

Applied aspirations: Design and applied art at the Ballarat Technical Art School during the early twentieth century.

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Abstract

Applied art and design schools operate at the nexus of art, industry, and education. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the regionally located Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) was the leading institution of its kind in Victoria, Australia, amid shifting economic, cultural, and pedagogical conditions. Emerging from a 1907 amalgamation of institutions, and subsequently administrated by the School of Mines Ballarat (SMB), BTAS was equipped with the assets, experience, and historic reputation necessary to surpass its provincial and metropolitan rivals.

This micro-historical case-study employs qualitative analysis of primary sources to investigate the aims, outputs, and importance of BTAS, contextualised by the expectations and influences it operated under during the inaugural principalship of artist and educator, Herbert Henry Smith. Smith oversaw the training of designers, craftspeople, artists, and teachers from 1907 until his retirement in early 1940—a period of tumultuous events, fiscal obstacles, and social and cultural debate. The institution was accountable to diverse stakeholders and arbiters of taste, and successive cohorts learned in a contested space between tradition, origination, and modernisation. Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural theory serves to navigate this web of hierarchies, assumptions, and tensions, while secondary sources help contextualise findings.

This thesis also discusses the suite of drawing, design and material-based disciplines delivered at BTAS as single subjects, full courses, and supplementary art-trade training. Throughout, featured students provide examples of regionally trained, Australian designer-maker and artist-teacher experiences.

BTAS students learned from ambitious and skilled men and women, benefited from strong professional networks, and fostered a notable esprit-de-corps. The school was significant for its contribution to female technical training. The school’s pre-eminent position was modified during the late 1920s, when much art and art-teacher training was re-centred in Melbourne. Yet, the valuable, compelling, and widespread influence of Ballarat Technical Art School graduates resonated for decades.

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I would like to acknowledge the Wadawurrung people, Traditional Custodians and first artists, craftspeople, and scientists of the land on which this research was undertaken. I recognise their deep, rich, and ancient cultural connection to country, and pay my respect to their Elders, past and present.

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Statement of authorship

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made that this dissertation is of the author alone; includes nothing, which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text; has not been previously submitted, in part or whole, to any university or institution to qualify for any degree, diploma, or other qualification; that the content of the dissertation is the result of work that has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and that ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Signed

19 March 2021

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Language and definitions

As an historical investigation, this thesis occasionally discusses outdated attitudes and insensitive cultural representations. The author has endeavoured to use respectful and inclusive language. In addition, the intended meaning of certain terminologies is explained here, for clarification and disambiguation.

Technical Art, Applied Art, and Design: Today, *technical art* usually refers to the science of material conservation and art fraud prevention. Historically however, technical or *applied* arts usually served “some reproductive or industrial purpose” beyond creative expression.¹ Non-utilitarian *fine* or *high* art was positioned as an intellectual pursuit, demarcating useful, applied or technical as “lesser.”² Although fine art is a transactable commodity, it was not considered ‘commercial’ the way industrial arts, crafts and design were.

Prior to World War I, the terms design, decoration and ornament were relatively synonymous, but subsequently developed distinctions.³ Within this thesis, unless otherwise stated, *design* incorporates applied and technical art, while *craft* refers to the manual execution of a work in material form.

Technical Training, Manual Training, and Manual Arts: *Technical training* was post-primary vocational study generally separate from, or ancillary to, workplace learning. It was both theoretical and practical, covering almost all but university courses such as law and medicine. Senior technical training should not be confused with the work or Junior Technical Schools, nor the elementary *manual training* practised by primary and some secondary school children. Manual training included simple handcrafts in materials like paper, wood, and plasticine. *Manual art* refers to a suite of material crafts offered in art classes at primary,

¹ Victoria, Education Department (1873-1985), et al. [VED], “General Report on the Art Work done during the Year 1901 in the Technical Schools of Victoria by T.S. Monkhouse,” Parliamentary paper (Victoria. Parliament); 1902-03, no. 28 (Melbourne: Robt. S. Brain, Government Printer, 1903), 91.

² Ian Chilvers. “Applied art” and “Fine arts,” *The Oxford Dictionary of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) doi: 9780191727627; Michael Clarke. “Applied art,” *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms*, 2nd ed. (Online: Oxford University Press, 2010), doi: 10.1093/acref/9780199569922.001.0001; H. A. Rankin and F. H. Brown. *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1915), 198.

³ Mary Ann Stankiewicz, “Constructing an International History of Art Education: Periods, Patterns, and Principles,” *The International Journal of Arts Education* 7, no. 1 (2009): 9.
Laurie Duggan. *Ghost Nation: Imagined Space and Australian Visual Culture, 1901-1939*. (St. Lucia, Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 185.

secondary high, junior, and technical art schools. Where capitalised, Manual Arts refers to the course at senior technical art schools and teachers' colleges.

Historically, any skilled tradesperson, including Ballarat sewer workers in the 1920s, could be described as artisans, so the term needs to be read with care.⁴ *Victoria* or *Victorian* refers to the Australian state, not the reign of the British monarch. Within this thesis, terms such as *alumni/a/us* and *graduate* are shorthand for students who have completed studies at a tertiary institution, regardless of qualification or mode of study.

⁴ For example “Letter to the editor of the Age, by Mr J D Fraser, Secretary Master Plumbers and Sanitary Engineers' Association, 24 October 1923”, in SMB Cuttings (1921–24); and School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat (SMB), *Annual Report* (1924), 4.

Introduction

It had been a pleasant autumn day, and the predicted cool change was not going to hinder the festivities of Herbert Henry Smith's (1875-1957) retirement reception on Saturday, 6 April 1940. Despite early reverberations of the Second World War, his 35 years of service as principal of the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) would not go unmarked. For Smith himself it was a history chronicled in his flesh, like the soot and grease etched into the pores of the local railway workers.

During the evening a stream of friends, colleagues and peers ascended the grand staircase at the Alexandria Tea Rooms on Lydiard Street to acknowledge Smith's career. Warmest wishes were offered by the dozens of artists, craftspeople, and art teachers whose diverse careers had been ignited under his tenure at the school. Surrounded by so many familiar faces, the old Principal might have sensed almost four decades telescoping into a single point in time. Thus, Smith stood aged 65, at his retirement celebration. The end of an era.

Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark, once said; the "placid sea of a neutral education is never likely to remain unruffled when the waters of technical instruction are reached."⁵ To continue his analogy, Smith navigated the fraught seas of individual, governmental, industrial and cultural influence. An art teacher and administrator, Smith's principalship provides the timeframe of this research; bookended by the formal establishment of the amalgamated Ballarat Technical Art School in 1907 and Smith's retirement in 1940. The school's parent institution, the School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat (SMB), was the oldest technical institution in Victoria. Both are antecedent institutions of Federation University Australia.

The Ballarat Technical Art School was regularly perceived as a leading institution in tertiary art and design education during the first four decades of the twentieth century, sometimes described as "the best of its kind in the State."⁶ So what led to this impression, and is there evidence to support the claim? If so, what were the conditions that led to the school's

⁵ Donald Clark, *The Future of Technical and Industrial Training in Victoria*. (Melbourne: The Working Men's College Printing Dept., 1927), 34.

⁶ Australian Natives' Association (ANA), *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, Promoted by the Metropolitan Committee of the Australian Natives' Association, Exhibition Building, Melbourne, February 14th to March 7th, 1914* (Melbourne: Metropolitan Committee and Paragon Printers, 1914), 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-61549136>.

advantageous position? What ideas, ideologies and events contributed to the school's cultural, socio-political, and economic milieu? This thesis interrogates these questions.

This period of the school's history corresponds to a tumultuous time in Australian, and indeed, world history, and certainly the disruptions of war and economic catastrophe impacted BTAS. Yet the agents of the school's advantages and disadvantages, real and perceived, were more localised. To some extent, its fortunes rose and fell with personnel changes in the Victorian Education Department and the tensions between differing views on training, skills, and labour. Moves toward centralisation were keenly felt by the regional institution.

Partially shielded by its own history and the residual gravitas held by SMB, BTAS undoubtedly benefited from the relative stability of Herbert Smith's principalship. Smith oversaw a community of teachers, many of whom had also attended as students, who in turn fostered holistic relationships with students, engendering a robust esprit-de-corps and instituting an engaged ensemble of alumni.

A senior technical school, BTAS delivered scaffolded training options for artists and designers, draughters, craftspeople, and art teachers. Staff also taught into SMB's junior technical classes, streamlining entry for a pool of prospective students already familiar with the senior school, and prepared for its rigours.

BTAS aimed to keep pace with industry changes, including the increased professionalisation of art and design practitioners. The school was noted for its originality and experimentation, but not for radical stylistic innovation, which was the luxury of private art schools unencumbered by commercial expectations. However, BTAS can firmly lay claim to producing reliably skilled, knowledgeable, and creative work-ready graduates, many of whom could claim practical experience of their field while studying. Staff, students, and graduates produced successful commissions, exhibited regularly, and often won prizes. The school produced several notable artists, designers, educators, and administrators.

This thesis prioritises a regional Australian context, and counters hero-designer mythologies by featuring the experience of lesser-known individuals as they learned their craft. It aims to be inclusive of gender, even if its primary setting and period limited expressions of cultural diversity. Importantly, this thesis acknowledges the porous nature of art and design boundaries during the early twentieth century to demonstrate the extent and value of technical art education. This research adds to a growing body of knowledge and invites other researchers to draw further parallels and divergences between BTAS, and its contemporaries.

One perspective, many views

My personal history intersects with the Federation University timeline at a range of junctions, spanning several decades and antecedent institutions. In 1988, as a student at the Ballarat College of Advanced Education, I undertook subjects that BTAS students were familiar with, including drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, foundational studies, art history and theory, and design. Technical design skills had gone largely unchanged for decades, yet I graduated on the cusp of a digital revolution that would transform the designer experience forever. In the early 2000s, I was employed at the University of Ballarat as a sessional teacher of graphic design to undergraduate students of a similar age to those attending BTAS a century earlier.

As a graphic design practitioner with 30 years' experience, I bring to this research both academic rigour and practical experience that bridges analogue and digital methods of graphic design production and its teaching.

Going about it

EPISTEMOLOGY

Empiricist historians believe the past is knowable, or why else attempt to explore it? Yet it is critical to acknowledge that everyone views and interprets the world through a unique set of filters, obscured and tinted by their own personal and cultural baggage. Attempting to access and compare individual experiences is “epistemologically problematic.”⁷ Given the same evidence, different historians will provide varying accounts or, as Alan Munslow gruesomely puts it, “same corpse — different autopsy results.”⁸ Our challenge is to navigate the empirical and literary elements of history by acknowledging that our viewpoint is socially constructed and analysing our own practice as it is undertaken, by being self-reflexive.⁹

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Design research questions are rarely neatly constrained by specific disciplinary boundaries.¹⁰ This research is sited within fields of art, education, and industry; each attracting judgement regarding hierarchy, power, class, language, value, and taste. These concepts articulate into Pierre Bourdieu’s theories, providing a theoretical structure for this thesis.¹¹

⁷ A. F. Blackwell, C. M. Eckert, L. L. Bucciarelli, and C. F. Earl, “Witnesses to Design: A Phenomenology of Comparative Design,” *Design Issues* 25, no. 1 (2009): 39, doi:10.2307/20627792.

⁸ Alun Munslow, “Alun Munslow: In Conversation with Keith Jenkins,” *Rethinking History* 15, no. 4 (2011): 573, doi:10.1080/13642529.2011.617124.

⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, Or: The Economic World Reversed,” *Poetics* 12, no. 4-5 (1983): 317, doi:10.1016/0304-422X(83)90012-8.

¹⁰ Carolyn Barnes and Gavin Melles, “Managing Interdisciplinarity: A Discussion of the Contextual Review in Design Research,” in *Proceedings of ‘Emerging Trends in Design Research’, the International Association of Societies of Design Research (IASDR) Conference, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, 12-15 November 2007* (Hong Kong: School of Design, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, November 2007), 2; and Alain Findeli. “Design History and Design Studies: Methodological, Epistemological and Pedagogical Inquiry,” *Design Issues* 11, no. 1 (1995): 53, doi:10.2307/1511615.

¹¹ Refer: Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990); Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (London; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage in association with Theory, Culture & Society, Dept. of Administrative and Social Studies, Teesside Polytechnic, 1990); Pierre Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production, Or: The Economic World Reversed,” *Poetics* 12, no. 4-5 (November 1983): 311-56, doi:10.1016/0304-422X(83)90012-8; “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” *Poetics*, no. 14 (1985): 13–44; Pierre Bourdieu; “The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 201-10.

It is important to acknowledge (as Bourdieu himself does) that his concepts are not solid-state forms, but continually in flux.¹² Some consider Bourdieu's approach worn to the point of passé.¹³ Undoubtedly his work has been raked over by many academics and theorists, deconstructed, re-defined and re-assembled, but Karl Maton encapsulates Bourdieu's theory as: practice that "results from relations between one's dispositions (*habitus*) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)."¹⁴

Distilled into 'thinking tools', Bourdieu's ideas provide a framework for the examination of cultural institutions such as BTAS.¹⁵ His relational thinking hinges on the tensions and interactions between people, environments, institutions and objects, as well as the value judgments and perceptions applied to each. Some key terms warrant brief outline.

Field: Bourdieu describes any cultural landscape as the "field of power" within which many struggles take place: for position, capital, and legitimacy.¹⁶ Within this universal domain exist other fields, fuzzy-edged and organic, each secondary to the subjective battle to define what falls within its boundaries, and what is excluded — the distinction between the two.

Doxa: Bourdieu compares each field to a 'game', its rules loosely determined by common, often unspoken, expectations, behaviours, and an understanding of appropriate codes.¹⁷ Combined they form a philosophical *doxa*. Whether a person feels comfortable or acknowledged within a field is determined by how well they know its rules. The degree to which a person understands a field's practices determines the legitimacy of their engagement within that field, and their acceptance by players already on the pitch.

Habitus: According to cultural theory, people are directed to action (or inaction) by their personal milieu and individual history. The "system of dispositions" resulting from this social conditioning is termed *habitus* and might be described as a vague propensity to respond in a particular way to events and situations.¹⁸ It is a predictor of behaviour but may be overridden by conscious decision-making.¹⁹ *Habitus* should not be conflated with socio-economic background (even if background contributes to *habitus*), nor is it innate. If a person's *habitus*

¹² Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 116.

¹³ Regina Lee Blaszczyk, Review. "Love Objects: Emotion, Design and Material Culture," *Journal of Design History* (2016): 2, doi:10.1093/jdh/epv049.

¹⁴ Maton, "Habitus," 51.

¹⁵ Maton, "Habitus,"; John A. Walker, *Design History and the History of Design* (London: Pluto, 1990), 51.

¹⁶ Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods," 27; Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 126.

¹⁷ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 194.

¹⁸ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 77.

¹⁹ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 108.

aligns neatly within a field's doxa they will find themselves more accepted and at ease. However, habitus perpetually alters.²⁰ One way in which habitus transforms is through the accumulation of *capital*.

Capital: All agents, including individuals, institutions and fields, jostle for position in *social space* where events, interactions and transactions occur.²¹ Bourdieu and others chart agent positions within this space through statistical analysis of *capital*, visualising it graphically.²² Bourdieu identifies three key powers that influence legitimacy within any field: economic capital; cultural capital; and social capital.²³ A fourth, symbolic capital, is the value applied to other forms of capital once they become “known or recognized.”²⁴ Symbolic capital is determined by various agents (themselves battling for legitimacy) wrestling for the authority to declare the value (symbolic capital) of economic, social or cultural capital.

Constellations, clusters, and class: People with similar habitus and capital may be grouped into theoretical “classes on paper”, which Bourdieu terms *constellations*.²⁵ However, constellations may form a physical *class* under the right conditions. Where this thesis discusses class, it is as constellations of people with like-habitus or like-capital.

Culture: The term, culture, encompasses ideas, beliefs, traditions, and even objects. Anthropologically, it describes everything humans do “to express and understand ourselves.”²⁶ Culture, Williams states, indicates “a process, not a conclusion.”²⁷ During the early twentieth century, culture aligned with social improvement.²⁸ Williams explains that, as a consequence of art as an expression of social, economic and political life, “aesthetic, moral and social judgements are closely interrelated.”²⁹ Culturalization or, more commonly, acculturation into a dominant society, informs individual and institutional thought and action. The interactions of individuals and structural relations (fields) are the basis of Bourdieu's

²⁰ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 116.

²¹ Patricia Thomson, “Field,” in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Edited by Michael Grenfell. (Durham UK: Acumen, 2010), 67.

²² For example: Thomson, “Field,” 71.

²³ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 127.

²⁴ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 124.

²⁵ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 117.

²⁶ John Holden. “How We Value Arts and Culture,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Arts and Cultural Management* 6, no. 2 (2009): 448.

²⁷ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, 2nd ed. (Mitcham, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1961), 137.

²⁸ Tony Bennett, “Culture,” in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, edited by Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris, 63-69. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005. Reprint, 2008), 65.

²⁹ Williams, *Culture and Society*, 285.

cultural theory.³⁰ By understanding, participating in, and consuming culture, individuals and organisations build cultural capital; status credits by which they can be categorised, or classed. Agents with influential cultural capital act as gatekeepers; controlling what is produced, how it is shared, and how it is valued.

Why Bourdieu for this thesis?

Bourdieu identifies two modes of cultural production, which are definable in relation to each other and hierarchised with dozens of intermediary stages: the field of restricted production (which is exclusive and elite) and the field of large-scale cultural production (popular and consumer-driven).³¹ Technical art schools educated fine artists, designers, craftspeople and teachers, all of whom inhabited the space between these fields.

Cultural theory allows examination of a single possibility among many and means no single individual can be deemed wholly responsible for certain actions or events.³² The Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) experienced the push and pull of educational, administrative, industrial and cultural institutions, government policy, and community expectation, exacerbated by individuals of varying legitimacy and influence. BTAS was subject to varying struggles for power and shifting hierarchies. If, according to Bourdieu, “*symbolic power is a power of consecration or revelation*” [original emphasis] then what art schools accepted, rejected, and revealed helps define their position in social space.³³

According to Bourdieu, educational authorities consecrate “a certain type of work and a certain type of cultivated” person.³⁴ Bourdieu’s theories suggest that the experience of learning at BTAS inculcated students into a certain cultural milieu, distinct from other art schools. This experience permeated their habitus which, in turn, predisposed their judgements and decision-making processes, and helped define their position in social space. Despite personal background, perceptions, motivations or expectations, the school left its cultural mark on each person, a not adverse form of institutionalisation. This is important. If participation within an institution were irrelevant to individual outcomes, there would be no cause for this thesis.

³⁰ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 311.

³¹ Bourdieu, “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” 14, 29.

³² Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 191.

³³ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 138.

³⁴ Bourdieu, “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” 24.

Yet, students were not passive actors and, as cultural producers, they also held the symbolic power of creation; bringing something tangible into existence from the seemingly intangible.

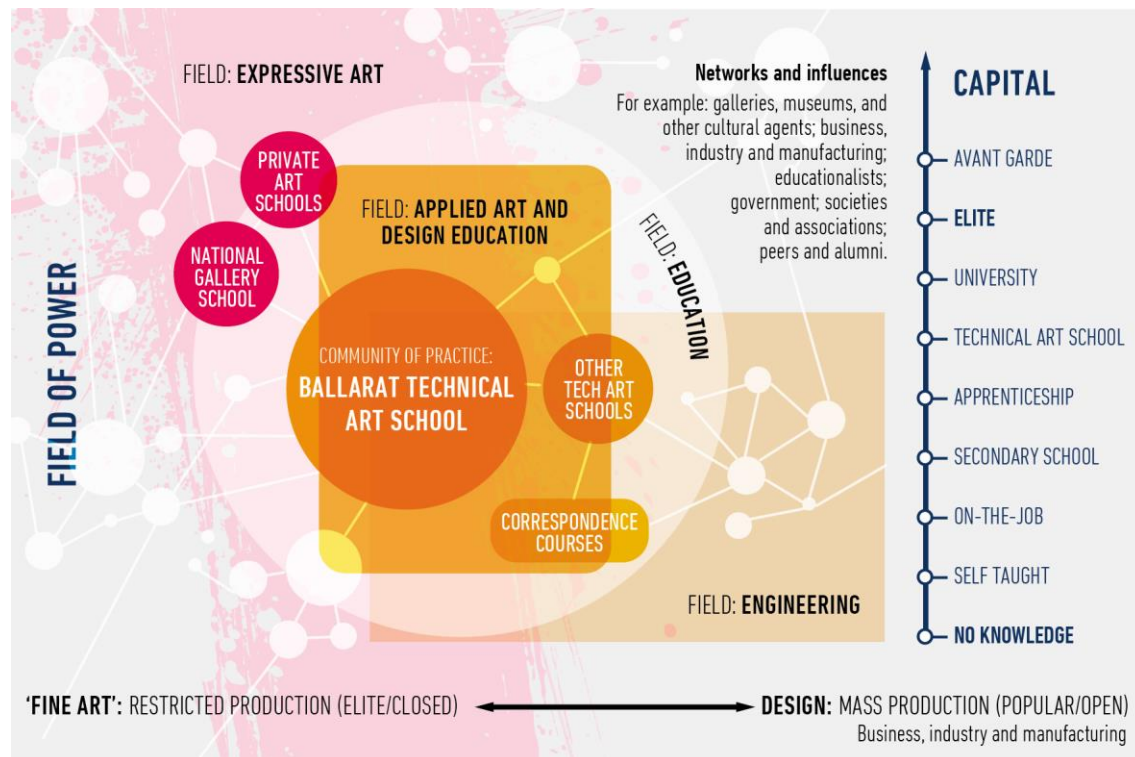


Figure 0.1 The above graphic helps describe how Bourdieu's theories apply to this thesis.
© Elise Whetter.

METHODOLOGY

A micro-historical case study, this thesis locates BTAS within both a structural and amorphous network of local, national, and global human exchange. Micro-history addresses the limitations of grand narratives which can fail to “acknowledge alternative experiences that can be peculiar to local characteristics.”³⁵ Generally forged within a “narrow compass in time and space”, a micro-historical approach might be considered selective and unrepresentative, a close-up rather than a panorama.³⁶ Yet locating this reduced scale (BTAS) within a wider context (art, industrial and educational fields) prevents it from becoming fragmentary.

³⁵ Anna Calvera, “Local, Regional, National, Global and Feedback: Several Issues to Be Faced with Constructing Regional Narratives,” *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 4 (2005): 374.

³⁶ Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi, and Anne C Tedeschi. “Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It,” *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 12.

METHOD

This research utilises a documentary historical method, investigating primary and secondary sources. It consists primarily of qualitative research, supported by some quantitative data.

The Federation University Australia Historical Collection provides access to much primary source material regarding BTAS and the School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, (SMB). This includes student magazines, annual reports, prospectuses, correspondence, student lists, examinations, and scrap-booked collections of newspaper clippings. Some articles are cited from these cuttings rather than the direct news article. This decision is to demonstrate which articles had been considered important by SMB stakeholders who collected and collated them. Of significance are examples of student artwork housed in the University's historical and art collections. What the students themselves thought is difficult to quantify, as their opinions are rare within historical sources; however, traces of voices can still be gleaned. Remarkably, while relocating elements of the University collections, the curator uncovered two books of Herbert Smith's reports to the SMB Council, fortunately in time to incorporate them into the final stages of this thesis, despite access restrictions related to the covid-19 pandemic.

Beyond the University's collections are parliamentary papers, Education Department reports, directives, and gazettes, as well as alumni publications, reviews, and photographs. Secondary sources include a range of books and journal articles.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to published materials, this investigation required access to biographical, educational, governmental, and other data regarding a range of individuals, including birth, death, marriage, military, census, and educational records. These were accessed via public records and published information. As such, a *Request for Approval to Use Existing Data* was granted from the Federation University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) in October 2015, project number C15-012. Project Reports have been submitted to HREC annually. Refer appendix.

Thesis structure

The following section outlines key themes, perspectives and responses unearthed within the literature review. It presents the economic and technological stimulus for training applied artists and designers, as well as cultural, social, and personal incentives. Together, they describe a multifaceted contextual milieu, subject to overlap, interplay and competing tensions.

Subsequent chapters are divided into two parts. Part One explores the institution of the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS), and its location in the Victorian Education system. Part Two explores the subjects facilitated by the school and the key cohorts it catered to.

The Art School's fortunes, and indeed those of its parent institute, the School of Mines, Ballarat (SMB), were significantly impacted by the attitudes and ideologies of individual members of its governing and administrative bodies. Herbert H. Smith's principalship was supported by the institution's governing Council, whose stability was regularly tested by outside forces, particularly the Victorian Education Department. It splits the period of Smith's oversight into two periods: the first governed by people supportive and sympathetic to technical education and BTAS; the second after significant Departmental personnel changes.

Chapter One provides an overview of art teaching at primary, post-primary, and tertiary levels. Chapter Two surveys BTAS in parallel to other Victorian technical art schools, probing its advantages and disadvantages, perceived and real, and examines the relationship between the Art School and other SMB departments. This chapter looks at the school's infrastructure, equipment, and collections, as well as the conditions, engagement and institutional life of staff and students. The chapter concludes with a range of markers by which BTAS was measured and assessed as, in many ways, successful. Chapter Three discusses the BTAS experience from 1926 following significant Education Department changes and wider societal shifts.

Part Two of this thesis scrutinises the disciplines, courses and subjects delivered by BTAS during the early twentieth century. Like many art schools at the time, BTAS catered to several training cohorts: applied artists and designers, artisans and craftspeople, and art teachers; with significant overlaps. Chapters Four through Six investigate the many subjects offered as individual units, course components or both. Examples of student experience and graduate outcomes are interspersed throughout. Drawing was critical to all cohorts, both as

visual language and technical or creative skill, and is examined in Chapter Four. Chapter Five interrogates applied art and design thinking and practice, as well as a range of largely two-dimensional subjects including lettered arts, commercial art, and illustration. Three-dimensional subjects are examined throughout Chapter Six.

One of the most significant BTAS legacies is the production of many of the State's art teachers, yet their objectives, and therefore qualifications, varied. Chapter Seven explores the types of art teachers required in Victorian schools and institutions, the courses established to meet these requirements, and profiles the experience of some BTAS graduates.

The conclusion pulls these chapters together to demonstrate BTAS as an institution strengthened by regional champions and a strong esprit-de-corps whose alumni undertook diverse arts-based careers and wielded wide-spread influence as educators. Appendices provide additional information to enrich this thesis.

Literature, themes, and perspectives

“Education must be regarded as a scientific process for the full development of the nation in intellectual, moral, and religious capacity — an instrument of national uplifting, for the raising of the standard of humanity apart from mere considerations of money returns to individuals.”¹

As the last leaves of nineteenth century calendars fell away, Australian authorities aimed to facilitate industrial competitiveness and growth by improving technical training and applying art to industry. Technical art schools trained artists, artisans, and art teachers within overlapping fields of art, trade, and science.

Cultural theory frames technical education as a social construction, including the motivating factors of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital.² Bourdieu argues that a dominant culture in control of symbolic goods (such as education) is in a position to legitimise its own cultural sensibilities, and devalue less powerful, regional or counter-cultures.³ Thus visual culture becomes a weapon in the battle for cultural and economic power struggles.

The following section discusses key themes and perspectives of technical art education as identified through a review of literature, with reference to the Ballarat Technical Art School.

THE STATE OF PLAY: AUSTRALIAN INVESTIGATIONS

Australian technical art education history has been under-represented in design research.⁴ Daniel Huppatz describes Australian design and its history as “popularly perceived from both within and without as marginal, [...] little known beyond Australia.”⁵ Of the 90 theses listed with the Design History Australia Research Network (DHARN) between 1970 and 2014, only a handful correspond to this thesis in time (early twentieth century) and place

¹ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education. *Final Report on Technical Education: Continuation Schools in Great Britain and Europe, Establishment of Continuation Schools in Victoria; Survey of Technical Education in Great Britain, Europe, America, Japan, Etc.; Technical Education in Victoria - Report and Recommendations*, by Victoria. (Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, Parliamentary Paper [PP] no. 29, 1901), 260.

² Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 127.

³ Bourdieu, “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” 32.

⁴ Neville Edward Weston, “The Professional Training of Artists in Australia, 1861–1963, with Special Reference to the South Australian Model,” (PhD, Adelaide, December 1991), xii.

⁵ D. J. Huppatz, “Introduction: Reframing Australian Design History,” *Journal of Design History* (2014): 205, doi:10.1093/jdh/ept044.

(Australia), and fewer are analogous in subject matter (technical education and/or applied art).⁶

A broad-spectrum investigation into Australian technical education was written by Stephen Murray-Smith in 1966. His survey of governmental and administrative machinations ends in 1914 and covers technical education in general, with relatively few references to art education.⁷ The Victorian Education Department's *Vision and Realisation*, a centenary history published in 1973, includes a book on the Technical Division and references to art education throughout its three volumes.⁸ *A History of State Education in Victoria* provides a perspective more contemporary to the period of research.⁹

Established in 1870, Ballarat's School of Mines (SMB) became Australia's first technical education institution. While its title prioritised mining, from the beginning its operating Council had ambitions to deliver broader technical and scientific instruction. After a sluggish start, SMB achieved its ambitions over the next couple of decades.¹⁰ At the behest of the government-appointed Technological Commission (1869-1890), other schools were founded in many Victorian districts, including Melbourne's Working Men's College (WMC) in 1887.

Murray-Smith and Dare offer a wide-ranging history of the WMC up until its centenary as the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).¹¹ Many institutional histories are produced to celebrate a significant milestone.¹² Histories written for the metropolitan WMC, the Eastern Suburbs Technical College (Swinburne), The Gordon (Geelong), and the Bendigo School of Mines provide opportunities for comparison, although art departments can rate relatively few mentions.¹³ More often, schools of note are touched upon in wider

⁶ Design History Australia Research Network (DHARN), "Theses on Australian Design," 2014, accessed 2 September 2016, dharn.org.au.

⁷ Stephen Murray-Smith, "A History of Technical Education in Australia: With Special Reference to the Period Before 1914" (PhD thesis, Melbourne: Melbourne Graduate School of Education – Theses, 1966).

⁸ L. J. Blake, ed. *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*, vol. 1-3, 3 vols. (Melbourne: Education Department of Victoria, 1973); James Docherty, "Book 6: The Technical Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, vol 1, 607-787.

⁹ Edward Sweetman, Charles R. Long, and John Smyth, *A History of State Education in Victoria*, (Education Department Victoria, 1922).

¹⁰ Docherty, "The Technical Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 612.

¹¹ Stephen Murray-Smith and A. J. Dare, *The Tech: A Centenary History of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology* (South Yarra: Hyland House, 1987).

¹² Such as: Bernard Hames, *Swinburne, 75 Years of Distinction*. (Hawthorn, Vic.: Swinburne College Press, 1982); Murray-Smith and Dare, *The Tech*; and Nanette Carter, *Pen to Pixel: 100 Years of Design Education at Swinburne* (Melbourne, Vic.: Swinburne University of Technology, 2008).

¹³ See respectively: Hames, *Swinburne*; Gordon Long, *The Gordon – A Century of Influence* (Geelong: Gordon Technical College, 1987); and Frank Cusack, *Canvas to Campus: A History of the Bendigo Institute of Technology* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1973).

examinations of art and design. Michael Bogle's book *Design in Australia, 1880-1970* mentions several Australian schools. BTAS is buoyed by its inclusion, as all others noted are based in capital cities.¹⁴ Grace Cochrane mentions schools only when they are relevant to a certain person, medium or technique.¹⁵ The South Australian experience has been explored (particularly the early colonial period) including private art institutions.¹⁶ A history of the Perth Technical College in Western Australia discusses key teaching staff and is illustrated with artwork but includes relatively little information on the inter-war period.¹⁷ Melbourne's National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Art School is also a point of reference if only to highlight the difference of its aims and approaches to the technical art colleges.

The Ballarat Technical Art School has previously been examined in ways different to that which this thesis intends. Warren Perry's comprehensive administrative history includes discussion of BTAS and is a solid chronology of events but provides little detail of the lived experience of the art students.¹⁸ Other historians have captured the school and its emergence but do not explore learning and teaching in depth.¹⁹ Individuals associated with BTAS can be found scattered throughout literature, particularly in reference guides such as Max Germaine's *Artists and Galleries of Australia and New Zealand*.²⁰ Short biographies for some are included at *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and *Design and Art Australia Online*.²¹ Extended biographies could be written for dozens more.

¹⁴ Michael Bogle, *Design in Australia, 1880-1970* (Sydney: Craftsman House: G+B Arts International, 1998), 33.

¹⁵ Grace Cochrane. *The Crafts Movement in Australia: A History* (Kensington, NSW, Australia: New South Wales University Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Refer to Marissa Beverley Mary Young, "A History of Art and Design Education in South Australia 1836–1897" (Master's thesis, South Australia, March 1985); and Weston, "The Professional Training of Artists in Australia."

¹⁷ Dorothy Erickson and Judith Hugo, *Art & Design in Western Australia: Perth Technical College, 1900-2000* (Perth, W.A.: Central Metropolitan College of TAFE, 2000).

¹⁸ Warren Perry, *A History of the School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat: 1870–1982* (Ballarat: School of Mines and Industries Ballarat Ltd., 1984).

¹⁹ These include, Anne Beggs-Sunter, *A Centre of Culture: Artists and Ballarat Art Schools 1870–1995* (Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, May 1995); Anne Beggs-Sunter, *Rich Vein of Learning: The Origins of the University of Ballarat 1869-1993* (Ballarat, Vic.: University of Ballarat, 1994); Anne Beggs-Sunter, "Evoking a Taste for Art: The Role of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute," in *Under Minerva's Gaze*, eds. Jill Blee and Phil Roberts, 28-41 (Ballarat: Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, 2010); Anne Beggs-Sunter, *Not for Self but for All* (Ballarat: Art Gallery of Ballarat, 2018); and D. H. Bowers, ed. *The Ballarat School of Mines: Retrospect (1870–1970)* (Ballarat: Waller & Chester, 1970).

²⁰ Max Germaine. *Artists and Galleries of Australia and New Zealand* (Sydney; New York: Lansdowne Editions, 1979).

²¹ Databases: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/> and <https://www.daa.org.au>

Some research examines the role of art and historical collections within art and teacher-training institutions.²² In 2015, Liam Fennessy probed pedagogical modes of industrial design instruction in a contemporary Australian context, including two literature review chapters building a picture of historical approaches.²³ Other researchers highlight specific disciplines.²⁴ For example, a Peter Timms' outline of technical art training in Australia focuses on ceramics.²⁵

Alan S. Young's PhD thesis includes an overview of art education (if largely Melbourne-focused) and provides political context to Victorian graphic design practice. Young explores power and legitimacy, hierarchy and privilege, inclusion, and exclusion, investigating the role of institutions (including educational ones) in legitimising certain types of art and design through language, theories, histories, and objects. A later article discusses commercial art training within Victorian art schools.²⁶

The experiences of women artists have been broadly investigated.²⁷ In many cases, research around art and design education makes note of women according to the extent in which they participated in certain subjects or activities. An examination of cultural diversity within an Australian art institution has not been found, likely owing to the lack of data to track involvement of Indigenous and culturally diverse designers.²⁸ While not the object of this thesis, there is an opportunity for determined researchers to bring these stories to light.

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- ²² Including: Caroline Jordan, "The South Kensington Empire and the Idea of the Regional Art Gallery in Nineteenth-Century Victoria," *Fabrications* 20, no. 2 (2011): doi:10.1080/10331867.2011.10539681; Penelope J. Collet, "The Role of Art and Craft Collections in Teacher Training Institutions in Australia," *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 23, no. 1 (2004): 91–100; and Penelope J. Collet, "F. M. Curtis Collection: A Window on Teacher Education at Bendigo, Australia," *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 28, no. 2 (2009): 207–214.
- ²³ Liam Gwyn Fennessy, "All Together and at Once the Practice: Towards a Pedagogy of Implication for Australian Industrial Design" (PhD thesis, RMIT University, 2015).
- ²⁴ For example, Keith Free, "Arts and Crafts Potters in Sydney: The Sydney Technical College School," in *Australian Art Pottery 1900-1950*, ed. Kevin Fahy, John Freeland, Keith Free, and Andrew Simpson. (Sydney: Casuarina Press, 2004), 9-15.
- ²⁵ Peter Timms, "Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges," in *Designing Australia: Readings in the History of Design*, ed. Michael Bogle, (Annandale, N.S.W.: Pluto Press, 2002).
- ²⁶ Alan S. Young, "A Genealogy of Graphic Design in Victoria" (PhD thesis, January 2005); Alan S. Young, "Commercial Art to Graphic Design: The Rise and Decline of Commercial Art in Australia," *Journal of Design History*, Online (2015): doi:10.1093/jdh/epv021
- ²⁷ For example: Helen Topliss, *Modernism and Feminism: Australian Women Artists, 1900-1940* (Roseville East, NSW, Australia; USA: Craftsman House; G+B Arts International, 1996).
- ²⁸ Yoko Akama and Carolyn Barnes, "Where Is Our Diversity: Questions of Visibility and Representation in Australian Graphic Design," *Research Journal of the Australian Graphic Design Association* 4, no. 1 (2009): 30.

Murray-Smith notes that between 1880 and 1900 technical education was part of a political agenda to democratically liberate the male population. Rather than being industry relevant however, he believes technical schools were in fact multi-functional institutions that became “poor men’s grammar schools.”²⁹ It should be noted that in the twentieth century, at least, the aims of post-primary and tertiary technical education differed greatly.

Geoff Hammond’s 1978 thesis extensively explores art education ideologies within Victorian state elementary and secondary schools between the 1860s and 1970s. While barely touching upon artist-designer education at tertiary level, Hammond discusses art-teacher training within technical art schools (and elsewhere) and the impact of curriculum decisions upon junior pupils.³⁰

Murray-Smith explains, prior to 1914 at least, “...technical education evolved independently of the elementary school system and without any defined relationship to it.”³¹ That noted, for many years both elementary and tertiary art education in Victoria were overseen by one person, Ponsonby May Carew-Smyth (1860–1939), a man of considerable influence in his roles as Inspector of Drawing and Art Inspector. His advocacy for technical art education and his association with the Ballarat art schools render him an interesting protagonist. The event of his retirement is conspicuous in the way regional art schools were subsequently viewed.

Positioning the Australian student experience

Bourdieu explains that for art to have symbolic value, it must be socially instituted to be known and recognised.³² Problematically, repetition of a legitimised design canon, its restatement of certain fields, innovations and individuals, has distilled and limited design history. Judgments made by people of power and influence have been accepted and adopted by successive generations who inherit a doctrine pre-loaded with assumptions and biases. The problem with this type of curatorship, by agents who are generating and protecting their own cultural capital, is that only limited successes are visible and evidence of process or rejected ideas are suppressed, giving “rise to shared assumptions in society.”³³

²⁹ Murray-Smith, “A History of Technical Education in Australia,” 219.

³⁰ Geoff Hammond, “Changes in Art Education Ideologies: Victoria 1860s to Mid-1970s” (PhD thesis, June 1978).

³¹ Murray-Smith, “A History of Technical Education in Australia,” 727.

³² Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 318.

³³ Peter Childs, *Modernism. The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2000), 208.

Design histories have traditionally concerned themselves with key movements, hero-artists, and mass-produced objects aligned with industrial progress, usually emanating from the so-called ‘West’.³⁴ University libraries around the world house glossy publications that exalt select artists, artefacts and movements. Martha Scotford might cast this as “neat history” compared with an expanded view of design (perhaps including student design) as “messy history.”³⁵ Where creativity is sometimes perceived as an innate power, it might be countered that creativity, if with some difficulty, can in fact be taught through practice.³⁶

Monika Parrinder’s *The Myth of Genius* defines several representations of the hero-artist, each “striving for genius status”, with characteristics ranging from ground-breaking to irreverent.³⁷ In some cases, the personality of the designer can outstrip the content of the design, rendering it less a work of communication, and more a piece of self-promotion. As Michael Rock explains “the status of the creator frames the work and imbues it with mythical value.”³⁸ For Tony Fry, connoisseur or canonised histories are primarily histories “of the leadership of style.”³⁹

Historically, Britain, Western Europe and the USA had the strongest voice in global design discussions.⁴⁰ Key Euro/US-centric texts reinforce assumptions of Australia as a “peripheral design culture, always anxiously lagging behind developments elsewhere.”⁴¹ Meggs’ *History of Graphic Design* (with six editions since 1983) has been the bedrock on which many other stories were built, but it has historically prioritised so-called Western discourse, and rarely considered British colonies: Australia, New Zealand and Canada don’t even make the index.⁴² Similarly, Asian art (represented almost solely by Japan) is noted only for its revitalizing effects on Western graphic design. This is particularly cheeky as the cover

³⁴ Naoki Sakai and Meaghan Morris, “The West,” in *New Keywords*, 372.

³⁵ Martha Scotford, “Messy History Vs. Neat History: Toward an Expanded View of Women in Graphic Design,” *Visible Language* 28, no. 4 (1994): 371.

³⁶ Bryan Lawson, *How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified* (Oxford; Burlington, MA: Elsevier/Architectural, 2006), 303.

³⁷ Monika Parrinder, “The Myth of Genius,” *Eye Magazine* 10, no. 38 (2000), <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/the-myth-of-genius> (accessed June 8, 2015).

³⁸ Michael Rock, “The Designer as Author,” *Eye Magazine* 5, no. 20 (1996), <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/the-designer-as-author> (accessed September 11, 2017).

³⁹ Tony Fry, *Design History Australia: A Source Text in Methods and Resources* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger: Power Institute of Fine Arts, 1988), 27.

⁴⁰ W.J.T. Mitchell, “Art,” in *New Keywords*, 6.

⁴¹ Huppatz, “Introduction: Reframing Australian Design History,” 208.

⁴² Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis, *Meggs’ History of Graphic Design*, 4th ed. (Hoboken, N.J.: J. Wiley & Sons, 2006), 190; Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis, *Meggs’ History of Graphic Design*, 6th ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporate, 2016). In this edition, “Australia” is mentioned five times, usually as part of an address. Brian Donnelly, “Locating Graphic Design History in Canada,” *Journal of Design History* 19, no. 4 (2006): 285.

features several elements of non-Western letterforms. The sixth edition makes some attempt to address this imbalance.

Recent commentators have begun to direct attention toward the less featured design activities of wider nations and cultures.⁴³ While Victor Margolin's two-volume behemoth, *World History of Design*, groups Australia with New Zealand and Canada, in just 24 pages amidst 1500 he re-iterates commentators such as Michael Bogle and Simon Jackson.⁴⁴ With due credit to Margolin's massive undertaking, Australians need to look elsewhere for a deeper, more inclusive, national design history.

Christine Boyanoski similarly groups Australia, New Zealand and Canada with South Africa, as "bound together by economic co-dependency, Britannic race sentiment, and the imperial ideology of the dominant culture" of Britain.⁴⁵ These dominions were more closely connected and aligned during the interwar period than they are today, but her article does not encompass all British territories. A few researchers have investigated other post-colonial regions in Africa, the Americas, the Pacific, Middle East, and Asia.⁴⁶

The empire-dominion relationship exists, of course, beyond British colonies. France, Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands had long maintained empires. Schmid explains that Japanese colonies, particularly Korea, have been "largely eliminated from Japanese history" or paid a back-handed compliment as untainted by modernity.⁴⁷ Kevin Slivka provides an example of the impact of Western approaches on Native American art students.⁴⁸ Other countries

⁴³ Calvera, "Local, Regional, National, Global and Feedback," 372.

For examples of diverse perspectives, see Eduardo Castillo Espinoza, "The School of Applied Arts, University of Chile (1928–1968)," *Design Issues* 25, no. 2 (2009): doi:10.2307/20627807; Ami Kantawala, "Art Education in Colonial India: Implementation and Imposition," *Studies in Art Education* 53, no. 3 (2012): 208–222; Artemis Yagou, "First Steps: Early Design Education and Professionalization in Greece," *Journal of Design History* 23, no. 2 (2010): doi:10.1093/jdh/epq003.

⁴⁴ Victor Margolin, *World History of Design: World War I to World War II* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

⁴⁵ Christine Boyanoski, "Decolonising Visual Culture: Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and the Imperial Exhibitions, 1919–1939" (PhD thesis, London, March 2002), 2.

⁴⁶ Examples of research on colonial Africa include: Geraldine Brennan, "Art Education and the Visual Arts in Botswana," *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 25, no. 3 (2006): 318–328; D. Pretorius, "Graphic Design in South Africa: A Post-Colonial Perspective," *Journal of Design History* (2015) doi:10.1093/jdh/epv010; Anna Tietze, "'The Attainment of a True Eye and a Correct Hand': Drawing, Art Training Institutions and Theories of Art Education in Cape Town, 1860–1926," *De Arte*, no. 89 (2014): 4–17; and Sabine Marschall, "Strategies of Accommodation: Toward an Inclusive Canon of South African Art," *Art Journal* 60, no. 1 (2001): 51–59. Research on art in other regions include: Robin Jones, "British Interventions in the Traditional Crafts of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), c1850–1930," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 1, no. 3 (2008): doi:10.2752/174967808x379443.

⁴⁷ Andre Schmid, "Colonialism and the 'Korea Problem' in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A Review Article," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 4 (2000): 971.

⁴⁸ Kevin Slivka, "Art, Craft, and Assimilation: Curriculum for Native Students During the Boarding School Era," *Studies in Art Education* 52, no. 3 (2011): 255–242.

willingly ingested diverse cultural connections as they navigated global commercial networks. Marina Gravier indicates that Mexican designers blended aesthetic and technological elements from Spain, France, England, Germany and the United States of America with local themes and expressions.⁴⁹

Adoption of transnational approaches to history means national frameworks are no longer fashionable, yet regional histories are being championed. Jonathan Woodham explains a “deeply felt and articulate movement seeking greater recognition of the significance of the local and the regional” has arisen, highlighting the need to build up “geographically appropriate insights.”⁵⁰ To facilitate transnational comparative analysis, a range of regional institutions, their graduates, and the diverse cultures they sit within, must be examined. Such research may serve to counteract the dominance of Euro-USA design histories and the cult of celebrity preferred by many publishing houses.

Town and country

Issues of centrality and periphery are scalable. Historically, Australian town rivals jockeyed for prestige and position, pursuing ever better and well-resourced public facilities and institutions.⁵¹ Civic pride notwithstanding, they were preparing their defences against metropolitan centralism. As early as the 1880s, Ballarat both feared and envied Melbourne’s expansion and creeping dominance.⁵² Caroline Jordan reveals regional Victorians were often unhappy with “Melbourne’s centralised grip on resources in art and technical education” around this time.⁵³ Local community leaders demanded their slice of cultural pie.

A common difficulty for researchers of regional design is access to material.⁵⁴ The commercial and ephemeral nature of design materials, collection policies, and the overall devaluation of design, means little remains of early commercial art in regional areas. Fortunately, the Federation University art and historical collections contain a substantive contribution. This is part of the Ballarat Technical Art School legacy.

⁴⁹ Marina Garone Gravier and Albert Brandt, “Nineteenth-Century Mexican Graphic Design: The Case of Ignacio Cumplido,” *Design Issues* 18, no. 4 (2002): 54-63, 56.

⁵⁰ Johnathon M. Woodham, “Local, National and Global: Redrawing the Design Historical Map,” *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 3 (2005): 264, 258, doi:10.1093/jdh/epi044.

⁵¹ Philip C. Candy, “‘The Light of Heaven Itself’: The Contribution of the Institutes to Australia’s Cultural History,” in *Pioneering Culture: Mechanics’ Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia*, ed. Philip C. Candy and John Laurent (Adelaide: Auslib Press, 1994), 14–15.

⁵² Weston Bate, *Lucky City*, (Carlton, Victoria: MUP, 1978), 217-218.

⁵³ Jordan, “The South Kensington Empire,” 54.

⁵⁴ Woodham, “Local, National and Global,” 264.

MOTIVATIONS FOR TECHNICAL ART TRAINING

Australian colonies, having displaced many Aboriginal populations, were populated from diverse backgrounds during the nineteenth century. Wealthy settlers and government administrators feared for the soul of the nation, so established cultural institutions in the belief that widespread education would ‘civilise’ society. Enjoying a post-goldrush boom, Ballarat’s prosperous and public-minded individuals donated time, money and energy toward establishing cultural institutions; a public fine art gallery among them.⁵⁵ Masked by a democratic effort to educate the masses, members, perhaps unconsciously, flexed their personal capital and indoctrinated established definitions of taste.

‘Lanier’s Scalpel’ states “the essential consideration of any educational policy or practice is its conception of purpose” to which all other aspects of education are simply “logical and inevitable consequences.”⁵⁶ Thus, the motivations for technical art training are revealing.

The cultivation of taste

Bourdieu reasoned that taste (as opposed to aesthetics) is a cultural and personal construct, often linked to a person’s position in social space.⁵⁷ As such, it can be manipulated and refined. This aligns with motivations for art institutions to train artists and educate public taste. The approach had economic spurs; an educated population would demand better products and stimulate quality production. Attempts to improve consumer taste by upskilling craftspeople was in evidence around the world.⁵⁸

Historically, ‘good taste’ implied decorum, the appropriateness of certain styles to specific circumstances. It alluded to connoisseurship; the ability of trained, cultivated, and refined persons to discriminate as to what was ‘good’ or ‘bad’ art. There were teachable conventions

⁵⁵ James Alexander Powell, *Retrospective Synopsis of the Origin and Progress of the Ballarat Fine Art Public Gallery From Its Inception in June, 1884, to September, 1886: With a Plea for Art Culture* (Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Public Gallery Association, 1887), 15; Beggs-Sunter, *Not for Self but for All*.

⁵⁶ Vincent Lanier, *The World of Art Education According to Lanier* (Reston, Virginia, USA: National Art Education Association, 1991), 13.

⁵⁷ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 318.

⁵⁸ Jones, “British Interventions in the Traditional Crafts of Ceylon (Sri Lanka),” 391; Maryland State Archives, “The Peabody Gallery of Art: A History,” last modified 22 March 2002, accessed 7 October 2020. <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/stagser/s1259/143/ghexhibit/onlinehistory.html>; Joseph Basile, “Facsimile and Originality: Changing Views of Classical Casts in Arts Education and Art History,” *The International Journal of the Arts in Society: Annual Review* 8, no. 1 (2014): 16; and Peter Maaswinkel, “An Informetric Investigation Into the Potential for Change in Belgian Art Education at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 23, no. 2 (2004): 208.

around taste and style, unencumbered by the idiosyncrasies of individual preference.⁵⁹ In design, good taste elevated natural proportions but rejected the naturalistic application of fine-art styles to ill-chosen objects. Harmony could be demonstrated through almost mathematical exercises in rhythm, balance, proportion and hierarchy, and the propriety of colour use was important. ‘Beauty’ was an oft-quoted law of art during this period, and a term regularly used alongside taste.⁶⁰ A collection of essays edited by Bernard Smith offers a selection of contemporary Australian views on taste at the turn of the twentieth century.⁶¹

Taste functioned as a marker of class.⁶² Historically, ‘correct taste’ was a learned cultural position, bequeathed to successive generations of selective social classes and catered to by the artists and architects who served them. The untrained masses were seen to harbour indiscriminate, inappropriate, or indecorous taste, and thus complacent in accepting ugly objects. As one BTAS student remarked, people “think they know beauty when they see it ... but in most cases they need to be educated.”⁶³ Applied art training would be in vain if consumers failed to appreciate designers’ efforts.

If taste was just another word for discernment, then choice was imperative to demonstrating taste. Bourdieu explains successful changes in the production of goods are rewarded through selection and purchase, and that these new objects also have the power to transform taste.⁶⁴ At the end of the nineteenth century, however, Australia’s choices were relatively limited.

Australian art education instilled a preference for the restricted Greco-Roman cultural lineage favoured by South Kensington. Although at least one commentator found France to be generally superior “in all matters of taste and design.”⁶⁵ This arbitration and dissemination of a select aesthetic tradition is now recognised as a form of “cultural imperialism”, by agents with enough cultural capital, legitimacy and power to define ‘good taste’.⁶⁶ Art schools,

⁵⁹ Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, 196.

⁶⁰ Refer: Ernest E. Clark. *A Handbook of Plant-Form for Students of Design, Art Schools, Teachers and Amateurs*. 2 ed. (London: B T Batsford, 1909), xvi; James R. Hopkins, William M. Hekking, and Louis Weinberg, “What Kind of Technical Art Shall Be Taught to the A. B. Student?” *The Bulletin of the College Art Association of America* 1, no. 3 (1917): 40; and Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, 197, v.

⁶¹ Bernard Smith, *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia: The Colonial Period, 1770-1914*, ed. Bernard Smith, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975).

⁶² Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 6.

⁶³ “The Appreciation of Beauty. (By E.R.),” in *The SMB: The Magazine of the School of Mines Students, Ballarat [SMB Magazine]*, (Ballarat: SMB, 1929), 18.

⁶⁴ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 231.

⁶⁵ Frederick Campbell, “The Industrial Education of the People,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), October 26, 1889, 5.

⁶⁶ Stankiewicz, “Constructing an International History of Art Education,” 9; Mary Ann Stankiewicz, “Projection and Coordinates for One Historical Map,” in *International Handbook of Research in Arts*

museums, galleries and publishers prioritised Britain in the hierarchy of cultural supremacy. Their practices isolated and excluded alternatives.

Early training for the working ‘classes’

In lieu of government action in adult education prior to 1869, Australian Mechanics’ Institutes delivered some of the earliest technical training in the mechanical arts, trades and sciences within their mandate to facilitate useful knowledge to ‘working men.’⁶⁷ Mechanics’ Institutes pursued an agenda of mental and moral improvement, dignifying labour and improving manufacturing. Problematically, indifferent “labourers preferred the beer-shops.”⁶⁸ In this light, as Bernard Smith suggests, Mechanics’ Schools of Art were “a forlorn hope.”⁶⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, many Institutes were reduced to providing entertainments such as card games or billiards to encourage subscribers. This suited some employers who objected to the education of the low-waged, unskilled factory fodder they relied on.

The Ballarat Mechanics’ Institute (BMI), which continues to operate into the present day, was a rare exception. At the end of the nineteenth century it still boasted a library of works by leading thinkers, a museum, and hosted art exhibitions.⁷⁰ It demonstrates an ongoing passion for art and knowledge among local people, which extended to Ballarat art schools.

The Mechanics’ Institute ethos coloured technical training after the organisations themselves had faded. It echoed in the benefits ascribed to art and craft training, including the “habits of cleanliness, self-reliance, perseverance” and a love of honest work.⁷¹ In art, as in literature, aesthetic appreciation could be considered an antidote to the demoralizing aspects of life.⁷² Rationalists might argue money was a vaccine.

Doug Boughton explains economic shifts often catalyse government intervention in education and training “to achieve socio-economic objectives.”⁷³ During the nineteenth

Education (Part 1), eds. Liora Bresler and Mary Ann Stankiewicz, (The Netherlands: Springer Science & Business Media, Online, 2007), 18.

⁶⁷ Candy and Laurent, *Pioneering Culture*.

⁶⁸ Campbell, “The Industrial Education of the People,” (1889), 5.

⁶⁹ Smith, *Place, Taste, and Tradition*, 100.

⁷⁰ Beggs-Sunter, *Rich Vein of Learning*, 6.

⁷¹ Victoria, Education Department [VED], ed., “Manual Training: woodwork and its correlation with other subjects,” *Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, 1907, 43.

⁷² VED, ed., “Aesthetic Appreciation,” *Education Gazette*, 1910, 25.

⁷³ Doug Boughton, “Six Myths of National Curriculum Reforms in Art Education,” *JADE Journal of Art & Design Education* 14, no. 2 (1995): 140.

century, humans were considered cogs within the mechanics of wider social structures, thus technical education enabled individuals to better contribute to “the industrial, commercial, agricultural, and domestic life of the country.”⁷⁴ With the intention to exploit industrial resources and improve local manufactures for economic benefit, technical art training was driven by government, industry and market competitiveness. Personal development was secondary.

In January 1869, an eight-member Technological Commission was formed to prepare Victoria for greater infrastructure and uptake of technical education, to improve the quality of local manufacturing. This formalised aspirations to establish several Schools of Mines, technical colleges, and Schools of Design, including at Ballarat.

Skills to address socio-economic and ‘moral’ poverty

In the late 1800s, Ballarat housed numerous social welfare organisations.⁷⁵ Among them, the euphemistically named ‘industrial schools’ operated under a thin guise of technical training. They were in fact oubliettes for “defectives, street vagabonds and orphan children indiscriminately mixed.” The teaching was ineffective and the results deplorable.⁷⁶ Ballarat’s own Industrial School for neglected children devolved into a pseudo-penal establishment for children who had committed no crime.⁷⁷ Other nations founded similar institutions, some with religious affiliations.⁷⁸

Sir Redmond Barry (1813–1880) identified technical education as a cure-all, able “to arouse the indolent, to abash the trifler, to restrain the irregular, [and] to encourage the diffident.” His view that education rendered people more trustworthy and respectable was perhaps coloured by his service as a Supreme Court judge.⁷⁹ At the 1870 opening of the Ballarat School of Mines (SMB), Barry evoked the concept of the noble working man who experienced hardship for want of an education. His empathy did not extend to local

⁷⁴ Charles Long, “Part III (1901-1922),” in *A History of State Education in Victoria*, (Melbourne: The Education Department of Victoria, 1922), 243.

⁷⁵ Powell, *Retrospective*, 1887, 11.

⁷⁶ Attributed to Dr C. H. Pearson, Royal Commissioner on Public Education, 1878, in Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 6.

⁷⁷ William Bramwell Withers, *The History of Ballarat: From the First Pastoral Settlement to the Present Time*, facsimile ed., (Melbourne: Queensberry Hill Press, 1980, originally published 1887), 308.

⁷⁸ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 82, 92; and Yagou, “First Steps,” 151.

⁷⁹ Redmond Barry, *Address on the Opening of the School of Mines at Ballarat Victoria*, (Melbourne: Mason, Firth, & McCutcheon, General Printers, October 26, 1870), 22.

Aboriginal people whom he compared in the same speech as “a scant and lazy indigenous [sic] population” against “Anglo-Saxon energy.”⁸⁰

With limited funds and impact, the Technological Commission was disbanded in 1890 and the Victorian Education Department took responsibility for many schools.⁸¹ The colony tipped into depression and factories exploited the poor, triggering debate spanning socialist ideals of broad class improvement to the expression of individual development and action; from economic advantage to more holistic, humanist benefits.⁸² As the State government assumed greater responsibility for training, debate surfaced as to what technical education should consist of, how it should be funded, and to whom it should be available. Some believed every man, at least, should be educated for community benefit. Others argued that beyond primary school, further education for all was neither practical nor justifiable, and should instead be limited to “individuals of superior intellect and fitness for business.”⁸³ Others objected to the democratising nature of educating everyone, claiming State schools and colleges “mix us all up together and tend to make us average or commonplace.”⁸⁴ Those who considered themselves special hoped to keep others in their place.⁸⁵

Technical education was scrutinised by the Victorian Royal Commission on Technical Education 1899-1901, chaired by Theodore Fink (1855-1942). More than 250 witnesses shared thoughts and aired grievances, although few recommendations were actioned in the immediate years following. An ongoing subdivision of industrial labour continued to generate relatively unskilled positions, but systematic technical education was hoped to redress skill losses. It would be a challenging task, given funding had been slashed by more than 70 per cent during the previous decade.⁸⁶

The Commission feared Melbourne’s uneducated, but otherwise healthy and intelligent youth, were likely to “fall into the lowest ranks of unskilled labour or into evil” without a

⁸⁰ Barry, *Address on the Opening of the School of Mines at Ballarat Victoria* (1870), 9.

⁸¹ Docherty, “The Technical Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 610.

⁸² For a summary of New Education approaches, and Victorian educational responses to it, refer Rosalie Triolo, “State Schooling and Civic and Citizenship Ideals in Victoria, 1872-1910,” (Master’s thesis, 1999), 57-80.

⁸³ The opinions of Sir Lyon Playfair and Lord Armstrong respectively as presented by Frederick Campbell, “The Industrial Education of the People,” (1889), 5.

⁸⁴ ‘People we know,’ *Punch* (Melbourne, Vic.), 8 June 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article175410574>.

⁸⁵ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 260.

⁸⁶ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 251; and P. D. Brereton, “Origins of the Victorian Apprenticeship Commission: A History of Apprenticeship Regulation in Victoria 1896-1927,” (Master’s thesis, 1970), 69.

trade; destined for homelessness or gaol.⁸⁷ Even where opportunities existed, the young were accused of apathy, instead focussing on entertainment and amusements.⁸⁸ Technical training sought to keep idle hands from mischief.

Moral improvement continued to be a rationale for art education into the twentieth century.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, where one culture's concept of morality dominates another, people can be systematically deculturised; their own traditions supplanted by colonising surrogates.⁹⁰

Innovation and industry

Following a long period of industrialisation, a well-conceived patent was a licence to print money, seemingly democratising power, privilege, and wealth. However, in factories, mechanisation led to a division of labour and technological advance came “to seem inseparable from domination by others.”⁹¹ Stripped of their creativity and autonomy, people wrangled machines rather than ideas. Yet, the separation of manufacture from art was not unassailable. A restructured amalgamation of art and industry spawned new technologies, processes and even industries, and encouraged the development of entirely new visual languages. In his 1887 treatise for a public fine art gallery in Ballarat, James Powell (1836-1921) spoke of the “inventive genius of art” and its role in the industrial progress of nations.⁹² In 1900, American John Duncan wrote “let the machine frankly declare itself, and let the craftsmen be educated to use it properly, and we shall have new arts.”⁹³ Such statements acknowledge the role of designer as innovator and reaffirm the economic benefits attributable to design.

As the twentieth century emerged, Australia could no longer afford to rest on the laurels of primary industries. The Federation of Australian states in 1901 removed some barriers and lent weight to the country's importance within the British Empire, stimulating economic growth.⁹⁴ However, most Australian manufacturers were small-scale businesses distributing locally, and not well positioned to encourage experimentation in art and design.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 94.

⁸⁸ “Star, 2 August 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924), 72

⁸⁹ Doug Boughton, “Visual Literacy: Implications for Cultural Understanding Through Art Education,” *JADE Journal of Art & Design Education* 5 (1986): 125.

⁹⁰ For an American example, R. Pratt, *11th Annual Report of the Indian Industrial School*, Cumberland County Historical Society (1890) in Slivka, “Art, Craft, and Assimilation,” 227.

⁹¹ Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (London: Penguin, 2009), 108.

⁹² Powell, *Retrospective*, 1887, 10.

⁹³ John Duncan, “Technical Art,” *The Course of Study* 1, no. 4 (1900): 261.

⁹⁴ VED, PP no. 2 (1908), 14.

⁹⁵ Fry, *Design History Australia*, 106.

In Ballarat, with its goldfields nearing exhaustion, the demand for geologists, metallurgists and mining engineers waned. In fact, the entire population was literally decimated, contracting about 10 per cent each decade between 1901 and 1920.⁹⁶ The local School of Mines (SMB) was compelled to diversify its educational offerings to attract students, solidify its financial position, and ultimately justify its continuation. It identified a promising future in the delivery of technical and applied arts training. The Bendigo school was similarly affected by the decline in mining.⁹⁷ Victoria's technical art schools attempted to align with local industries to ensure ongoing community support and employment opportunities.⁹⁸

The *Education Act 1910* instituted some significant changes, not least of which was the wide implementation of junior technical education aimed to “inculcate a sense of duty, justice and responsibility to strengthen the character of the students, and to equip them for future social service.”⁹⁹ Among their studies was manual training, deemed to embody intellectual, moral, and physical training “based on sound educational principles.”¹⁰⁰ Such statements indicate technical education was seen to serve industry, individuals and society collectively; and that prosperous countries became so by training a flexible and adaptable workforce.¹⁰¹

About this time, the Victorian Minister for Labour, Sir Alexander Peacock (1861-1933), was reportedly at loggerheads with the Director of Education, Frank Tate (1864-1939), about the aims of technical education, although Tate later denied any disagreement.¹⁰² Tate wanted all children to leave school with a knowledge or skill base. Employer advocates, channelling their concerns via Peacock's department, feared in-school training might not meet workplace needs, and theory would outweigh practical skill. Similar concerns were raised about apprenticeship training. Ideological tensions continued into the 1930s, particularly between

⁹⁶ Weston Bate, *Life After Gold: Twentieth-century Ballarat* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press at the Miegunyah Press, 1993), xv.

⁹⁷ Cusack, *Canvas to Campus*, 91.

⁹⁸ Refer, Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 40; “Source paper not listed”, SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 23; VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 45.

⁹⁹ School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat (SMB), *A Leaflet of Information Regarding the Boys' Junior Technical School Branch*. (Ballarat: Berry Anderson & Co., Ballarat, 1922), 3.

¹⁰⁰ VED, “Report of John Byatt, Organising Inspector of Manual Training,” PP no. 39 (1901), 85.

¹⁰¹ *Aussie*, March 1928; in David Carter, “‘Esprit De Nation’ and Popular Modernity,” *History Australia* 5, no. 3 (2008): 74.1.

¹⁰² Refer “Argus, 4 April 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); and letter to the SMB council, reported in the “Courier, 18 April 1916” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

supporting the educational (and therefore social and economic) advancement of all children, versus directing money only to children with a certain aptitude.¹⁰³

Fear is a motivator

During the nineteenth century, international exhibition and trade facilitated technological comparison and so design emerged as a vehicle for nationalist propaganda. Factors for technical superiority, real and perceived, included education.

The 1901 Fink Commission had investigated technical education in France, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, the Russian empire, Japan, USA, and New Zealand, as well as other Australian states. It paid close attention to Germany, whose technology appeared to be outstripping British and colonial counterparts, and its delivery of technical and industrial education, both metropolitan and regional.¹⁰⁴ Fink warned “the economic struggles of the future will be waged by the trained faculties of contending peoples.”¹⁰⁵ Nine years later, Ballarat’s *Courier* warned Australians would have themselves to blame “if we lag behind and have our places taken by the foreigner, who is so eager to displace us.”¹⁰⁶ Australians feared becoming servile.¹⁰⁷

In the midst of World War I, newspapers confirmed Germany was outspending other nations on technical education, noting class attendance in Munich was four times the rate of Ballarat.¹⁰⁸ At the July 1915 opening of the new BTAS art building, George Swinburne (1861-1928) boldly pronounced Germany not only “the greatest military power, but the greatest and best organised industrial and educational power in the world.”¹⁰⁹ Twelve months into a war that became a crucible for Australian national identity, this would have rattled some onlookers.

As the war progressed, utility was necessarily prioritised over aesthetics. Still, as trading partners become enemies, clever design was critical to leveraging increasingly scarce resources.

¹⁰³ “Star, 19 November 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); Clark, *The Future* (1927), 26; D. McCallum, “Educational Expansion, Curriculum Reform and Psychological Theory: Australia in the 1930s,” *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 22, no. 2 (1986): 225.

¹⁰⁴ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 49–57.

¹⁰⁵ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 147.

¹⁰⁶ “Courier, 23 April 1910” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰⁷ “Star, 22 April 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰⁸ “Star, 21 April 1915,” “Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰⁹ “Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

Ready hands: manual dexterity and material awareness

If Australia was to compete globally, it needed ready craftspeople who could make best use of local raw materials. Improving manual dexterity was a key goal of art training during the early twentieth century.¹¹⁰ It promoted accurate, rapid observation skills and considered thought, which translated into skilful execution of goods, and reduced waste from ill-formed work. Today, Richard Sennett explains, “making is thinking.”¹¹¹ Manual training was similarly considered in 1907; “the work creates thought.”¹¹²

Recent investigations into the creative brain seem to support this idea. For example, the acquisition of bimanual motor skills alters brain processing.¹¹³ Historically, some believed making offered a dual carriageway to the brain unachievable through drawing alone. Others disparaged efforts to train ambidexterity by claiming right-handedness as an advanced evolutionary trait and suggested “left-handedness or ambidexterity was common only among idiots.”¹¹⁴

At the turn of the twentieth century, drawing-based art programs attracted criticism for their impracticality, and material practice became increasingly important. The limitations of each material further challenged designers to innovate.¹¹⁵ Even at early primary school level, manual training became considered critical to intellectual development, promoting different ways of thinking which would improve mathematical ability, spatial awareness, and oral and written expression.¹¹⁶ It can be asserted that art and craft making, including the repetitious use of techniques and the haptic response of tools and materials, trains focus and develops muscle memory. These in turn contribute to the development of an intuitive approach to creative practice. Sennett describes the convergence of hands, brain, and eyes as the “intelligent hand.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ Melbourne Technical College [MTC], *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934* (Melbourne: Melbourne Technical College, Department of Printing), 20, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/135506>

¹¹¹ Sennett, *The Craftsman*, ix.

¹¹² VED, ed., “Manual Training,” *Education Gazette*, 1907, 43.

¹¹³ Joydeep Bhattacharya and Hellmuth Petsche, “Drawing on Mind’s Canvas: Differences in Cortical Integration Patterns Between Artists and Non-artists,” *Human brain mapping* 26, no. 1 (2005): 1, 11, doi:10.1002/hbm.20104.

¹¹⁴ James Crichton Browne, “Ambidexterity: Impossible and undesirable,” VED, ed., *Education Gazette*, October 20, 1908, 63.

¹¹⁵ See: Duncan, “Technical Art,” (1900), 261; and Archibald H. Christie, *Traditional Methods of Pattern Designing: An Introduction to the Study of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 68, <https://archive.org/details/cu31924020576082>.

¹¹⁶ VED, ed., “Manual Training,” *Education Gazette*, September 20, 1907, 43.

¹¹⁷ Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 162, 164, and 174.

A shared visual language

Technical art was the “language of many industries.”¹¹⁸ Thus, visual literacy was crucial to applied artists and designers. To become familiar with a multitude of visual dialects, and so maximise employability, technical art students undertook wide-ranging studies. Art practice was used to explore, understand, and enable critical evaluation. Students were taught to recognise, appreciate, and replicate diverse works, reinforcing pre-existing codes and modifying them through original work.

Communication is a dynamic process where meaning is made, not transmitted, and all elements are prone to cultural bias.¹¹⁹ Bourdieu contends codification of meaning reduces the risk of communicative misunderstanding or conflict.¹²⁰ Codification, the agreed consensus of meaning, can result informally from shared-experience or formally through a deliberate process of acceptance, ratification and rejection. In conjuring a national identity, successful codification is crucial.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND COMMERCIAL DIFFERENCE

Today, the notion of a distinct national identity appears implausible and misguided; many cultures exist within a single nation, and nationalist expression incorporates varied individual beliefs and practices. A century ago, however, ideas of national selfhood spread over Australia like a crisp red, white and blue sheet. Any diversity was largely ignored.

During the 1800s, global connections etched through centuries of imperialism, diplomacy, war, and trade, were scored deeper. Philosophies, ideas, styles, and perspectives were disseminated. Materials, methods, and manufactures were shared through world fairs and international trade. The opportunities for comparison were enlightening, challenging and in some cases, alarming. Economic competitiveness and national identity became entwined. Some Australians believed indigenous flora and fauna could serve as the starting point for a national style. It was a hard sell. During the 1880s asking designers to incorporate these motifs was apparently “as embarrassing as asking them to cultivate a broad Australian

¹¹⁸ Victoria, Board of Inquiry into the Working Men’s College, *Final Report on Government, Teaching Work and Finances of the Working Men’s College: Together with Minutes of Evidence, Etc.* (Victoria: Parliament, Parliamentary paper [PP] no. 14, 1911, Melbourne: J. Kemp, Government Printer), 16, 129.

¹¹⁹ Johanna Drucker and Emily McVarish, *Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2013), xxix.

¹²⁰ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 80.

accent.”¹²¹ Yet by the early twentieth century, we begin to see Australian motifs become more acceptable.

Around Federation in 1901, Australia’s sense of national identity toggled between kinship with, and independence from, Britain. With nationhood attained, Australians were urged to “realize that the most priceless of our heritages is national and individual character.”¹²² A post-Federation panic attack saw a return to British nationalism as conservatives, claiming to protect Australia and its art, resisted cultural input from non-British migrants.¹²³ The approach was not unique. Many countries attempted self-isolation from external political, social, and cultural influences. World War I initiated a period of ‘de-globalization’ which peaked with a 1930s tendency toward protectionism, then tapered off during the 1950s.¹²⁴ Interestingly, the ‘international’ Modernist movement ran in often contrasting parallel. But more on that later.

Bourdieu explains that in every field, “the dominant have an interest in continuity, identity and reproduction.”¹²⁵ Thus, it is unsurprising some groups reacted to globalisation by reasserting their own visual cultural identities; European culture was particularly characterised by nationalistic competition.¹²⁶ Catalan people attempted to distinguish themselves from Spain through visual style, Italy sought to re-claim artistic supremacy, and the French fiercely defended their sense of nation from dilution by outside forces. Scotland revived its Celtic art traditions and Scandinavians drew upon their ancient motifs, history, and literature to restate national character. Identity and assertion were front-of-mind for Polish designers, and in Germany the global threat to national culture was addressed by the *Deutscher Werkbund* coalition who eschewed individual taste for national types. Further afield, nationalistic debate in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) included the maintenance of local design elements within applied art, and Brazil’s *Modernismo* movement attempted “to create a revolutionary new form of art that was modern and distinctly Brazilian.”¹²⁷

¹²¹ Smith, *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia*, 231.

¹²² Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 260.

¹²³ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 35.

¹²⁴ A. G. Hopkins, *Globalization in World History*, (London: Pimlico, 2002), 29.

¹²⁵ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 319, 322.

¹²⁶ Keith P. F. Moxey, “Panofsky’s Melancholia,” in *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 69.

¹²⁷ Refer: Margolin, *World History of Design*, 324, 327, 329; A. B. Pesando and D. N. Prina, “To Educate Taste with the Hand and the Mind. Design Reform in Post-Unification Italy (1884-1908),” *Journal of Design History* 25, no. 1 (2012): 37, doi:10.1093/jdh/epr051; Stephen Eskilson, *Graphic Design: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 75; and Guy Julier, *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of Design Since 1900* (London; New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson, 2005),

Following their country's revolution of 1917, Russian Constructivists demonstrated social and political motivations in "putting art to the service of constructing a new society."¹²⁸ As the second world war approached, "German and Japanese art educators used art in schools to cultivate nationalism, ideals of patriotism and martial character."¹²⁹ Despite this period of de-globalisation, formal and informal contact between international peoples continued, and exposure to the diaspora of material culture allowed people of many nations to adopt and adapt multiple influences. Carter suggests that by this stage Australian national identity was "a *generational* experience" (original emphasis), as individuals shared national aspirations to be robust, healthy, and free.¹³⁰

Made in Australia

Established in a Melbourne hotel in 1871, the Australian Natives' Association (ANA) actively and persuasively promoted their brand of nationalism for many decades. A mutual-benefit society, it comprised Australian-born children of settlers who identified themselves as 'native' and therefore less concerned with British parentage. Members promoted the Federation of Australian states and advocated for education, health and welfare, aesthetics and the environment.¹³¹ Embodied in its 'Advance Australia Fair' motto and 'Made in Australia' campaigns, the ANA actively promoted Australian-made products and worked to counter the prejudice Australians felt toward products manufactured on their own soil. The ANA fervently promoted technical education, and its influence, according to Murray-Smith, "could hardly be over-estimated."¹³²

ANA exhibitions of diverse art and craft promoted designs based on Australian fauna or flora. Awards and prizes ensured young people were engaged in exploring Australian concepts and exploiting local materials. The Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria also evangelised local materials and motifs.¹³³ Victorian Art Inspectors, too, encouraged original

72; Jones, "British Interventions in the Traditional Crafts of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)," 399; and TATE, "Glossary of art terms," TATE, accessed July 12, 2015, <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary>

¹²⁸ Julier, *Dictionary of Design Since 1900*, 58.

¹²⁹ Stankiewicz, "Projection and Coordinates," 19.

¹³⁰ Carter, "Esprit De Nation," 74.4.

¹³¹ For a comprehensive history of the ANA, refer to John E. Menadue, *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association 1871-1971* (Melbourne: Horticultural Press, 1971).

¹³² Murray-Smith, "A History of Technical Education in Australia," 703.

¹³³ Exhibition of Australian Manufactures and Products and Australian Natives' Association (ANA), *Sixth Exhibition of Australian Manufactures and Products, promoted by the Metropolitan Committee of the Australian Natives' Association, Exhibition Building, Melbourne, January 31st to February 26th, 1910* (Melbourne: ANA Metropolitan Committee, 1910), 64, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-62457522>; ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, 1914*, 82.

use of Australian forms, colour and feeling.¹³⁴ Such approaches perhaps contributed to a 1930s return of Australian sentiment to the “extreme of national assertiveness.”¹³⁵

The Ballarat branch was the ANA’s administrative centre during the 1880s and boasted a strong membership into the 1970s.¹³⁶ Its influence possibly encouraged 1920s Ballaratians to determine “they had a separate destiny” to Britain.¹³⁷ Certainly, the output of the Ballarat Technical Art School demonstrates much use of Australian flora, fauna and landscape subjects.

Cultural mis/appropriation

To assert national difference, some Australian artists attempted to mine the perspectives of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—a collective term for hundreds of geo-cultural communities, family and language groups.¹³⁸ By the 1920s, examples and imitations had entered mainstream spaces, particularly in pottery and textile designs, repositioning Aboriginal work as art rather than anthropology.¹³⁹ The distinct forms and vitality of First Nations art resonated with adherents of the Australian modern movement, some of whom appropriated them.¹⁴⁰ Problematically, the aesthetic was removed from its original context, adopted without awareness of its symbology and applied to commercial conditions. It was an illegitimate solution for non-Indigenous artists seeking a national style. Sometimes images of First Peoples themselves were reduced to motif, sometimes grossly caricaturised. These images can be confrontational, notably in situations such as the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, where images of male and female faces are contextualised as “Australian Native Fauna.”¹⁴¹ Debate on how to address heritage monuments in the face of varied and changing cultural values has seared several nations recently.

¹³⁴ Minutes of Council, Working Men’s College, 26 October 1931, in Murray-Smith and Dare, *The Tech* 227.

¹³⁵ A. A. Phillips, “The Family Relationship,” in A.A. *Phillips on the Cultural Cringe* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2006), 54.

¹³⁶ Menadue, *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives’ Association*, 304, 36.

¹³⁷ Bate, *Life After Gold*, 76.

¹³⁸ Narragunnawali, “Terminology Guide”, accessed January 3, 2018, <https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/terminology-guide>

¹³⁹ Bogle, *Design in Australia*, 84; Glenn R. Cook, “Aboriginal Motifs in the Decorative Arts, ‘an Art for Australia from Australians’,” in *Motif & Meaning: Aboriginal Influences in Australian Art, 1930-1970*, Claire Baddeley and Ballarat Fine Art Gallery eds. (Ballarat, Vic.: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, 1999), 9.

¹⁴⁰ For some examples, see: Claire Baddeley and Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, eds., *Motif & Meaning*.

¹⁴¹ Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) “Memorials,” accessed November 7, 2017, <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/indigenous-australians-war/memorials>. For an image see: Australian War Memorial, “Male Aboriginal,” accessed 9 October 2020, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C332454>

Australia was not the only colonised nation to appropriate the imagery of First Peoples. In New Zealand, Maori imagery, language, and caricatures were used to brand products. In Canada, handcrafts in Quebec drew on indigenous craft traditions. Caucasian South African artists and designers appropriated the aesthetics, including rock art, of the region's indigenous peoples. During the early 1900s the USA experienced an "Indian craze" where Native American designs and products were promoted and displayed in department stores, sometimes bizarrely situated within the "Oriental Department."¹⁴² Some artists believed they were tapping into 'pure' art, unencumbered by industrialisation or quashed by imperialistic art education. These infractions were perhaps attempting to mirror other countries that were trawling through their own deep histories and mythologies to reinforce national identity.¹⁴³ However, the capture of Indigenous aesthetics by their nations' invaders must have felt a profound blow to First Peoples following decades of oppression, displacement and genocide.

Antipodean pride and shame

In 1950, A. A. Phillips coined the term 'cultural cringe', but was immediately uneasy it might be used as a "kind of missile [...] to throw at the Australian mob."¹⁴⁴ It is, however, useful shorthand. Phillips' cringe was a self-imposed, self-conscious anxiety that Australian productions might somehow be culturally inferior to those of its 'parent nation', Britain, leaving Australian creatives struggling to articulate themselves. Phillips argued this deferment to English preferences dulled creativity and sacrificed immediacy and honesty.¹⁴⁵

The widespread, introspective nationalism of the early twentieth century stands in stark contrast to the concurrent modernist rejection of historical, provincial, and vernacular styles. Australian designers discovered unhappy tensions in trying to reconcile a provincial national identity and the desire to be viewed as modern, global citizens. A similar problem confronted the *Deutscher Werkbund*.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Refer Margolin, *World History of Design*, 424 and 558; Pretorius, "Graphic Design in South Africa," 7; Slivka, "Art, Craft, and Assimilation," 238.

¹⁴³ For examples, see Robert Stewart Bell, "Nordic Wave: A Study of the Reception and Influence of Scandinavian Design in Australia," (PhD thesis, 2007), 112; Eskilson, *Graphic Design*, 74; Yagou, "First Steps," 157 and Artemis Yagou, "Beyond National Design Histories: Some Reflections," accessed March 27, 2015.
https://www.academia.edu/11319437/_Beyond_national_design_histories_Some_reflections_.

¹⁴⁴ A. A. Phillips, "The Cultural Cringe," in *A.A. Phillips on the Cultural Cringe* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2006), 7.

¹⁴⁵ Phillips, "The Cultural Cringe," in *Cultural Cringe*, 8, 3.

¹⁴⁶ Julier, *Dictionary of Design Since 1900*, 72.

Early Australian designers should perhaps be forgiven their self-imposed aura of inferiority. An examination of the international design canon demonstrates Australia receives sparse attention, an exclusion that presents Australia as peripheral and unnoteworthy. The country's physical isolation was also keenly felt. To seek validation, many artists were drawn to the cultural metropolises of the world.

In 1939, “rampant ‘modernist’” Roland Wakelin suggested Australians reject European influences in favour of a confident local vision, more expressive of the nation.¹⁴⁷ Any attempts were interrupted by the World War II during which ‘British Australia’ persisted, eventually petering out during the 1950s.¹⁴⁸ Even so, an Australian style remained elusive. Tony Fry's hackle-raising assertion that “there is no such thing as Australian design” set a low bar in 1988.¹⁴⁹ Against the self-congratulatory, flag-waving backdrop of the country's European bicentennial, Fry may well have felt it worth knocking Aussie designers down a peg.

Discussion of Australian design is interwoven with perceptions of national identity, its location within transnational and temporal contexts, and whether it can ever be independent of its cultural antecedents. Simon Jackson argues that Australian culture is merely the offspring of immigrant parent cultures. As such he suggests Australian design is best described as the adaptation of international design ideas “to suit local needs.”¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Phillips argued that given Australia's English heritage, any difference in style would “appear only in the choice of an image here and there, the occasional turn of an inflection or flavouring of phrase.”¹⁵¹ If this is the case, it is via these small variations within the wider artistic conventions of the time that we must seek out ‘Australianness.’ Jackie Dickenson suggests the challenge for historians is to reveal how the blend of Australian, British, and global forces meshed to “produce a uniquely hybrid industry in Australia.”¹⁵²

In the end, the swing of the nationalist pendulum best describes fluctuations in a narrative to ease the nation's colonial hangover and assert an independent Australian identity.

¹⁴⁷ Roland Wakelin, “The Modern Movement Flags,” *Art in Australia*, 15 November 1939. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-351742466>

¹⁴⁸ Frank Bongiorno, “Comment: Australia, Nationalism and Transnationalism,” *History Australia* 10, no. 3 (2013): 77–84.

¹⁴⁹ Fry, *Design History Australia*, 14.

¹⁵⁰ Simon Jackson, “The ‘Stump-Jumpers:’ National Identity and the Mythology of Australian Industrial Design in the Period 1930-1975,” *Design Issues* 18, no. 4 (2002): 23.

¹⁵¹ Phillips, “The Family Relationship,” in *Cultural Cringe*, 47.

¹⁵² Jackie Dickenson, “Global Advertising Histories: An Australian Perspective,” *HIC3 History Compass* 12, no. 4 (2014): 323.

EQUIPPED FOR THE ALTERED CONDITIONS OF LIFE

Following the World War I armistice, technical training was identified as an opportunity for some return to order. “We must begin to revolutionise the lives of the multitude” announced one BTAS student in 1917.¹⁵³ Manufacturing began to expand, then struggled to meet even domestic demand.¹⁵⁴ Growth in trade unionism encouraged the delineation of trades and its subsequent impact on trade training and apprenticeships.¹⁵⁵ The theatre of war had demonstrated some widespread, negative impacts of mechanisation.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps art could soften its sharper edges and heal some trauma.

Forty per cent efficiency: Vocational training for repatriated soldiers.

Some returned servicemen were unable to pick up the tools of their previous trade. Numerous peacetime industries had changed, and new ones developed, enlistment had interrupted the education of some while injury necessitated retraining of others. To assist affected men, the Repatriation Department established training opportunities, granting additional space and equipment to Victorian trade schools. However, it was unprepared for the severe physical and emotional limitations of many men.¹⁵⁷ Art classes provided accessible therapy, rehabilitation, and the opportunity to apply new skills to industry. From March 1916, the Ballarat School of Mines (SMB) offered free training to returned soldiers and established a job-access bureau to assist their employment.¹⁵⁸

Once men were assessed to be 40 per cent efficient, they were deemed fit for employment, however many were unable to transition into the work they had trained for. Of the 11,706 approved for Victorian repatriation scheme training, less than a quarter achieved full efficiency.¹⁵⁹ Rigid industrial laws, apprenticeship requirements and union conditions also restricted their access to employment. Some men trained in specialist trades at SMB were instead transferred to the railways as “light porters and goodsheds hands.”¹⁶⁰ Significant disability rendered others unable to work, and the community was called upon to make allowance for them.¹⁶¹ In 1922, after more than 400 ex-servicemen had passed through the

¹⁵³ *SMB Magazine* (1917), 17.

¹⁵⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), “Development of Manufacturing Industries in Australia,” First published in *Year Book Australia 1988*. Last modified 22 November 2012, accessed 6 July 2018.

¹⁵⁵ Cusack, *Canvas to Campus*, 100.

¹⁵⁶ Jeff Wallace, *Beginning Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 78.

¹⁵⁷ VED, PP no. 45 (1925), 26.

¹⁵⁸ “Courier, 20 March 1916” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁵⁹ VED, PP no. 45 (1925), 27.

¹⁶⁰ “Star, 25 February 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁶¹ “Star, 29 April 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924), 58.

SMB gates, the classes closed down and excess equipment tendered for sale.¹⁶² Most technical institutions benefited from the temporary injection of government funds.¹⁶³

The repatriation trade training model was short and intensive, and delivered two positive social lessons; that older students could learn new skills, and that many people with disabilities were able to work productively.¹⁶⁴ However, Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark, warned the Education Department similar training would never serve as a replacement for technical education; just in case they tried to crib course lengths or expenditure.¹⁶⁵

Women’s workforce participation

The Fink Commission recommended art schools should only be funded where they served industry.¹⁶⁶ Yet in 1915, it was claimed many of the women attending had no view to employment; the benefit of their study considered little more than cultivation of an artistic sense that might one day influence their children’s taste.¹⁶⁷ Such ‘lady amateurs’ were much maligned for their presence in schools, where it was felt their influence negatively impacted upon the curriculum, instruction and quality of work. Art Inspector Carew-Smyth objected to their filling seats that could be utilised by women who wished to qualify for work.¹⁶⁸ In 1915, except for the Melbourne College of Domestic Economy, the only State-aided technical instruction for women was delivered by technical art schools.¹⁶⁹ As such, art education was crucial to female workforce participation.

With the onset of war, it became evident women were going “to fill a bigger place in the general scheme of things.”¹⁷⁰ The anticipated dearth of skilled men meant junior technical training for girls needed to extend beyond domestic economy classes. Carew-Smyth believed girls should focus primarily on art and its application to industry.¹⁷¹

¹⁶² SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 11.

¹⁶³ Clark, Donald. *Reminiscences of Technical Education in Victoria*. Melbourne: The Working Men's College Printing Dept., 1923, 15. See also Brereton, “Origins of the Victorian Apprenticeship Commission,” 185; and Harriet Edquist and Elizabeth Grierson, “Melbourne Technical College: working with industry 1920-1960,” in *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind: A Guide to the Architecture and Art of RMIT University* (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2012), 37.

¹⁶⁴ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 34.

¹⁶⁵ VED, PP no. 1 (1919), 19.

¹⁶⁶ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 188.

¹⁶⁷ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 91.

¹⁶⁸ VED, “General Report in Art in Technical Schools by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 5 (1910), 69.

¹⁶⁹ VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 49 (1915), 79.

¹⁷⁰ “Courier, 15 October 1915” and “Echo, 3 November 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁷¹ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 94.

From February 1916, SMB and BTAS offered a suite of studies collectively described as the Girls' Preparatory Technical Classes or Girls' Preparatory School (GPS).¹⁷² Structured similarly to the boys' Junior Technical School, it was only the second in Victoria for girls. It offered preparatory classes, preliminary technical training, and pathways to further study. Overseen by BTAS principal, Herbert Smith, art classes unsurprisingly featured.

Overlooking the vocational aspects of technical training, young women were urged to consider an art school education as good preparation for a thrifty domestic life.¹⁷³ The Sydney Art School sketch club debated whether "a girl's place should be in the studio or the kitchen." The consensus was that "even though few of the fair sex might rise to fame", the ultimate task of women artists was to "elevate the standard of culture in future generations."¹⁷⁴ That old chestnut. In practice, women continued to carve out places in industrial art and design, BTAS graduates among them. Art practices provided women with socially acceptable opportunities to eschew traditional roles and expectations. Creative work enabled economic independence, status, and increased freedom. BTAS alumnus, Harold Herbert, suggested fashion illustration was particularly suited to girls. Architecture, too, but women would likely prefer designing homes and gardens.¹⁷⁵ Another author recommended fashion illustration, ticket writing, designing for catalogues, retouching and finishing photographs, and designing signage.¹⁷⁶

The fields available to female artists and artisans expanded during the early twentieth century, even if, as Burke argues, they have been "largely uncherished and unacknowledged."¹⁷⁷ However, under the grim weight of the Great Depression, working men were stripped of their power to negotiate, and ultimately relieved of their jobs. Society began to rail against women who worked while so many men were unemployed. Freshly minted 'career girls' were corralled back into the domestic space. Marriage also marked the end of innumerable female careers.

¹⁷² School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat (SMB), *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (November 1915) (Ballarat: Federation University Historical Collection, Item 1110.4, c7-4-box26); "Courier, 15 October 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); "Courier, 9 February 1934," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); "Courier, 25 May 1938," SMB Cuttings (1936–48).

¹⁷³ "Courier, 16 December 1925" and "Courier, 16 December 1926," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁷⁴ Sydney Art School, *The Art Student, Sydney Art School Magazine*, ed. Clif Pier, (Sydney: 1932), 28.

¹⁷⁵ Harold Herbert, "Art," *The Australasian*, 13 April 1935, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article141434841>

¹⁷⁶ "Your Daughter's Career: No. 2: Occupational Art," *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8.

¹⁷⁷ Janine Burke, *Australian Women Artists, 1840-1940* (Collingwood, Vic.: Greenhouse Publications, 1980), 9.

Personal incentives

Organisations (cultural, educational, and governmental) were the dominant motivators of art education, but individual motivations ultimately trump those of government and industry. After all, technical art schools only trained those who chose to attend.

Designers have personal motivations for wanting to design.¹⁷⁸ Cultural theory tells us individuals act to profit beyond the financial sense. Tertiary education enabled a person to accumulate cultural capital and distinguish themselves from others; the degree of training, the discipline, the institution in which they studied, all had currency. Some people studied art for accomplishment or personal gratification, although in the early 1900s these dilettantes were met with disdain within the technical training sphere. Others, not obliged to work, undertook art studies purely for the joy of exploration, experimentation, and creation.

Individual benefit placed second to the expectation that students would stimulate industry and improve market performance. However, by the 1920s, art education had become more student centric. As early as the 1890s, people were recognising that a universal form of instruction would not suit children of different capabilities, given “there are as many individualities as there are children.”¹⁷⁹ Manual art was valued because it engaged student imagination and innovation, and enabled individuality and creative self-expression.¹⁸⁰ By the end of the 1930s, Victorian junior technical schools were attempting to break from the rigid interpretation of the prescribed syllabus, and the government encouraged “free expression and imaginative work by individual pupils.”¹⁸¹

Individual expression, originality and style became important for designers who wished to distinguish their work from that of other people.¹⁸² Interestingly, Modern design could be accused of obscuring the individual in favour of stylistic conventions.

¹⁷⁸ Lawson, *How Designers Think*, 159.

¹⁷⁹ Benjamin B. Hoffman, *The Sloyd System of Wood Working: With a Brief Description of the Eva Rodhe Model Series and An Historical Sketch of the Growth of the Manual Training Idea* (New York: American Book Company, 1892), 48.

¹⁸⁰ Arthur F. Payne, *Art Metalwork with Inexpensive Equipment*, 2 ed. (Peoria, Illinois: The Manual Arts Press, 1914), 20.

¹⁸¹ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 34.

¹⁸² Sydney Art School, *The Art Student*, *Sydney Art School Magazine*, ed. Walter Cunningham, (Sydney, 1931), 16.

THE CONTESTED TURF OF MODERNISM

Modernism (from a post-modern perspective) embodies contradictions and exceptions within the generalised acceptance of what it essentially *is*. The terms modern, modernist and modernism are debatable according to one's point of view.¹⁸³ Modernism is something of a chameleon. One author suggests modernism peaked between 1905 and 1925.¹⁸⁴ Others argue modernist art was generated between 1909 and 1939. Yet modernism's genesis and decay span a longer period. Bernard Smith coined the term *Formalesque* to describe a non-chronologically fixed, tendency in Australian visual arts between 1890 and 1970.¹⁸⁵ Not wishing to overstate modernism's influence in the Australian space, whatever its chronological boundaries, it nevertheless colours analysis of the period of this research.

Broadly, modernism spanned an era of intense social and scientific change and, in some countries, literal revolutions. These changes shifted the way some (initially European) artists, authors and musicians thought, and altered the way they expressed themselves through their work. Some were financially secure or supported, allowing them to reject prevailing norms of artistic taste, counter conventions, and experiment. They were free to be the avant-garde, creating a distinction from popular consumer production. Where high art was restricted to a wealthy few, applied art served the masses and necessarily catered to a wider concept of taste.

Australian modernism

Modernism was not a tsunami that breached Australian shores in one vast wave, nor did it ripple through cultural and artistic streams of consciousness at the same time or pace. Robert Craig notes that the transition to modernism was neither linear nor progressive, and was in fact, "quite bumpy."¹⁸⁶ Via a winding trajectory and hotchpotch of influences, Australian modernism was a conglomerate creature that slowly acclimatised to local conditions. To the authors of *Modernism & Australia*, cross-pollination between diverse disciplines is crucial to how modernism was 'received' in Australia.¹⁸⁷ Arguing against Australia as a passive receptor of modernism, Butler and Donaldson claim the nation's exports have been

¹⁸³ Calvera, "Local, Regional, National, Global and Feedback," 376.

¹⁸⁴ Robert Martin Adams, "What Was Modernism?" *The Hudson Review* 31, no. 1 (1978): 33, doi:10.2307/3850132.

¹⁸⁵ Smith, *The Formalesque*, 7, 23.

¹⁸⁶ Robert L. Craig, "Through Printers' Eyes: From the Arts and Crafts Movement to Modernism," *Visual Communication Quarterly* 15, no. 1-2 (2008): 32, doi:10.1080/15551390801914561.

¹⁸⁷ Ann Stephen, Andrew McNamara and Philip Goad, eds., *Modernism & Australia: Documents on Art, Design and Architecture 1917–1967*, (Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press, 2006), 7.

obstructed from view, suggesting a limit to the logic of non-reciprocal provincialism, particularly between Australia and the United States.¹⁸⁸

Haphazard development aside, Janine Burke identifies two main influxes of modernism to Australia between 1913 and 1930, wrought primarily by women.¹⁸⁹ The Victorian Artists' Society reported in 1933, there was a "marked development in the influence of women's art" as they were tending to "take up modernistic art", while still paying attention to standards of drawing.¹⁹⁰ Yet, there was some resistance to international influences at a time when many nations were protecting their own culture and customs. In addition, there was more than a whiff of socialism about modernism, which was viewed with suspicion by a relatively conservative nation.



Workman: "What-oh! Come and look at this one, Bill."
Gallery Attendant: "Pardon me, NOT Watteau – Picasso!"

Figure 1.1
Black and white illustration, possibly by Gilda Gude, reproduced from *SMB Magazine*, 1937, p5.
(FedHC. Public domain.)

Art Nouveau arguably marked the beginning of an international design consciousness.¹⁹¹ Countries, including Australia, adopted and localised its application through vernacular cultural elements and motifs. It became a broad commercial style, incorporated into decorative and functional products, and evident in work from BTAS. Even where unconventional art had flourished, a 'return to order' following World War I subdued avant-garde experimentation.¹⁹² Weary of wartime destabilisation and chaos, consumers sought consolation and comfort in more familiar, non-confrontational forms and styles. This may explain why Art Nouveau motifs had a comparatively long life in Victorian technical art education.

BTAS students were cognisant of Europe's radical art movements, specifically mentioning Cubist, Futurist, Vorticist "and every other 'ist'" in a 1916 school magazine.¹⁹³ However, Australian painting was just emerging from its Impressionist

¹⁸⁸ Rex Butler and A.D.S. Donaldson, "Against Provincialism: Australian-American Connections 1900–2000," *Journal of Australian Studies* 36, no. 3 (2012).

¹⁸⁹ Burke, *Australian Women Artists*, 37.

¹⁹⁰ "Don't Buy a Name" *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 11 October 1933, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205116576>.

¹⁹¹ Margolin, *World History of Design*, 289; and Steven Heller and Seymour Chwast, *Illustration: A Visual History*, (New York: Abrams, 2008), 30.

¹⁹² TATE, "Glossary of art terms," TATE, accessed July 12, 2015, <http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary>

¹⁹³ *SMB Magazine* (1916), 25.

period, so a young applied artist attempting to introduce avant-garde techniques was likely to find themselves ahead of public taste. One student noted that, while the type of art imposed by “classical scholars” largely appeals to the general population, “a special and privileged education” was required for a full appreciation of diverse art.¹⁹⁴ The *Weekly Times* forecast, however, that twenty years hence consumer taste would improve, having “a generation or two of culture and leisure behind it.”¹⁹⁵ Indeed, Bernard Smith pins the 1939 *Melbourne Herald* exhibition of 60 years of modern painting as “the most important exhibition ever held in Australia.”¹⁹⁶ It could be argued, however, that accolade is more apt for department store exhibitions of the 1920s and 30s which featured modern applied art and interior design. Such exhibitions, in Melbourne and Sydney at least, are referenced by many design academics and authors.¹⁹⁷

Shorthand for modernity

As industries mechanised, craft skills and intelligence risked becoming irrelevant.¹⁹⁸ Arts and Crafts proponents reacted by emphasising making, materials and product suitability, but their output was largely unaffordable, and thus a method of elite production. In a 1917 edition of *Art in Australia*, R. S. Dods called out the exclusivity of luxury, hand-made products and urged art educators to integrate Art and Craft ideals with industrial capacities.¹⁹⁹ Gradually, modern designers reconciled the manual and the machine, the creative and the productive, emphasising form, process and material.

With a modern sensibility, all objects could be viewed as aesthetic objects, thus all objects were potential works of art. New machines informed the geometric, streamlined, and futuristic Art Deco style that became synonymous with order, economy, and speed. As with Art Nouveau, recognisable graphic elements (simplification, abstraction, geometric forms, and flat colour) were extracted from the ideologies of avant-garde movements to produce more acceptable styles. Adoption of this industrial aesthetic has been termed *Commercial*

¹⁹⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1917), 17.

¹⁹⁵ “Applied Art: Its Money Value,” *Weekly Times* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 July 1910, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article221771691>.

¹⁹⁶ Smith, *Place, Taste, and Tradition*, 193.

¹⁹⁷ For example: Bogle, *Design in Australia*, 77; Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 43; Lianne Gibson, *The Uses of Art* (Univ. of Queensland Press, 2001), 47; Margolin, *World History of Design*, 583; Johnathon M. Woodham, “Review: Design in Australia 1880–1970,” *Journal of Design History* 12, no. 2 (1999): 174.

¹⁹⁸ “Editorial: Cycles of Change in Art and Design Education,” *JADE Journal of Art & Design Education* 6, no. 3 (1987): 246.

¹⁹⁹ R.S. Dods, “Industrial Art in Australia,” *Art in Australia*, no. 3 (1917), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-347075105>, 54.

Modernism.²⁰⁰ Heller and Chwast suggest designers employed it as a “method of telegraphing modernity.”²⁰¹ This certainly seems apt for the Australian experience.

Historically, Australians have been chastised for failing to quickly accept modern art, a criticism loaded with moral judgement. A similar charge has been laid at the United States.²⁰² Yet proximity to Europe did not guarantee adoption of modernist styles by commercial artists. Modernism was not recognised at London’s Royal College of Art (RCA) until after World War I, and avant-garde movements were not discussed until the late 1920s.²⁰³

As late as 1932, George Bell lamented; “Modern Art, so called, is now more than fifty years old, and its acceptance here [in Australia] is just about due.”²⁰⁴ However, David Carter argues Australia was “not a belated recipient of the modern but [...] a site of and for modernisation in its own right.”²⁰⁵ Despite a disconnect from modernism’s founding ideologies, Australia was a nation looking forward.

In Australia, any delayed acceptance of modernism might be attributed more to social lethargy than intellectual deficiency.²⁰⁶ According to Bourdieu, an understanding of objects of cultural production, particularly restricted production, is only accessible to those with knowledge of their codification.²⁰⁷ Thus, the acceptance or rejection of certain styles and forms can be aligned to the understanding or ignorance of certain visual codes.²⁰⁸ In the annals of design history, Australians unaware of the doxa of the field of modernist styles have been punished for their perceived provincialism and naivety. Conversely, fear of being backward or uncultured motivated some Australian artists to adopt a modern perspective.

Gradually, through exposure to more comprehensive and diverse art styles, the public increased its cultural competence through an expanded visual vocabulary. However, Christine Boyanoski explains the nation’s cultural gatekeepers were out of sync with the increasingly modern taste of Australian audiences, preferring instead to reinforce traditional

²⁰⁰ Eskilson, *Graphic Design*, 426, 423.

²⁰¹ Heller and Chwast, *Illustration*, 9;
Eskilson, *Graphic Design*, 170.

²⁰² Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 33.

²⁰³ Hilary Cunliffe-Charlesworth, “The Royal College of Art: Its Influence on Education, Art and Design 1900-1950,” (PhD thesis, Sheffield: August 1991), 50.

²⁰⁴ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., “George Bell (1878–1966), Untitled, *Manuscripts: The Book Nook Miscellany*, 1932,” in *Modernism & Australia*, 104.

²⁰⁵ Carter, “Esprit De Nation,” 74.1.

²⁰⁶ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., “P.R. Stephenson (1901–1965), ‘No Dearth of Genius’, 1936,” in *Modernism & Australia*, 56.

²⁰⁷ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 81.

²⁰⁸ Boughton, “Visual Literacy”, 126, 131.

British styles and approaches.²⁰⁹ Yet the worm was turning, as consumers became arbiters of taste.

Changing tastes

Slowly, the field of restricted (elite) production was displaced by diverse commercial (popular) taste. The shift in power meant designers served not only clients, but also the many-headed *vox populi*, a hydra of taste. The semiotics of taste evolved to incorporate individual preferences.

The momentum of individualism in art and architecture alarmed some. In a 1913 Australian *Building* article, Lewis Day feared it would see tried and tested design traditions forsaken. Worse, he believed students were imitating rather than inventing, commenting the “sameness about the work most proud of its originality is something astonishing.”²¹⁰ It appears early modernists rebelling in unison led to unintended homogeneity. Day urged students to learn traditional practices before attempting to discard or subvert them. Dods argued that, while “fully recognising the value of tradition, [industrial art] should speak for its own day and its own people.”²¹¹

Meanwhile, as manufacturers hoped to cash in on new markets created by an expanding middle class, designers needed to cater to a critical mass of consumers who were now equipped with a “sound instinct” for quality design.²¹² Storekeepers slow to accept modernism were accused of selling dodgy, over-ornamented “freak things.”²¹³ In line with modern ideologies to break from the past, urban Australians were turning their backs on the nation’s settler-pioneer mythologies. They looked to fashionable magazines and large-scale department stores for contemporary design sensibility. Modernism had become consumable, and Australia was ready to buy in.

From 1926, Victorian technical art examinations demonstrate increased specification of ‘modern’, which was often disambiguated from modernity as ‘modern style’. A broadening

²⁰⁹ Boyanoski, “Decolonising Visual Culture,” 120.

²¹⁰ Lewis F. Day and Federated Builders’ Association of Australia (FBAA) and Master Builders’ Federation of Australia (MBFA), “Style in Art and Architecture,” *Building* 6, no. 70 (12 June 1913), 11, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-264754837>.

²¹¹ Dods, “Industrial Art in Australia,” (1917), 55.

²¹² Geoffrey Holme, ed., *The Studio’ Year-Book of Applied Art, 1921*, (London: The Studio, 1921), 2.

²¹³ Holme, ed., *The Studio’ Year-Book of Applied Art, 1921*, (1921), 2.

curricula and recession of strict conventions provided greater scope for modernist themes and styles, particularly within design subjects.

Yet, even as tastes evolved, some maintained an elitist attitude to popular preferences.²¹⁴ In a surprising foreshadowing of European fascist rhetoric on modern art, one Ballarat student suggested in 1929 that modern art, if not beautiful, could be considered “degenerate.”²¹⁵ Howard Ashton disparaged modernism as the “Cult of Cactuses.”²¹⁶ In contrast, Sydney Ure Smith pragmatically noted it was “all very well to sneer at fashions in art... [but] the artist who decides to ignore the characteristics of his own day is likely to starve.”²¹⁷ From a Darwinian perspective, designers needed to adapt or die.

Art education continued to be charged with the development and refinement of taste throughout the 1930s. In Victoria, it was framed by cultural taste-keepers such as the Art Inspectors. In 1939, discussing supplementary museum and gallery visits, Art Inspector Dean insisted “under suitable guidance refinement of taste is fostered and appreciation of beautiful things is cultivated.”²¹⁸ His language would not have been out of place a century earlier.

Everett Rogers explains “adopting an innovation is not necessarily a passive role.”²¹⁹ If we acknowledge this position, we can understand that over the years, in addition to originating ideas, Australians also *chose* which elements of global culture they would accept, reject, mediate or transform. In general, BTAS students identified as modern citizens and aimed to create ‘modern’ work, whether it would today be termed modernist, or not.

A note on the Bauhaus and its possible (ir)relevance

Guy Julier suggests historians may have “inadvertently inflated the Bauhaus effect.”²²⁰ It is unlikely *Staatliches* Bauhaus (1919-1933) directly influenced BTAS while active, although there are some parallels with the Weimar Bauhaus. Both emerged from the amalgamation of existing schools and encouraged the exploration of form and materials through a cross-disciplinary approach. BTAS records make no mention of the word ‘Bauhaus’.

²¹⁴ Peter Gay, *Modernism* (London: William Heinemann, 2007), 24.

²¹⁵ “Arts and Crafts Gossip: Mon Art (By D.J.),” in *SMB Magazine* (1929), 16.

²¹⁶ Howard Ashton, “George Lambert. Was he ‘Modern’?” in *The Art Student* (1930), 9.

²¹⁷ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., “Sydney Ure Smith (1887–1949), ‘Editorial Notes’, *Art in Australia*, 1932,” in *Modernism & Australia*, 106.

²¹⁸ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35.

²¹⁹ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*. 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1983), 17.

²²⁰ Julier, *Dictionary of Design Since 1900*, 30.

In 1915 Victorian educators were looking closely at Germany but focused on the Munich experience rather than Weimar or Dessau.²²¹ Munich was then “a cultural center of international importance.”²²² In 1916, Carew-Smyth accused Germany of purchasing poor quality, English student designs and publishing them “in Germany as the ‘New Art’.”²²³ This suggests Victoria was examining Munich’s compulsory trade training structure, rather than any stylistic innovation, particularly as Carew-Smyth understood most German schools of design were completely theoretical, without workshops.²²⁴ Today, the influence of Munich schools is indistinct in the shadow of the Bauhaus.

A Trove search suggests mention of the term ‘Bauhaus’ in Victorian newspapers was rare prior to the 1940s.²²⁵ Yet, as we shall see, BTAS students were reading contemporary magazines. They may have viewed articles in Australia’s *The Home* and *Building*, which made note of Bauhaus in 1928, and then more consistently from 1936.²²⁶ Although not all were complimentary of the ‘new architecture’.

A modern postscript

Following World War II, a highly prescribed version of modern good taste was defined to the exclusion of most others, prejudicing young designers and casting other styles into design wasteland. This led to the perception that if an item was not modernist, it was not designed, and therefore aesthetically inferior.²²⁷ Jan Michl states, particularly from the 1950s, that a narrow, modernist aesthetic (often conflated with the Bauhaus school) dominated design to the exclusion of new ideas, resulting in an impoverished aesthetic environment, and the establishment of a “modernist education monopoly.”²²⁸ Ironically, they were embracing a movement that sought to reject the past.

²²¹ “Courier, 11 March 1916” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²²² Beate Ziegert, “The Debschitz School, Munich: 1902-1914,” *Design Issues* 3, no. 1 (1986): 29.

²²³ “Victoria Is to Be Australia’s Chief Manufactory,” *Geelong Advertiser*, 10 July 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article130687955>.

²²⁴ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP Second Session no. 3 (1909), 75.

²²⁵ For example: “Plays and Players,” *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 September 1927, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article140802148>; “Art, Music and Architecture,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 23 June 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204845018>.

²²⁶ For example: Henry Pynor, “Visit Old Countries for New Ideas for Your Home” and “Solid Geometry the New Motif,” *The Home* 9, no. 10 (1 October 1928): 48, 49; “The Typical Living House, Berlin, and Other Futurist Conceptions,” *Building* 41, no. 253 (12 September 1928): 166; “Freak House Design: Futurism in Germany,” *Building* 41, no. 251 (12 July 1928): 53-55.

²²⁷ Jan Michl, “A Case Against the Modernist Regime in Design Education,” *International Journal of Architectural Research* 8, no. 2 (2014): 37.

²²⁸ Michl, “A Case Against the Modernist Regime in Design Education,” 39.

A COLLISION OF THEMES: THE 1930S

High inflation followed by a severe recession marred the early 1920s. What became known as the Great Depression originated overseas, but “structural weaknesses of the Australian economy” contributed to local conditions.²²⁹ This period appears to have informed some of the Australian design mythologies Simon Jackson questions, including the perceived revival of “pioneering spirit.”²³⁰ Economic, societal and political motivations for technical art training continued to overlap.

Prospects for economic recovery were constrained as Australia’s traditional exports, wheat and wool, no longer commanded the prices they once had. The failure to compete hit the nation like a slap, and primary and agricultural training suffered. Of the industries that persisted in 1929, several were largely un-catered for in technical training.²³¹ Art and design schools were charged to improve Australian products. A presentation to the Ballarat Legacy club outlined the importance of artist-manufacture collaboration to industries including furniture, clothing, and vehicles.²³²

Australians were again urged to practice practical patriotism and ‘Buy Australian’ to invigorate local manufacture and stimulate the economy. Showcases sought to counter consumer prejudices, evoke pride and encourage consumption.²³³ Those who purchased foreign-made goods were admonished for “a peculiar lack of vision, initiative, and patriotic sentiment.”²³⁴ Retailers featured Australian-made displays, which included a BTAS storefront exhibition in 1925 to coincide with ‘Made in Australia’ week.²³⁵ Some Australian designers sought alternative modes of stylistic expression to identify Australian products, while others codified local motifs, for example, the ANA popularised a trade-mark style kangaroo.²³⁶ Designers oscillated between parochial shorthand and contemporary, modern expressions of Australian identity.

Other nations were also motivated to ‘buy local’ throughout the early twentieth century. The *Deutscher Werkbund* aimed to reinforce Germany’s economic power by improving design in

²²⁹ ABS, “Development of Manufacturing Industries in Australia,” First published in *Year Book Australia, 1988*, last modified 22 November 2012, accessed 6 July 2018.

²³⁰ Jackson, “The ‘Stump-Jumpers’,” 63.

²³¹ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 50.

²³² “Courier, 12 February 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³³ Fry, *Design History Australia*, 85.

²³⁴ A statement by Mr V. L. Ginn, Made-In-Australia movement, to students of the Ballarat Junior Technical School, as reported in “Courier, 28 June 1928,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³⁵ “Courier, 7 October 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³⁶ Menadue, *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives’ Association*, 304.

partnership with industry. Greece's artistic carpet makers sought attractive American dollars while the Netherlands debated distinctions between artistic craftsmanship and design applied to industry. The early 1930s saw Chile's dictatorship run a campaign promoting a preference for local products, and Canada aimed to equal the quality of design and manufacture found elsewhere.²³⁷

As modernist style was making inroads with the consuming public, Art Inspector Dean found Victoria's technical art schools "unaffected by fashion", in what appears to have been a compliment.²³⁸ Indeed, not everyone identified modernism as a movement, but considered it the output of a contemporary cohort of artists; one BTAS student believed modern art "does not qualify any special form of artistic expression but denotes the individual efforts of living artists."²³⁹ Some artists openly rejected the modernist ethos in preference for eclecticism and tradition.

The reluctance of art schools to embrace new ideas frustrated some. Notably, Thea Proctor claimed she had "never seen any idea of design in the work of an Australian artist who has not studied abroad."²⁴⁰ This seems a harsh assessment, but perhaps was directed at the gallery schools, as technical schools had been delivering diverse design subjects for decades.

Early optimism for the return of prosperity was slow to materialise in Australia. In mid-1932, almost 32 per cent of Australians were unemployed.²⁴¹ Ballarat's School of Mines (SMB) buildings were subjected to several break-ins and thefts, and sometimes "uninvited visitors" sought shelter in the student common-room, one time nearly burning it down.²⁴² To assist its community, Vocational Guidance and Youth Employment Classes were introduced at SMB to occupy and rehabilitate unemployed young people.²⁴³ Some subjects were offered with half

²³⁷ Refer Drucker and McVarish, *Graphic Design History*, 170; Yagou, "First Steps," 146; Margolin, *World History of Design*, 518; Espinoza, "The School of Applied Arts, University of Chile (1928-1968)," 81; and 'Industrial art: the progress it is making in Ontario' *The Globe*, 46, 21 June 1890, 3, in Graeme Chalmers, "Chapter 13: Who is to do this Great Work for Canada? South Kensington in Ontario," in *Histories of Art and Design Education Collected Essays*, ed. John Steers. (Bristol; Portland, Or.: Intellect, 2005), 216.

²³⁸ VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1933), 22.

²³⁹ "Arts and Crafts Gossip: Mon Art (By D.J.)," in *SMB Magazine* (1929).

²⁴⁰ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., "Thea Proctor (1879-1966), 'Design', 1926," in *Modernism & Australia*, 160.

²⁴¹ National Museum of Australia, "Great Depression," accessed 23 January 2018, http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/great-depression

²⁴² "Courier, 19 February 1932," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

²⁴³ "Courier, 8 March 1934" and "Courier, 15 March 1934," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

fees or deferred payment.²⁴⁴ SMB also offered gold prospecting classes, in case there were some patches of sod left unturned.²⁴⁵

By 1939 many students, whose training had been interrupted by the depression, were resuming their studies. Instead of single subjects, more people undertook full courses of instruction over longer periods of time. Expansion of manufacturing industries drove demand for technically trained personnel which flowed-on to technical school enrolments. Courses were analysed, revised, and modified to suit changing industrial requirements. In parallel, the demand for applied art teachers with industrial experience grew.²⁴⁶

DISTINCTIONS

Historically, art making has facilitated storytelling and held ritual significance, from the illumination of medieval parchments to the act of archiving cultural memory in stone. It may be practical or a pure expression of emotion. Yet definitions of art and design fields, and their somewhat permeable boundaries, are points of struggle among competing agents; some benefit from the status quo, others seek change.²⁴⁷ The differentiation of fields (for example between elite and popular reproduction) facilitates hierarchical organisation leading to variation in symbolic value.

Blurred lines and the taint of commercialism

For decades people have wrestled to establish distinctions between fine and applied art, design and craft, profession and trade, attempting to attain legitimacy or gain advantage for one area over another. Unsurprisingly, some cultural baggage has resulted. Art history has been dominated by practices that are “untainted by commercialism”, such as painting and sculpture.²⁴⁸ Agents such as academies and galleries have long held the legitimacy to draw the boundaries of what constitutes ‘fine art’ and the power to preserve it as a field of restricted production. Generally, design intended for mass consumption has been excluded.

Defining design as a tainted, commercialised distortion of fine art ignores many areas of overlap and convergence. Fine art can be understood as expressionistic and unaffected by market forces, while design combines analysis and creativity to answer a brief; yet, most

²⁴⁴ “Courier, June-July 1931,” Advert SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁴⁵ “Courier, 20 April 1934,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁴⁶ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 33.

²⁴⁷ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 324, 340.

²⁴⁸ Ellen Mazur Thomson, “Alms for Oblivion: The History of Women in Early American Graphic Design,” *Design Issues* 10, no. 2 (1994), 32.

designers would consider their work an expression of their taste and values, while many fine artists hope to be suitably remunerated for their work.

In pre-Federation Australia, artists were rarely categorised as either fine or commercial, and undertook whatever work came their way, given they had “a stomach to fill and a back to cover.”²⁴⁹ Alan Young suggests that for artists working in the early twentieth century, “any strict distinction between the fine and applied arts had little meaning or relevance.”²⁵⁰ However, some artists used pseudonyms for their commercial work to avoid, ironically, devaluing their fine art practice, so a distinction was surely evident. Conversely, some believed the fine arts lacked depth or meaning and were in fact more decorative than the applied arts.²⁵¹

Definitions of design bounce like pinballs against ever-shifting boundaries. Young determined that ‘commercial art’ around the 1920s, was in fact a collection of industry-focussed art practices that fell outside the discourse of fine art.²⁵² Emerging technologies prompted divisions of labour, specialisations and efforts toward professionalisation that spawned the delineation of industrial, graphic, product, and interior design. The fluidity of design terminologies, and the variation in their perceived hierarchical values, force every design practice in and out of different categories over time and place.

Young notes that creative disciplines undergo a process of legitimisation as they move between popular and restricted fields.²⁵³ Architecture, for example, has been legitimised within fine art discourse by its inclusion within most fine art books, whereas commercial art is diminished by its exclusion.²⁵⁴ At the Royal College of Art (RCA), London, the word ‘commercial’ became so degraded that its use was phased out.²⁵⁵

Fallen into oblivion

Bourdieu tells us that artists who produced for mass-audiences, or popular production, have often “fallen into oblivion” at the hands of historians.²⁵⁶ Much commercial art is ephemeral,

²⁴⁹ Sidney Dickinson, ‘What Should Australian Artists Paint?’, *The Australasian Critic*, I, 1 (Oct. 1890), 21–2, in *Documents on Art and Taste in Australia*, 247.

²⁵⁰ Young, “Commercial Art to Graphic Design,” 5.

²⁵¹ Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, v.

²⁵² Young, “Commercial Art to Graphic Design,” 13.

²⁵³ Young, “Commercial Art to Graphic Design,” 10.

²⁵⁴ Parrinder, “The Myth of Genius,” online.

²⁵⁵ R60 Student in the Design School 1932–35, quoted in Cunliffe-Charlesworth, “The Royal College of Art,” 104.

²⁵⁶ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 320.

collaborative, and/or unsigned (by men or women). With rare exceptions, if work was marked at all it was done discretely, often with initials. The historic tendency of women to change their names upon marriage adds a further layer of opacity in tracking work histories. Notably, women consistently outnumbered men at the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) during the early twentieth century, so the definitions that locate their work are important.

While gender is not a key theme of this thesis, it is important to observe that women have been largely absent from traditional histories of design. Their omission can be planted at the feet of a long-standing patriarchy, definitions of design, and favoured historiographic methods.²⁵⁷ For example, The First Exhibition of Women's Work, held at the Melbourne Exhibition Buildings in 1907, was "almost totally neglected" by historians for decades.²⁵⁸ Its centenary, at least, provided opportunity for reflection.²⁵⁹ Yet, even when attempting to redress gender imbalances within art history, Ellen Thomson explains historians have tended to ignore the commercial work undertaken by female artists and illustrators, suggesting a certain 'shame' in earning money from art.²⁶⁰

Cheryl Buckley points out that the elevation of industrial design above domestic design excluded women based on the work they were perceived to be suited to, and the employment they were allowed to access.²⁶¹ Walter Gropius stands accused of excluding women from courses he felt were unsuitable for them.²⁶² The RCA, London, considered its own design school second-class compared to the fine arts, directing 'weaker' students toward design. As the majority of design students were female, the situation suggests an innate discrimination against both women and design at the college.²⁶³ More recently, Guy Julier's definition of design positions mass production as mandatory, to avoid "the blurring with the decorative arts that it has suffered", further alienating historical female designers.²⁶⁴

Within this pecking order some arts were disparaged as the quiet pleasure and entertainment of women. Yet, as Monika Parrinder points out, "the personal and domestic is equally

²⁵⁷ Burke, *Australian Women Artists*, 32.

²⁵⁸ Burke, *Australian Women Artists*, 32.

²⁵⁹ Geoff Hannon, Kirsten McKay and Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, *Portrait of an Exhibition; Centenary Celebration of the First Australian Exhibition of Women's Work 1907*, (Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 2007).

²⁶⁰ Thomson, "Alms for Oblivion," 28.

²⁶¹ Cheryl Buckley, "Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design," *Design Issues* 3, no. 2 (1986): 3–14. See also Thomson, "Alms for Oblivion."

²⁶² Eskilson, *Graphic Design*, 229.

²⁶³ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, "The Royal College of Art," 86.

²⁶⁴ Julier, *Dictionary of Design Since 1900*, 12.

important because it is the arena in which the inequalities of the world are played out.”²⁶⁵ Alain Findeli suggests women designers provide opportunity for analysis of the effects of power and legitimacy on design history.²⁶⁶ Other papers express similar positions, reinforcing the need for female-inclusive, craft-based and applied artwork to be included within definitions of design.²⁶⁷

Even today, women’s anonymity within the design narrative seeks redress. Through statistical analysis of the Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA) Awards, Jane Connory determined that women, on average, accounted for only 25 per cent of winners.²⁶⁸ Diversity and invisibility are also discussed in the work of Yoko Akama and Carolyn Barnes, who explain there exists “no data to track the participation of ethnic, indigenous and minority designers in Australian graphic design.”²⁶⁹

The requisite of mass production to some definitions of design is problematic in that it rules out unrealised creations.²⁷⁰ Woodham states Bogle’s definition is more inclusive, yet is still framed as “the visualisation of objects, graphics or structures initially conceived for multiple or serial production.”²⁷¹ These definitions create a false logic, that if an object is not intended for ‘mass production’ neither has it been ‘designed’. Student work, for example, is often limited to concepts and mock-ups, as they rarely have the finances or facilities to execute the product of their design. In the case of technical art students, we must often imagine the intended outcome, in the form of two-dimensional drawings and illustrations or three-dimensional mock-ups. In some instances, we must settle for fuzzy glimpses of artwork within old photographic records.

Steven Heller urges historians and designers alike “to remove the elitist prejudices that have perpetuated a biased history.”²⁷² This thesis utilises a genealogy of design that includes technical and applied art, restoring their position within the art-historical narrative, and aims to scour away some of the prejudice against one-off, decorative or domestic items. It asserts the exploration of student art practice is another legitimate approach to design history.

²⁶⁵ Parrinder, “The Myth of Genius,” online.

²⁶⁶ Findeli, “Design History and Design,” 62.

²⁶⁷ The role of women as agents of modernism is highlighted in Carter, “Esprit De Nation,” 18, 74.

²⁶⁸ Jane Connory, “Anonymity: Measuring the Visibility of Women in Design Awards,” ACUADS Conference Paper, September 29, 2017.

²⁶⁹ Akama and Barnes, “Where Is Our Diversity,” 30.

²⁷⁰ Julier, *Dictionary of Design Since 1900*, 12.

²⁷¹ Woodham, “Review: Design in Australia 1880–1970,” 173.

²⁷² Steven Heller, “Advertising: Mother of Graphic Design [extract],” *Eye Magazine* 5, no. 17 (1995), <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/advertising-mother-of-graphic-design-extract>

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Australian designers and their history have been under-represented in the design canon. An historical tendency to centrally position certain places and people has arbitrarily isolated those peripheral to them. Subsequently, Australia has been positioned as an outpost of British culture, without quite fitting the category of ‘other’ ascribed to nations with a non-Western tradition. Similarly, Euro/USA-centric curatorship of art and design histories has favoured hero-artists/designers and carefully curated anthologies of finished pieces that conceal alternatives and failures. As such, early twentieth century Australian technical art education has been under-studied. Much research is several decades old and often as part of wider or institutional histories. However, academics and historians are challenging outdated approaches.

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of significant upheaval, and technical art education was thought a tonic for many of its ills; positioning individuals as elements within a wider social and economic organism, each serving their purpose within culture, gender, class, labour and educational divisions. Technical art training also aimed to empower individual intellect through manual practice, to develop neural pathways, build visual literacy, and foster creativity and intuition.

Even amidst World War I, people acknowledged technical education would be required to facilitate Victoria’s financial, industrial, social, and political reorganisation come peacetime.²⁷³ The Great Depression further spurred calls for training opportunities. Throughout, social and political changes affected the participation of women in the workforce.

Globalisation, technological advances, and trade rivalries triggered protectionist and nationalistic responses from many countries which implemented ‘buy local’ strategies and encouraged patriotic purchasing, Australia among them. Some countries attempted to reaffirm their national identity by mining historical clichés and mythologies. Australia also craved markers of uniqueness but was challenged to balance an ambiguous national identity and style with its desire to be a modern nation on the global stage, all while wrestling with cultural cringe. Thus, Australian modernism developed from a cross-pollination of philosophies, and the tension between tradition and origination, particularly within applied art and design.

²⁷³ “Technical Education,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 July 1915, 19.

Australian technical art schools were expected to train designers to add value to raw materials, thus expanding secondary industries, and stimulate economic growth and competitiveness through innovation. They were steeped in the British tradition but, despite the best efforts of some cultural gatekeepers, were not blinkered to new or local cultural influences. Historical precedents remained valued within broader efforts toward innovation, and abstraction, while subjectivity and expression became increasingly acceptable. Throughout this transition, Australian artists generally extracted the modernist aesthetic from its originating ideologies and applied its visual language to express modernity. Acceptance of ‘commercial modernism’ varied as Australians familiarised themselves with the new visual code. As popular culture drove demand for certain styles, the historic, prevailing taste of the cultural elite diminished and was devalued. However, even as definitions of taste evolved, fostering ‘good taste’ of worker and consumer alike impelled technical art training throughout the period of this research.

Key to Bourdieu’s theories is the distinction between fields and practices. Attempts to delineate fine, applied, industrial and commercial art are fraught with fuzzy margins and changing terminologies. The blurred boundaries for artists, designers and craftspeople working the spectrum between popular and restricted fields of production suggests distinction was somewhat illusory. This extends to the educational institutions that trained them. Still, there is a propensity for art of a commercial nature to be valued beneath fine art. Definitions of design with an assumed prerequisite of mass-production rule out conceptual, unfinished or prototyped student work; but an inclusive definition of design is crucial to reposition and revalue the work of students, particularly women.

An examination of existing literature demonstrates an institutional study of the Ballarat Technical Art School, distinct from its parent institution, is warranted. The motivations, themes and perspectives outlined in this chapter provide a backdrop for examination of the school, its aims, outputs, and significance. This thesis disrupts the conception of regional Australia as a fringe-dweller of culture and counters design-hero mythology by exploring the experience of lesser-known individuals as they learned their craft. It should assist other researchers to draw parallels and divergences between the Ballarat Technical Art School and its contemporaries.

PART ONE

Chapter 1

Framed by structural, cultural, and pedagogical inheritances, the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) was the product of the art education milieu in which it was established, with fluctuating opportunity to initiate, facilitate or even mediate change. Despite the relative stability of several Education Department of Victoria administrators, their competing ideologies, aims and responsibilities could elicit frustration. Curricula and pedagogical approaches were also shifting inconsistently across Victoria's primary, post-primary, and tertiary levels, variously affecting BTAS cohorts.

ORIGINS

In 1870, three horses shot from the gates in a race to win cultural hearts and minds: the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute (BMI) School of Design; the Ballarat East Technical and Art School (No. 11); and the Ballarat School of Mines (SMB) (No. 10), which continues operation as a campus of Federation University today.¹

The East school (initially Ballarat East School of Design, then School of Art) was established and operated by the Ballarat East Public Library. For a few years it enjoyed limited competition from SMB which, under a gentleman's agreement, primarily taught mechanical drawing until 1880. The BMI's School of Design failed to reach the end of the nineteenth century, closing in 1889. Then in 1891, the Ballarat Fine Art Public Gallery Association established the Ballarat West Technical School of Art (No. 15). It identified the need for widespread, democratic arts education, both informal and explicit. Unfortunately, the school was unable to secure space within the gallery building. In titling their school 'West' it appears the gallery association sought a distinction from the East school, and the traditionally working-class affiliations of the area. James Alexander Powell (1836–1921) hoped the gallery school would deliver “a sound artistic and technical art education under an approved system and recognised competent supervision.”² Powell's 'approved system' was inspired by South

¹ For an overview of Ballarat's art schools, see Beggs-Sunter, *A Centre of Culture*; and Beggs-Sunter, “Evoking a Taste for Art”, 28-41.

² Powell, *Retrospective*, 1887, 10.

For more on James Powell, see Anne Beggs-Sunter, “Powell, James Alexander (1836–1921),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (MUP, 1988), accessed 28 December 2017, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/powell-james-alexander-8087>.

Kensington, the ‘recognised competent supervision’ fell to Ponsonby May Carew-Smyth (1860–1939).

Carew-Smyth was the gallery school’s first director upon his arrival in Australia in 1891, until he joined the Victorian Education Department in 1899 and his field of authority expanded. A product of the South Kensington system, Carew-Smyth recognised its limitations and integrated fine and applied art at the school.³ The convergence of design and execution, his ‘learning by doing’ ethos, and propensity to quote William Morris, demonstrate influence from the English Arts and Crafts movement. At the Ballarat gallery school, Carew-Smyth taught Herbert Henry Smith (1875-1957), a young local who would go on to succeed him as director. Theirs would be a long-standing association.

An arranged marriage

The East (Library) and West (Gallery) art schools jostled for position, both figuratively and literally. Legislative reforms in 1905 aimed to unite Victoria’s education stakeholders, thus Ballarat’s inter-school rivalry and multiple, scattered buildings were deemed unsustainable.⁴ The Education Department determined a single administrative body, housed at a single site, would be more efficient and cost effective. Each school was asked to consider handing its reins to the other. Predictably, following decades of competition, both were white knuckled in their resistance. Arguments were waged publicly and privately, but both administrations were unable to set aside their rivalry and co-operate. Instead, control was wrested from them and in 1907 the schools merged under the governance of a third party, the School of Mines, Ballarat (SMB). The new school adopted SMB’s institution number 10 and, relieved of East and West, was titled the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS).⁵

Political machinations, economic rationalisation, lack of suitable facilities, and wider changes to technical education sowed a rocky field for the foundations of the newly amalgamated school. It initially operated across multiple, inherited sites, but in 1915 a new building would coalesce operations. Gradually, the East institution’s standing weakened to become a footnote to the West school, whose date of establishment was celebrated at anniversaries and

³ Jordan, “The South Kensington Empire,” 41.

⁴ VED, “Report of the Director of Education, by Frank Tate,” PP no. 1 (1906), 32; “Star, 10 February 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

⁵ Further information on Ballarat art schools and their amalgamation can be found in Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 199-213; Beggs-Sunter, *A Centre of Culture and Rich Vein of Learning*.

reunions.⁶ This habit overlooked an additional twenty-one years of history, adding insult to the East school’s injury.

Principal of the Gallery school, Herbert Smith, approached the offer to head the new, amalgamated school with caution. At least with his colleague and mentor, Carew-Smyth, embedded within the Department, Smith would have a strong ally beyond the SMB walls. Smith ruminated, but on accepting the post he committed to a marathon stay and set about making the new Ballarat Technical Art School his own.

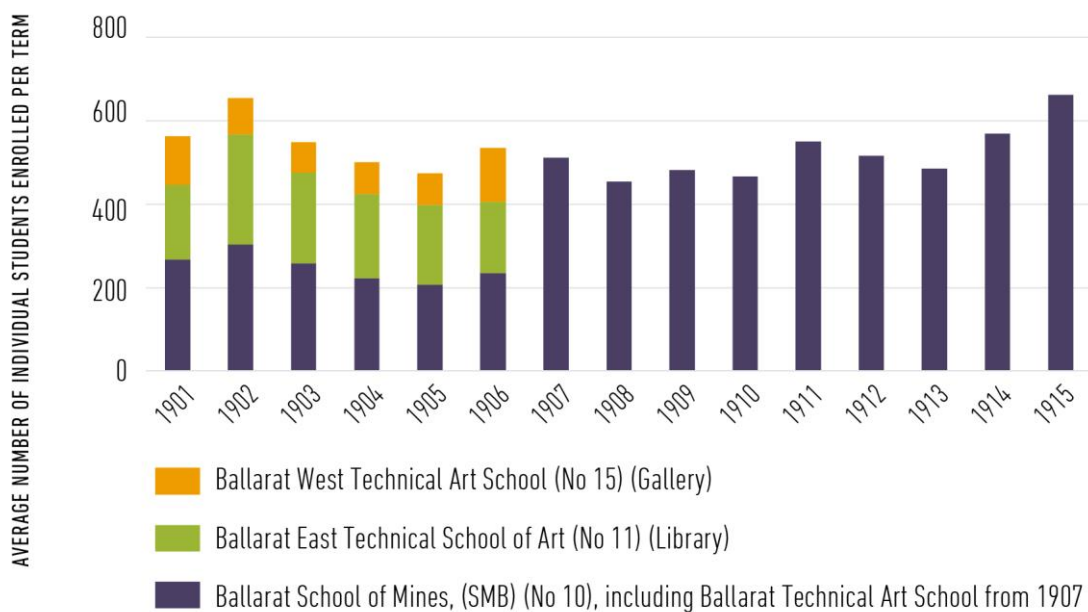


Figure 1.1 **Average number of individual senior technical students enrolled per term (1901-1915).** As at June 30 each financial year. Reported in VED Parliamentary Papers until 1915.

Technical art at the School of Mines, Ballarat (SMB)

Established in 1870, Ballarat’s School of Mines (SMB) was the first tertiary, technical institution in Victoria, and predated free, secular State education by three years.⁷ SMB was an autonomous institution managed by a council of representatives. It was one of only four sanctioned Schools of Mines in Victoria, (excluding University of Melbourne, other schools of mines were in fact technical schools), and one of five recognised as a Certified Science School by the Education Department.⁸ Over its first thirty years, SMB built its reputation in

⁶ “Star, 24 July 1915” and “Star, 26 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); “Courier, 30 October 1936,” “Courier, 30 March 1940,” “Courier, 8 April 1940,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

⁷ Sweetman, Long and Smyth, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922); Kevin Murray, *A History of the Ballarat Technical School* (Ballarat: Waller & Chester, Ballarat, 1969), 7.

⁸ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 5, 153,170.

mining and mineral science to be “recognised as the principal School of Mines in Victoria.”⁹ As the goldfields were emptied of their mineral resources however, SMB sought to diversify instruction.

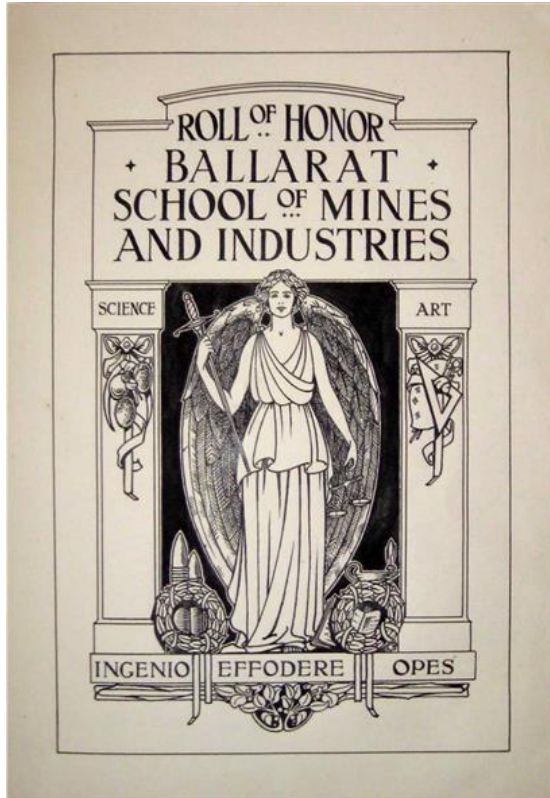


Figure 1.2 **The twin pillars of SMB: Science and Art.**
Frontispiece to the Ballarat School of Mines Honor Book. Black and white, c1920.
(Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 05600. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

SMB adopted an organisational apparatus (devised in England years earlier) of science, trade, and art. While necessary for student classification, they created false distinctions as technical art school attendees were often students of all three fields.¹⁰ Science and art were considered the shared basis of all industry.¹¹ However, Carew-Smyth noted that where an institution delivered both, art usually came off second best. To “obviate some of the evils that result in a combined school”, he believed council sub-committees should govern each separately.¹² SMB went further, employing a separate, art principal, Herbert Smith. Thus, SMB and BTAS evolved as parallel institutions with a shared governing body, which goes some way to

⁹ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 170.

¹⁰ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 101; and VED, “Report on Technical Education,” PP no. 14, 1928).

¹¹ Campbell, “The Industrial Education of the People,” (1889), 5.

¹² VED, PP no. 6, 1913-14, 131.

explaining the success of Ballarat’s art school. Carew-Smyth believed that, had Bendigo been similarly physically structured, their art department would not have “been starved.”¹³

When SMB’s Junior Technical School was established, it too gained its own principal. For a time, trade bridged art and science, but by 1918, the Ballarat School of Mines and Industries, as it now termed itself, consisted of six schools and departments: The School of Mines, Science and Engineering; The Technical Art School; The Junior Technical School; The Girls’ Preparatory Classes (headed by Herbert Smith); The Trade Classes; and The Commercial School. This structure was essentially still in place in 1938.¹⁴

VICTORIAN ART EDUCATION AFTER FEDERATION: 1901-1926

For the first three decades of the twentieth century, Victorian technical art education fell under the oversight and influence of three key people: Frank Tate (1864–1939), first Director of Education; Donald Clark (1864–1932), Chief Inspector of Technical Schools; and Ponsonby Carew-Smyth (1860–1939), Inspector of Drawing and Art Inspector. These public servants worked independently and collaboratively for years; some issues uniting them, others causing friction. The length of their tenures, and ability to work together despite undercurrents of educational disagreement, helps explain the relative stability in Victorian education claimed by some sources.¹⁵ Of course, they were not the only movers and shakers in State education at the time, but when all three retired from their roles in the late 1920s, they left sizeable shoes for their successors to fill, let alone strike out in a new pair.

The Art Inspector’s oversight

Victorian art education was administrated quite differently to other Australian States. Until as late as 1955, Victoria’s specialist Art Inspector had a high level of oversight incomparable with most other Australian regions.¹⁶ The Art Inspector had State-wide responsibility for art at all year levels, and their overarching role allowed co-ordination across urban, regional and rural districts. Supported by assistants, the Art Inspector’s office provided a hub from which

¹³ VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 49 (1915), 79.

¹⁴ SMB, *Short Resume of the work of The Ballarat School of Mines and Industries*, (Ballarat: SMB, June 1918), 1; and “Courier, 25 May 1938,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁵ Including “Education Department,” Research Data Australia, accessed 8 July 2018, <https://researchdata.ands.org.au/education-department/490526>.

¹⁶ Malcom C. Dimmack, “Art Education in Australia,” *Art Education* 8, no. 4 (1955): 3, doi:10.2307/3184227.

to disseminate art-education information and expectations, while offering art educators and administrators a central point to direct their questions. It might be argued that this convergence of responsibilities enabled Victoria to advance art education beyond some other States.

Having served as the first director and art master of the Ballarat West Technical Art School from 1891, Ponsonby Carew-Smyth was a man of considerable influence in his roles as Victoria's Inspector of Drawing (1899–1903) and Art Inspector (1903–1926). Carew-Smyth elevated the role and value of art within an ever-expanding system of State education; at primary, secondary high and junior technical schools, and senior technical art schools.¹⁷ He advocated for a coordinated and continuous scheme of art education spanning all educational divisions, and recommended a national system of teaching based on the application of art to manufacturing and industry.¹⁸ In several centres, the local senior tech was teaching junior students, and Carew-Smyth encouraged closer ties to prompt primary schoolers toward further study.¹⁹ Secondary high schools largely fell outside this vision, perhaps resulting in fewer reforms in that space.²⁰

FIRST THINGS FIRST: PRIMARY (ELEMENTARY) EDUCATION

In 1872, the State Government of Victoria legislated for delivered free, secular, and compulsory education to the colony's children, agglomerating a range of regulations and responsibilities under its own authority, and that of its Minister of Public Instruction. Schools delivered a core curriculum and, where possible, extra subjects could be offered for a small fee, drawing instruction among them.

The end of the nineteenth century hosted tensions between socialist philosophies and ideas of individual action and capitalist freedom. Within this atmosphere, educational pedagogies began to rebalance education theory and practice. Victorian educators were embracing 'New Education', a philosophy to train children's curiosity and critical thinking rather than cram their memory like "so many fattening fowls."²¹ Learning by rote yielded to the concept of learning by doing.

¹⁷ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 245.

¹⁸ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 208.

¹⁹ VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP Second Session no. 3 (1909), 76.

²⁰ Hammond, "Changes in Art Education Ideologies," 77.

²¹ "The New Education," *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* (Beechworth, Vic.), 13 June 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article201466137>.

It was in this atmosphere that Victoria's first Director of Education (1902-1928), Frank Tate, was appointed. Born in Castlemaine but schooled in Melbourne, Tate was a country teacher and district inspector all too familiar with the needs of regional schools and the impracticalities caused by their distance from Melbourne. He criticised the Education Department for its neglect of country teachers and its failure to keep up with global educational trends, using the Royal Commission on Technical Education as a platform for his views. Compared to the conservatism and incompetence of some Department officials, Tate's ideas were refreshing.²² When the commission created the permanent Director of Education position (arguably its most significant outcome), Tate's ambition and untiring work paid off and he was appointed to modernise and reinvigorate State education. Tate immediately reformed the primary school curriculum, designed to encourage children to make "the best use of mind and eyes and hands."²³ This ethos pervaded Tate's approach to secondary and technical teaching also. For Tate, education was the only way to create generations of innovators rather than imitators. Contributing to Tate's vision were Ponsonby Carew-Smyth and John Byatt (1862–1930), Organising Inspector of Manual Training.

Drawing at primary school: Carew-Smyth's approach

As Inspector of Drawing, Carew-Smyth inherited a primary school drawing system set by predecessor, George Green Simpson, which prioritised discipline and technique, even for very young children, who were expected to accurately render specially-made geometric wooden objects.²⁴ At the 1902 Educational Congress, Carew-Smyth unveiled a reformed and expanded elementary drawing curriculum.²⁵ His own studies included formal and hands-on guild training in London, Belfast and Paris.²⁶ Unsurprisingly, he proposed, "it is the making and the manner of making that is educational."²⁷

²² For an overarching biographical summary, refer to: R.J.W. Selleck, "Tate, Frank (1864–1939)," *Dictionary of Australian Biography* 12 (1990), accessed 4 July 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tate-frank-8748>; or, more extensively, refer to R.J.W. Selleck, *Frank Tate, a Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1982.

²³ Frank Tate, *School-Power – an Imperial Necessity* (Melbourne: Imperial Federation League of Australia, 1908), 9.

²⁴ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 9; Hammond, "Changes in Art Education Ideologies," 102.

²⁵ Blake, "Book 4: The Primary Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 336; Hammond, "Changes in Art Education Ideologies," 59, 219.

²⁶ Margot Lethlean, "Carew-Smyth, Ponsonby May (1860-1939)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (MUP, 1979), accessed 18 April 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/carew-smyth-ponsonby-may-5501>.

²⁷ "Training of Teachers," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 22 January 1904, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197235713>; VED, ed., "Inspectors' Reports: Drawing," *Education Gazette*, August 20, 1907; *Education Gazette Supplement, Circular for Information No. 4 Sept.*, 1902: 1, in Hammond, "Changes in Art Education Ideologies," 62.

Carew-Smyth urged primary school teachers to abandon old, mechanical drawing methods and condemned the copying of a pinned-up print or chalk-drawn teacher's example; a technique he determined required no knowledge and had no educational or artistic merit.²⁸ Carew-Smyth was horrified that much of students' 45-minute drawing class was wasted distributing and collecting materials, excessive task descriptions, and constant teacher interruptions of "pencils down."²⁹ Instead, Carew-Smyth encouraged learning through observational freehand drawing, prioritising the *process* of drawing over the nature and precision of the items being drawn, and preferring prolonged sketching to rushed work. He recommended teachers alternate sprigs of locally available flora with models constructed from cardboard, or real objects, such as a bucket or tin, noting natural objects offered more interest.³⁰ Given the availability of materials, most student work was monochromatic, initially in pencil, using a brush for solid forms and silhouettes. Problematically, many teachers clung tenaciously to outdated methods, which persisted despite a decade of censure.³¹

With the best intentions, top-down reforms such as Carew-Smyth was implementing, were apt to fail if hearts and minds were not successfully engaged along the way.³² To do so he produced an in-service training scheme, published instruction, direction and examples, and mustered the State's District Inspectors. At Drawing Centres across Victoria, teachers attended voluntary weekend or 'summer schools' to be guided through Carew-Smyth's new syllabus, its pedagogies and methods of implementation. Within a year, 859 general teachers had attended classes. By 1903, 27 centres were in operation, nine of them mobile.³³ Provincial institutes, including Ballarat, were crucial to the professional development of regional teachers, many of whom travelled miles to participate. Carew-Smyth also harnessed the wide distribution of the Victorian *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid* to promote the syllabus, offering direct feedback on examples provided by 10 schools each month.³⁴ He later

²⁸ "A.N.A. Competitions," *Mount Alexander Mail* (Vic.), 10 March 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199570723>.

²⁹ VED, "A Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Inspector of Drawing," VED, PP no. 1 (1905), 58.

³⁰ VED, ed., "Drawing and Brushwork Exercises," *Education Gazette*, August 20, 1909, 260; September 20, 1909, 284; and October 20, 1909, 314.

³¹ "Technical Training: Does South Australia Lag Behind?" *Evening Journal* (Adelaide, SA), 3 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article207967377>; VED, "A Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Inspector of Drawing," VED, PP no. 1 (1905), 58.

³² Boughton, "Six Myths," 148.

³³ VED, "Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Inspector of Drawing," PP no. 28 (1903), 79; VED, PP no. 28 (1903), 14.

³⁴ For example: VED, ed., "Drawing Examinations for Junior Teachers," *Education Gazette*, March 20, 1907, 133; "The course in drawing for candidates for teachers' examinations," *Education Gazette*, February 20, 1909, 123–124.

consolidated his approach in his series of *Austral Drawing Books*, described as the Victorian “art teacher’s bible.”³⁵

Unable to personally inspect his syllabus’ adoption by almost 2,000 primary schools, Carew-Smyth enlisted a small army of State school District Inspectors (DIs). He assembled them at the Melbourne Teachers’ College, sparking their enthusiasm with initial practice in freehand drawing and brushwork, then accompanying them on some school tours to examine drawing delivery and identify potential problems.³⁶ This training enabled DIs to confidently inspect the drawing work of classroom teachers.

Carew-Smyth’s face-to-face engagement with teachers, DIs and other stakeholders helped popularise the subject of drawing throughout Victoria, attracting the ire of private schools which were apprehensive at “being left behind in the race.”³⁷

Manual art: Elementary craft in primary schools

There were two types of manual training advocates in the early twentieth century: the economic and the educational. The former identified manual training as a pre-trade subject directed at children of the working classes. The latter believed practical, manual training was necessary to the development of all children; increasing intelligence, improving visual acuity and manual dexterity, and fostering moral fortitude, persistence, and pride. Craft-based handwork dovetailed with New Education philosophies.

To shape Victoria’s elementary craft curriculum, the Education Department appointed John Byatt (1862–1930) as Organising Inspector of Manual Training in 1900.³⁸ A British educationist, Byatt had trained at the Sloyd Seminarium in Sweden, and railed against the Australian term ‘manual training’, which implied only the work of the hands, or worse, “a new name for fisticuffs!”³⁹

Sloyd (anglicised from *slöjd*) derived from an Icelandic word meaning dexterity or skill.⁴⁰ A system of planned work, sloyd combined arts and science teaching with practical methods of

³⁵ Beggs-Sunter, *A Centre of Culture*, 8.

³⁶ “Drawing in State Schools,” *The Register* (Adelaide, SA), 19 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article59940580>.

³⁷ “Drawing in State Schools,” *The Register* (Adelaide, SA), 19 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article59940580>.

³⁸ For a brief biography of Byatt, see Neville Drummond, “Byatt, John (1862-1930),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 7 (MUP, 1979), accessed 18 April 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/byatt-john-5456>

³⁹ VED, “Report of John Byatt, Organising Inspector of Manual Training,” PP no. 39 (1901), 84, 85.

⁴⁰ Hoffman, *The Sloyd System of Wood Working* (1892), 19.

construction to stimulate the creativity, intellectual capacity, and intuition of students. Any material that met Sloyd's educational aims was valid.⁴¹ Students worked on real, useful, and engaging projects delivered as a logical progression of models, scaled in difficulty to build skills. In the process, they learned economy of materials and to care for their tools. Children took ownership of their designs and products at all stages, purchasing them with their own labour.⁴² Sloyd promoted intellectual development to improve mathematical ability, spatial awareness, and oral and written expression.⁴³ That the subject was also taught at exclusive, private institutions demonstrates its value as holistic education; such schools were not preparing future tradespeople.⁴⁴ It is notable that Sloyd sought to accommodate the varied capabilities and individual nature of children. If delivered as intended, Sloyd was very much student-driven learning.

In Australia at least, Sloyd was slowly stripped of its founding ethos, and instead became synonymous with woodwork. To differentiate, educationalists termed other craft-based practices 'manual arts.' These were very popular, with some primary schools even offering repoussé, leather embossing, stencilling and wood carving. Children with a taste for these crafts could go on to further their study at junior and senior technical schools.⁴⁵

The burgeoning field of elementary crafts required specialist teachers "imbued with the educational spirit and aims of the work."⁴⁶ Ballarat would become central to the delivery of Manual Arts teacher training.

Carew-Smyth's influence expands

While Carew-Smyth was administering State-school drawing, Thomas Stewart Monkhouse (1828-1920) held the broader remit of Inspector of Art. Monkhouse was not a permanent officer of the Department and since 1895 had only been asked sporadically to inspect technical schools. Despite his limited role, some believed Victoria possessed a more fully realised system of technical education under Monkhouse than, for example, South Australia.⁴⁷ However, he received mixed reviews at the Fink Commission. Herbert Smith, then art master at Sale, believed the consensus among senior technical art schools was that

⁴¹ Hoffman, *The Sloyd System of Wood Working* (1892).

⁴² Hoffman, *The Sloyd System of Wood Working* (1892), 25.

⁴³ VED, ed., "Manual Training," *Education Gazette*, September 20, 1907, 43.

⁴⁴ VED, PP no. 2 (1908), 64.

⁴⁵ VED, "General Report in Art in Technical Schools by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 5 (1910), 69.

⁴⁶ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 242.

⁴⁷ "Technical Training: Does South Australia Lag Behind?" *Evening Journal* (Adelaide, SA), Tuesday 3 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article207967377>.

Monkhouse was “not the man for the position.”⁴⁸ While Monkhouse’s qualifications were not in dispute, the 72 year old’s notions were deemed “antiquated”, and he was unfamiliar with many subjects.⁴⁹

Whether Monkhouse lacked the energy to modernise, or his temporary position afforded little influence over the State’s art education, in 1903 Frank Tate appointed Carew-Smyth to the role, eliciting objection from some quarters amid cries of favouritism.⁵⁰ Under Parliamentary privilege, Mr Bromley MLA suggested Carew-Smyth was incompetent, “a perfect dummy” who, as a friend of Tate, had usurped Monkhouse.⁵¹ This accusation did not go unchallenged by fellow parliamentarians, and Tate responded fiercely to the “utterly reckless and untrue” statements; the decision was in fact in accordance with government requests to dispense with temporary officers, of which Monkhouse was one.⁵² On the question of Carew-Smyth’s competence, Tate roundly defended him, stating “there is no more highly qualified man, as far as technical art is concerned, in Australia.”⁵³ In fact, Carew-Smyth had resisted the promotion, as it meant a much greater workload for zero increase in salary. The recent reorganisation and roll out of State school drawing had quarried heavily upon his time and energies. Yet, Carew-Smyth accepted the position and remained within it for over twenty years.

NEXT STEPS: SECONDARY (POST-PRIMARY) EDUCATION

Around the time of the Fink Commission into technical education, Victoria lagged other States in its provision of secondary education.⁵⁴ Post-primary education was the privilege of those who could afford private schooling; approximately just five per cent of children in 1905.⁵⁵ These were the young people, mostly men, destined for university and the professions it trained. The bulk of pupils left school aged around 12 years, so subsequent attendance at a School of Mines or senior technical school involved discontinuity of time and skills. Efforts

⁴⁸ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence on Technical Education*, Government Printer Robt. S. Brain. Parliamentary Paper (Melbourne, Victoria. Parliament), (1901) no. 36, 467.

⁴⁹ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 467.

⁵⁰ “A Charge and a Denial,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 13 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article208461666>, 5.

⁵¹ “Victorian Parliament,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 12 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197901678>.

⁵² “News of the Day,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 13 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197901203>.

⁵³ “News of the Day,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 13 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197901203>.

⁵⁴ A. Max Badcock. “Book 5: The Secondary Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 439.

⁵⁵ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 235, 241.

to bridge this gap contributed to the establishment of State-funded secondary schools in Victoria, but their introduction had caveats.

Initially, the Education Department only sought to top-up primary education with the addition of Grades 7 and 8, delivered within existing State school infrastructure. This was effectively enforced in 1905 when the *Education Act* required compulsory student attendance between the ages of six and fourteen years. The Ballarat Continuation School initially operated out of BTAS while accommodation was being prepared at the Dana Street State school around the corner.⁵⁶ This two year ‘continuation’ of State supported primary education was carefully orchestrated so as not to encroach on existing private secondary schools. When the 1910 *Education Act* authorised the institution of State district high schools, they were not to be established where private provision already existed.⁵⁷ This perpetuated the private school advantage in cities like Ballarat, which was at least allowed an Agricultural High School. The same act required non-departmental (private) schools to register with the Department, allowing limited State supervision and occasional inspection of these now Registered Schools. Broader oversight was achieved in 1912 when the Schools Board established a structure for secondary education.⁵⁸

To accommodate the shifting landscape, Carew-Smyth established the Drawing Teacher’s Primary Certificate and Drawing Teacher’s Secondary Certificate. Yet, he appears to have been relatively disinterested in high school art, which was just one subject among many and did not allow thorough exploration or appreciation.

Tate envisioned Victoria’s new district high schools as one-stop-shops. In addition to providing general education, junior teacher training, and priming students for university entrance examination, Tate hoped they would deliver preparational vocational training and streamline entrance to senior technical schools.⁵⁹ Around the age of 15, students would undertake common courses plus enter one of several study streams: professional, industrial, commercial, agricultural, or domestic.⁶⁰ Not everyone, however, believed a multi-purpose institution could accommodate seemingly divergent aims.

⁵⁶ VED, PP no. 2 (1908), 44.

⁵⁷ Badcock, “The Secondary Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 459; Murray, *A History of the Ballarat Technical School*, 8.

⁵⁸ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria*, (1922), 266.

⁵⁹ Badcock, “The Secondary Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 473.

⁶⁰ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 14.

As the Department's network of institutions expanded, it became evident a single Chief Inspector would be unable to cover the territory. Thus, the inspectorship was split to serve each sector, and Donald Clark (1864-1932) accepted the Chief Inspector of Technical Schools role (1911-1930). With a master's degree in mining engineering and extensive field experience, Clark had headed technical schools for 20 years. Clark rejected the arbitrary division of status between 'industrial' and 'professional' training, or as people were wont to put it, "the sheep and the goats."⁶¹ He believed technical education was a unique branch of learning, that its teachers were specialists, and that its students emerged as greatly skilled practitioners.

Clark credited Frank Tate with revolutionising primary school education, bringing it up to date against significant criticism and opposition, but his views on technical education put him at odds with Tate whose model of comprehensive yet general secondary education had unintended consequences.

Clark felt important technical subjects were routinely ignored and undervalued by high school teachers who directed their best and brightest away from trades, leading to distinctions which limited student opportunity and experience.⁶² Trade students were deemed failures and labelled 'industrials.' Clark believed these children received "a stamp of inferiority for life."⁶³ At best, some schools pursued a successful stream and neglected others, while some teachers were simply unfamiliar with, or unskilled in, the non-academic specialisations.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Bourdieu argues success at academic institutions reinforces pre-existing privilege.⁶⁵ The high school curriculum became weighted to academic work and produced graduates who were trained for (and preferred) office-based jobs over industrial or technical employment, much to Clark's chagrin.

Ultimately, Clark believed the plan to build up a system of technical education through the secondary school structure had failed.⁶⁶ If the high schools couldn't deliver diverse opportunity, an alternative needed to be sought. His urging resulted in the establishment of State-funded Junior Technical Schools.

⁶¹ Clark, *Reminiscences of Technical Education in Victoria*, 1923, 13.

⁶² VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 98.

⁶³ Clark, *Reminiscences of Technical Education in Victoria*, 1923, 13.

⁶⁴ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 259.

⁶⁵ Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, 141, 162.

⁶⁶ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 14.

Mind the gap: Junior Technical Schools

It became evident to Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark, that existing primary and high school education was not sufficiently preparing students for senior technical education. Instead, he pursued Junior Technical Schools, a pre-trade training route preparing intelligent 13 to 14-year-old boys for work in “occupations requiring scientific, artistic, and technical skill.”⁶⁷ The first opened in 1912 at the Working Men’s College (WMC), closely followed by one at the School of Mines in Ballarat (SMB). By 1920 another 18 would follow.⁶⁸

Pre-trades training at junior techs formed a crucial link between primary schools and senior technical institutions. The training also assisted boys seeking apprenticeships, employment, or entry to other schools and colleges. To Clark, the junior techs offered preparation for life at least equal to any other school.⁶⁹ As university entrance was not an objective, the junior techs were free to deliver a broader, more flexible education. The boys’ two-year Junior Technical Leaving Certificate taught both general academic and technically-oriented subjects including mechanical and freehand drawing, modelling, wood and metal work, and elementary design.⁷⁰

Carew-Smyth had been instrumental in writing the boys’ junior technical syllabus but felt greater distinction could be made between the preliminary training for art-based industries and other trades. In 1919 the two-year junior program was extended to a three-year Intermediate Technical Certificate, with a fee of £1 per term payable in the third year. As a result, senior school intakes were improved by junior tech students who came better prepared than their peers.⁷¹ Carew-Smyth reported that art-workers and designers of the future would come from institutions that combined junior technical training with senior art schools, and suggested it become Departmental policy.⁷² Ballarat already had this advantage, which would soon be extended to young women. At centres of Domestic Economy girls were taught to “do those womanly things which she alone could perform”; housekeeping, cooking and

⁶⁷ VED, “Report on Technical Education,” PP no. 2 (1929), 24.

⁶⁸ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 256.

⁶⁹ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 84; SMB, *A Leaflet of Information Regarding the Boys’ Junior Technical School Branch* (1922, 2; and Clark, *The Future* (1927), 15.

⁷⁰ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 15; VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 84; “Star, 21 February 1916” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 90.

⁷¹ Clark, Report on the Ballarat Junior Technical School by Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, 1915, 12.

⁷² VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 84, 94

mothercraft.⁷³ Tate strongly advocated domestic education for girls, but recognised not all women aspired to be “home-makers.”⁷⁴ Carew-Smyth suggested junior technical training offered girls a pathway into skilled, artistic occupations, either directly or via a senior technical art school.⁷⁵

Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) principal, Herbert Smith, clearly agreed. He was instrumental in the establishment of SMB’s Girls’ Preparatory Technical Classes, often collectively described as the Girls’ Preparatory School (GPS), which sought to provide young women with the same opportunities as boys with preliminary training in technical arts, craft, commerce, and industrial education. Smith managed and heartily promoted the classes, welcoming 40 students from 60 applicants into the 1916, inaugural two-year course.⁷⁶ That year, Swinburne also launched junior technical classes for girls.⁷⁷ In 1922, Sydney Technical School teacher, Miss Roberts, commented that Sydney had no classes for girls like those offered at Ballarat.⁷⁸

Following relatively general studies in their first year, second year girls specialised in their preferred form of practical art and, following examination, could receive a Junior Technical Certificate. A successful third year resulted in an Intermediate Technical Certificate. That these girls were not directed toward science or other trades, reflects ongoing patriarchal expectation.⁷⁹ However, the curriculum was more diverse than that offered to boys, and its art focus gave girls a head start when undertaking senior education at BTAS.⁸⁰ In fact, girls were able to undertake the Primary or Secondary Drawing Teachers’ Certificate within the junior classes.⁸¹

Smith’s reports to SMB Council demonstrate his enthusiasm, advocacy and responsibility for the GPS students at least equalled his dedication to senior art classes, and indicate an overlap

⁷³ “Education in Victoria,” *Warracknabeal Herald* (Vic.), 12 June 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article130121225>.

⁷⁴ “Education in Victoria,” *Warracknabeal Herald* (Vic.), 12 June 1914.

⁷⁵ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 94

⁷⁶ “Courier, 15 October 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); and SMB *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (February 1916).

⁷⁷ The Eastern Suburbs Technical College (Swinburne) classes were established in 1916. Sweetman, Long and Smyth, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 258; VED, PP no. 12 (1920), 22.

⁷⁸ “Courier, 13 September 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁷⁹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 12.

⁸⁰ “Courier, 15 October 1915,” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 73.

⁸¹ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 258.

in the educational, sporting and social activities of female students from both.⁸² Smith hoped to extend the girls' junior classes further but was stymied by lack of suitable accommodation, the Education Department deaf to his incessant pleas for twenty years. Inadequate space limited junior female participation through to the mid-1930s. In 1936, only 41 girls were enrolled in SMB's junior classes compared to 240 boys.⁸³ The remainder settled for single-subject enrolments, particularly in the overcrowded dressmaking department.⁸⁴

Junior techs proved so successful that the concept was exported to England, where multiple centres were established based on the Australian model, although most English schools were not adjoined to a senior technical school.⁸⁵ The success of junior techs seemed evident, but in some minds, technical education remained unimportant. Clark's efforts only exacerbated academic bias against trades through an ongoing misconception that junior techs were dumping grounds for children incapable of attending other secondary schools. Even the terminology of 'high' school, positions junior techs as 'lower'.⁸⁶ It transpired that sifting Australian children into two groups, one destined for high school, the other for tech was neither neutral nor democratic.

As the years progressed, debate and criticism conflated junior techs with their tertiary, senior technical counterparts. Senior diplomas, and the five Victorian schools able to award them, began to lose value.⁸⁷

TERTIARY TRAINING: SENIOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION

On his first official tour of senior technical schools in 1911, Donald Clark despaired. The bulk, large and small, were limping along with threadbare accommodation and poor facilities. Teachers were underpaid and justly depressed. Many schools experienced a vicious cycle; as student numbers fell, so did the fees that covered many costs. Good teachers left and their positions were advertised with lower qualifications at a lesser salary. Lowering standards did nothing to help the schools attract students.

⁸² Herbert H. Smith, *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929* (Ballarat: Ballarat Technical Art School, 1918-1929); and Herbert H. Smith, *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940* (Ballarat: Ballarat Technical Art School, 1929-1940).

⁸³ Refer "Courier, 27 June 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921-1924); VED, "Report on Technical Education," PP no. 5 (1935), 19; and "Courier, 20 February 1936," SMB Cuttings (1936-1948).

⁸⁴ Refer to Appendices, Table A-2, DOI: 10.25955/604d8c6d9c78a.

⁸⁵ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 41; and Clark, *The Future* (1927), 16.

⁸⁶ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 134.

⁸⁷ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (March 1930).

The introduction of State-funded secondary education was a critical hit for some institutions, forced to share their buildings with new high schools until additional accommodation could be found or built. At several regional schools, technical teaching almost wholly yielded to high school curricula. Technical teachers were literally displaced as their rooms were commandeered. As Clark himself said, the “cuckoo-like proceedings were scarcely calculated to build up a sound system of Technical Education.”⁸⁸ Frustrated, he suggested there was little point continuing to provide these schools with technical education funding.⁸⁹

Where Clark sought to modernise the technical education system, Tate was motivated to fully reform it, not least because it would allow him to consolidate control over the entire education system.⁹⁰ Problems at the Working Men’s College (WMC) provided the ammunition Tate’s department needed to suggest that staffing, remuneration, business, curriculum and exams of all technical schools should be reassigned to Education Department control. In 1912, most councils acquiesced. It was a disruptive period, particularly for the schools that continued to resist a takeover, including WMC, and the Ballarat, Bendigo, and Sale schools of mines.

Conversely, Clark was no fan of centralisation, which he believed led to an inward facing bureaucracy that ignored local input and interests. He supported the regional technical schools as much as their metropolitan counterparts and encouraged diversity amongst institutions, believing “uniformity saps innovation.”⁹¹ Clark defended the council-controlled schools which he later claimed were “a safeguard to technical education during troublous times.”⁹² Partly shielded from the machinations of the Education Department, their relative autonomy enabled them to maintain quality and continuity. Council-operated schools also benefited from the valuable contribution of high-calibre local stakeholders with regional interests, knowledge and, if they were lucky, additional funds.

Technical training as adjunct to apprenticeship

Upon completing primary school, students weighed their options to undertake further education, employment, or an apprenticeship. As 16-year-olds were considered too old to be apprenticed, there was little time for procrastination.

⁸⁸ Clark, *Reminiscences of Technical Education in Victoria*, 1923, 12.

⁸⁹ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 103.

⁹⁰ VED, “Report of the Director of Education, by Frank Tate,” PP no. 1 (1906), 32.

⁹¹ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 12.

⁹² Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 44.

Nineteenth century apprenticeships were mutually beneficial and binding agreements between pupil and employer. A competent apprentice became a ‘journeyman’ (the prerequisite for admission to many British guilds) while ‘improvers’ could work for reduced pay until they passed muster. By 1900, however, Australian apprenticeship no longer guaranteed secure employment or a complete trade training. Thus, ‘apprentice’ loosely described someone learning on-the-job, with or without written agreement, and ‘improvers’ were low paid, narrow skilled young people. The validity of apprenticeships was questionable but attempts at reform saw stakeholders unable to reach agreement.⁹³ In lieu of wholesale replacement of the apprenticeship system, technical colleges offered adjunct training to the apprentice.⁹⁴

BTAS principal, Herbert Smith, intended his institution “to supplement rather than supersede apprenticeship” offering greater theoretical and practical opportunities than might be experienced in the workshop.⁹⁵ This approach strongly echoes the sentiments of the London City Council Technical Education Board 20 years earlier.⁹⁶

To accommodate industry-based instructors and apprentices, classes were timetabled in the evening, several nights per week but, problematically, young students had already completed a day’s work when they straggled into class. Unsurprisingly, their enthusiasm waned and there was genuine concern for apprentice safety and wellbeing.⁹⁷ In the 1910s a concerted effort was made to provide apprentices with daytime work-release to attend compulsory trade classes.⁹⁸ Donald Clark and Frank Tate were in support.

Employer advocates, however, feared the Education Department overstepping, and worried apprentice education might not meet workplace requirements or consist of too much theory. Even pre-trades training was treated with suspicion.⁹⁹ The junior techs promised a pool of skilled young people from which employers could choose an apprentice, but tradespeople (and unions) feared they would churn out partially trained, low-paid competition for jobs. The Department of Labour was also reportedly at odds with the Education Department,

⁹³ For extensive coverage of the history of apprenticeships in Victoria, see Brereton, “Origins of the Victorian Apprenticeship Commission.”

⁹⁴ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 146.

⁹⁵ SMB, *The Ballarat School of Mines and Industries: Prospectus B: Technical Arts and Crafts* (Ballarat: Berry, Anderson & Co., 1915), 6.

⁹⁶ L.C.C. Technical Education Board, Central School of Arts and Crafts — *Prospectus and Timetable*, 20 December 1896 (p. 3), quoted in Stuart Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education: From Arts and Crafts to Conceptual Art* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2005), 94.

⁹⁷ VED, PP no. 14 (1911), 18.

⁹⁸ VED, PP no. 14 (1911), 15; VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 88.

⁹⁹ Brereton, “Origins of the Victorian Apprenticeship Commission,” 66.

prioritising productivity over the advancement of the masses.¹⁰⁰ These concerns were all raised despite apprenticeships no longer delivering quality outcomes. Meanwhile, Clark believed engagement between industry-connected organisations and government departments would better serve senior technical schools.¹⁰¹

Some forward-thinking employer groups recognised connection to their local technical school offered opportunities to influence teaching while gaining direct access to the best and brightest students. The SMB Council supported day release for apprentices and sought employer cooperation.¹⁰² For example, the Ballarat Master Employers' Association announced trade class attendance would be compulsory for its apprentices.¹⁰³ Training young staff placed a productivity burden on employers just as more experienced workers left for the battlefields of World War I. In what might be considered a public relation move, SMB established an apprentices' bureau.¹⁰⁴

It was not until 1928 that a landmark *Apprenticeship Act* was passed. Students were now required to reach a minimum standard of education prior to acceptance as a trade apprentice, a concept that had been rejected almost twenty years earlier.¹⁰⁵ Technical school attendance was compulsory, which boosted numbers but divided cohorts. Importantly, once requisite trade and educational standards were achieved, a final certificate of proficiency was issued. Official Victorian apprenticeship trades with strong applied art and design content included Lithographic Printing, Photography, Printing (Composing), Process Engraving, and Signwriting.¹⁰⁶

TECHNICAL ART CURRICULA

South Kensington: The colonisation of art education

Introduced in 1852, the National Course of Instruction emanated across Britain from the central hub of the National Art Training School, London, formerly the Government School of Design and later Royal College of Art, (RCA). Under what is commonly referred to as the South Kensington system, art was an academic discipline that prized technical prowess and immaculate draughtsmanship. Aesthetic taste was empirical, concrete and based on the art of

¹⁰⁰ “Argus, 4 April 1915” and “Courier, 18 April 1916” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰¹ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 35-37; Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 48.

¹⁰² “Argus, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰³ “Courier, 30 May 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰⁴ SMB, *Annual Report* (1915), 2.

¹⁰⁵ VED, PP no. 14 (1911), 19.

¹⁰⁶ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 18.

classical and Renaissance traditions. It was the archetypal model of teacher-centred education, and success was measured via standardised testing to demonstrate the ability of students to regurgitate teacher knowledge.¹⁰⁷

Students worked systematically through an inflexible curriculum of drawing and modelling, delivered as multi-level ‘Stages of Art Instruction’, from one through to 23 with several sub-stages each. Students laboriously copied reproductions of historical artworks, architecture, and artefacts. Skills were taught step-by-step in a ‘walk before you run’ process. Only after perfecting one step (for example, copying an outline drawing) could the student proceed to the next stage (such as replication of a shaded drawing). The centralised management of the RCA was key to the program. Success at examination and the National Art Competition was significant to teachers wishing to furnish the reputations of their school. To “ensure absolute uniformity” all work submitted to the competition had to adhere strictly to the Stages of Art Instruction.¹⁰⁸ Individuality and personal expression were structurally muzzled.



Figure 1.3 **Students drawing a sphere.**
Mixed class of students at a drawing class, Brisbane Technical College. Photograph, c1900.
(Source: State Library of Queensland [SLQ], 78773, Public domain.)

The South Kensington system was one of Britain’s most successful cultural exports. It permeated British colonies including India, parts of Africa and Asia. It was pervasive throughout Australia in the nineteenth century despite falling short of expectations and

¹⁰⁷ Andrew Johnson, “Three views of teaching: transmission, transaction, and transformation,” accessed 1 November 2017, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/three-views-teaching-transmission-transaction-andrew-johnson>.

¹⁰⁸ Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 76.

comparisons with European competitors.¹⁰⁹ Students around the world were inculcated into the mannerisms of an art history that was not necessarily their own. The difficult nature of achieving advanced art teaching qualifications in Australia also contributed to the dominance of RCA trained staff here, as we shall discover later. Australian schools and art galleries became “great repositories of South Kensington’s exports, both artistic and human.”¹¹⁰ Art teachers, principals and government inspectors were further agents of its consecration and replication.¹¹¹ Stankiewicz describes it as a form of cultural imperialism.¹¹²

The ubiquity of the South Kensington system can be ascribed to the widespread tentacles of Britain’s empire. However, its ready adoption suggests it was relatively easy to transplant and implement in many situations. The step-by-step stages simplified teaching, standardised examinations required few assessors, and some international schools sent work directly to London, where it could be examined alongside the work of English students. Fennessy describes the system as “an early form of educational franchise.”¹¹³

By the 1880s, the system was attracting criticism for being slow, vicious, and antiquated. French-born Alphonse Legros (1837-1911) raged that in spending “six weeks or a month in shading up a sphere; [students] get no ideas into their brains.”¹¹⁴

Altered aims

The RCA’s original objective was to deliver practical, applied art training to support industry (without stepping on the toes of the fine art Royal Academy school). Problematically, Britain’s Board of Education only recognised RCA qualifications so by the 1880s the college was prioritising teacher education ahead of designer training. As late as the 1920s, manufacturers continued to criticize the RCA for directing potential designers into teaching instead.¹¹⁵

The cyclical process of educating teachers to train other teachers was also disparaged. Some argued students should learn from experienced artists and craftspeople rather than other

¹⁰⁹ Stankiewicz, “Constructing an International History of Art Education,” 5.

¹¹⁰ Jordan, “The South Kensington Empire,” 39.

¹¹¹ Bourdieu, “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” 13, 26.

¹¹² Stankiewicz, “Constructing an International History of Art Education,” 8.

¹¹³ Fennessy, “All Together and at Once the Practice,” 68.

¹¹⁴ Statement made by Alphonse Legros, Slade Professor of University College, in Great Britain et al, *Second Report of the Royal Commissioners on Technical Instruction: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty*, vol. 3, (London: Printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1884), 199, 200.

¹¹⁵ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, “The Royal College of Art,” 16.

teachers, but efforts at reform were largely unsuccessful and progress was glacial. In 1975 Henry Moore (1898–1986), sculptor and one-time staff member compared the college to “a snake eating its own tail.”¹¹⁶ The RCA ouroboros, over-run by trainee teachers, left a void in applied art education for others to attempt to fill.

Perhaps one of the greatest criticisms of South Kensington, was that it was largely paper-based, and rarely taught the application of design to material or purpose.¹¹⁷ Students were unfamiliar with materials and the curriculum failed to dovetail with industry. The system limited creativity, originality and experimentation, and examiners were considered ill-experienced to judge practical work. Thus, the system afforded little practical value.

Among others, British art workers’ guilds began to rattle the established curriculum; among them William Lethaby (1857–1931) at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London, Walter Crane (1845-1915) in Manchester, and Robert Catterson-Smith (1853–1938) in Birmingham. Less concerned with training educators, these schools managed to avoid much of South Kensington’s prescribed teachings. During the inter-war period, Catterson-Smith added drawing and modelling from memory and nature to his curriculum, innovations credited with influencing “every level of art education.”¹¹⁸ Similar subjects were taught in Australia, suggesting South Kensington was losing its grip on the antipodes also. Over time, alternative approaches incorporating spontaneity, natural development, and self-expression emerged.¹¹⁹ Eventually, even the RCA was forced to incorporate new approaches.

Recasting a cast-iron system

Britain’s art education experience has been deeply investigated, providing surveyor marks by which to consider the Australian technical art experience.¹²⁰ Fennessy ascertains the “combination of technical and creative disciplines” characteristic of Australian design education distinguished it from Britain’s estranged design, technological and fine art

¹¹⁶ Henry Moore in the *Sunday Times* 25 May 1975, quoted in Cunliffe-Charlesworth, “The Royal College of Art,” 17.

¹¹⁷ Charles H. Caffin, “What Can I Do to Help the Industrial Art Movement?” *The Artist: An Illustrated Monthly Record of Arts, Crafts and Industries (American Edition)* 25, no. 236 (1899): xxxiv-xxxvii, xxxvi.

¹¹⁸ Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 140.

¹¹⁹ Stankiewicz, “Constructing an International History of Art Education,” 5, 7.

¹²⁰ For example: Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*; Cunliffe-Charlesworth, “The Royal College of Art”; John Swift, “Chapter 5: Birmingham and Its Art School: Changing Views 1800–1921,” in *Histories of Art and Design Education Collected Essays* (2005); E. J. Milton Smith, “Art Teacher Training in Britain (1852-1985) with Special Reference to Leeds,” *Journal of Art & Design Education* 4, no. 2 (1985): 103-146.

institutions.¹²¹ Still, it has been argued Australian technical education in general was hamstrung between 1890 and 1930 by prescribed aims that limited diversity of endeavour and approach.¹²² In 1927 however, Clark pre-empted such criticism, explaining “no false impression” should be made about the progress of technical instruction in the preceding 15 years. Progress, according to Clark, had indeed been made.¹²³ Wherever the truth lies, technical art education offers a tangential story to that of science and trade instruction.

In 1901, Art Inspector Monkhouse identified an imbalance in some art schools favouring fine art subjects over industrial work, noting his predecessor’s syllabus was nine years old and “apt to confuse”, but his attempts at reform were stalled.¹²⁴ Drawing Inspector, Carew Smyth, would not draw a boundary between technical and fine art, and argued the “very finest fine art is technical art”, citing the Sistine Chapel as an example.¹²⁵ He reiterated his position ten years later; “I do not recognise the term ‘fine arts’ at all.”¹²⁶

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Art School was slow to change under the 42-year directorship of Lindsay Bernard Hall (1859-1935) who held staunchly to old-fashioned, South Kensington-style methodologies.¹²⁷ Art Inspector Carew-Smyth was frustrated by the school’s limited approach, its failure to teach modelling, and the paucity of industrial art held in its collection. The board were unbending, but Carew-Smyth would later exert his influence.¹²⁸

Fine artists, at least, could find pedagogical alternatives to South Kensington via private providers, who were free to operate outside the academic sphere. Technical art schools did not have the same latitude, and syllabi changes were more conservative, yet, they delivered a far more extensive course of study than most fine art schools. External examination was not compulsory (unless for a teaching certificate) and art schools were free to offer non-examined subjects, thus not all training was driven by testing.

Carew-Smyth stressed the importance of studying both design and its material application. His approach often aligned with that of Arts and Crafts icons.¹²⁹ In 1901 he cited Britain’s

¹²¹ Fennessy, “All Together and at Once the Practice,” 87.

¹²² Murray-Smith, “A History of Technical Education in Australia,” 728, 797 and 822.

¹²³ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 26.

¹²⁴ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 491.

¹²⁵ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 499.

¹²⁶ Victoria, Board of Inquiry into the Working Men’s College, *Final Report*, PP no. 14 (1911), 128.

¹²⁷ Young, “Commercial Art to Graphic Design,” 7; Topliss, *Modernism and Feminism*, 29.

¹²⁸ Jordan, “The South Kensington Empire,” 40.

¹²⁹ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 2 (1908), 65.

Birmingham Municipal Art School as a sound model of integrated art and trade.¹³⁰ Locally, he nominated the Ballarat West Technical Art School (his old charge, by then under Herbert Smith) as an example of good practice, claiming its connection between skilled craft and technical education was to be found nowhere else in Victoria. Honourable mentions were given to technical schools in Geelong (the Gordon), Sale and Echuca.¹³¹ Aside from the pleasures of craft, Victorian technical art students should produce commercially saleable, beautiful and utilitarian items.¹³² With some minor tweaks, Carew-Smyth's new syllabus was accepted by a conference of technical school teachers in 1904.¹³³

By 1915, Victoria's government, educators and journalists were familiarising the public with Munich's art and craft schools which melded 'high art' and its application to industry.¹³⁴ When Carew-Smyth updated the Victorian technical art curriculum that year, some art examinations barely changed yet new courses augmented them.¹³⁵ Throughout his time as inspector, Carew-Smyth pressed for a broad creative curriculum built on the bedrock of drawing, design and modelling; "upon which all adequate expression rests."¹³⁶ He encouraged each technical art school to develop an individual character, explaining staff should be free to teach according to their own philosophy and methods, "without being over-ridden by copying other people."¹³⁷

That BTAS accepted staggered enrolments, sometimes 20 or 30 new students per term, suggests lessons were not only stratified per cohort, but that a certain amount of individual teaching was delivered to cater to diverse skill levels. Certainly, BTAS was not wedded to a dogmatic system. Former student, Alan T. Bernaldo, noted "when young I was spared much of a rigid art schooling."¹³⁸ State-wide examination, however, enforced stricter boundaries.

¹³⁰ VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP Second Session no. 3 (1909), 75.

¹³¹ VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 11, 1907), 65.

¹³² VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 11, 1907), 65; VED, PP no. 1 (1905), 67; and "Victoria Is to Be Australia's Chief Manufactory," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 10 July 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article130687955>.

¹³³ VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1905), 67.

¹³⁴ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 53. Other mentions include "Star, 21 April 1915, the Minister for Education in "Australasian, 11 March 1916" and "Argus, 4 April 1915" SMB Cuttings(1907–1916).

¹³⁵ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 9.

¹³⁶ VED, PP no. 12 (1912), 105.

¹³⁷ "Bendigo Art School," *Bendigo Independent* (Vic.), 19 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219782427>.

¹³⁸ Allan T. Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours: Recollections* (Frankston, Australia: Heritage Book Publications, 1976), 25.

Examination and assessment

Bourdieu and Passeron assert examinations are the “clearest expression of academic values and the educational system’s implicit choices”; they are tools to inculcate “the dominant culture and the value of that culture.”¹³⁹

Examination was at the crux of the South Kensington system, comparing like with like, and deviation from prescribed curricula distracted from efforts toward successful examination.¹⁴⁰ Problematically, global submissions sent to London for assessment were likely imbued with elements of their local cultural milieu. When tested uniformly, these variations suggested difference which should not have existed.¹⁴¹ Similarly, some early Australian colonial schools felt disadvantaged compared to their English counterparts, as students did not have access to the same libraries, museums and opportunities.¹⁴² Central examination provided the illusion of equity and equal opportunity, which was not always the case.

BTAS teaching staff facilitated in-house examination and assessment at the end of each term (quarterly until the late 1920s when the year was divided in three terms). These results were particularly useful for subsequent class planning and, together with teacher reports, were sent home to parents.¹⁴³

Around October each year, Art School staff forwarded a list of students examination entries to the Victorian Education Department, 1,100 in 1924, and industrious preparation ensued.¹⁴⁴ Departmental examinations were voluntary (except for teachers) and, where published, did not list failures until 1936, so do not provide accurate data on the success or otherwise of student cohorts or certain institutions. Examination indicated a student’s efficiency but was not necessarily an accurate reflection of all learning. Meanwhile, trade examiners were appointed by the Department, raising concerns they might be unfamiliar with the subject, teaching approach, or intended learning outcomes.¹⁴⁵

Having experienced the complexity of South Kensington’s staged examination as a London student, in 1906 Carew-Smyth simplified the Victorian system of examination, reducing the

¹³⁹ Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, 142.

¹⁴⁰ Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 76.

¹⁴¹ Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, 142.

¹⁴² Lindsay Broughton, “Essay: A Place for Art,” in *A Place for Art: A Century of Art, Craft, Design and Industrial Arts Education in Hobart*, eds. Lindsay Broughton, George Burrows, and Elizabeth Lada, (Hobart: University of Tasmania in conjunction with Hobart Technical College, 1988), 37, 47.

¹⁴³ Smith, “29 April 1921,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 54.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, “15 October 1924,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 121.

¹⁴⁵ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report, PP no. 29 (1901)*, 282.

number of sub-divisions and adding subject depth and breadth. Schools were not obliged to teach all available subjects.¹⁴⁶ In 1907, the year the amalgamated BTAS was established, Carew-Smyth reflected on the early results of his initiative, claiming more unity in instruction, increased economies and effectiveness, and greater efforts from teachers and students. He presented the view that each subject was a sub-division of the “one great subject”, art, and believed his syllabus allowed greater freedom in teaching.¹⁴⁷ This suggests some subjects may have been undertaken in a more cross-disciplinary way.

Yet, removing staged assessment had unintended consequences; systematic learning suffered and resulted in many sub-standard submissions, according to Carew-Smyth. Frustrated by poor quality work he asked instructors to weed out unprepared students prior to examination.¹⁴⁸ This request was to save time, effort and possibly student humiliation. Carew-Smyth was sole art examination assessor at the time and, according to a colleague, was so kind-hearted he hated to fail anybody.¹⁴⁹ In 1909 he attempted to lighten his workload by recruiting four leading technical school staff for assistance, two from Sale, one from Geelong, and Herbert Smith from Ballarat. Some unrepresented schools objected to the potential for bias, and so the idea was not repeated.¹⁵⁰ Assistant Art Inspectors were eventually employed; several were BTAS graduates.

To combat the extreme quality variations, Carew-Smyth reluctantly re-instituted staged examinations for some subjects, and added an Honours mark to the long-standing Credit and Pass marks, delivering wider classification and highlighting students of advanced skill.¹⁵¹ The Elementary stage hoped to filter out underperforming students and thus raise the standard of work produced in the Advanced grades.¹⁵² Twelve months later, Carew-Smyth believed great progress had been demonstrated.¹⁵³

Annual Departmental exams were held concurrently across Victoria throughout November and December, keeping superintendents busy from 9.00 am to 10.00 pm, six days per week for several weeks. Applied examinations gave candidates two to three hours to produce a

¹⁴⁶ VED, PP no. 1 (1906), 29.

¹⁴⁷ VED, PP no. 11 (1907), 65.

¹⁴⁸ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP Second Session no. 3 (1909), 75; and VED, PP no. 6 (1913-14), 132.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Henderson Croll, *I Recall: Collections and Recollections* (1939), <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks15/1500211h.html>

¹⁵⁰ VED, “General Report in Art in Technical Schools by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 5 (1910), 70.

¹⁵¹ VED, PP no. 5 (1910), 28.

¹⁵² VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 105.

¹⁵³ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 94.

design which they subsequently produced in material form, often over a period of days. Until 1931, the headmaster and staff of a local primary school were paid to supervise BTAS exams, after which the unremunerated responsibility transferred to already hard-pressed BTAS staff. Instructors usually had one day's notice to source specified metals for repoussé, stones for carving, wood blocks to a certain size and type, sprays of designated plants, and random collections of objects to be assembled for still life compositions. Sometimes an 'elderly woman' or 'young girl of 12 or 14' would be rounded up to model.¹⁵⁴ Carew-Smyth himself recalled searching the streets of Ballarat East for "a certain tramp or rustic type" life model, offering his preferred example a "few honest shillings for posing." He was struck with embarrassment when the indignant prospective model explained he was the mayor.¹⁵⁵

Later chapters of this thesis interrogate Victorian Education Department examinations to illuminate what was expected of students in various disciplines. SMB elegantly bound all exam papers annually. Within examination questions one can identify constraints, including how much latitude the designer has for expression, originality and experimentation, methods of production, as well as social, political and cultural context.¹⁵⁶ Smith annually reported the school's high pass rate as evidence of its "reputation for sound teaching."¹⁵⁷ However, the visibility of examination, compared to other teaching and assessment, must be considered to avoid unduly elevating its importance.

CHAPTER ONE CONCLUSION

Ballarat was home to some of Australia's oldest technical institutions but by 1907 the State government was unable to justify grants for multiple schools of art. Following some brutal debate, their amalgamation as the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) at the School of Mines, Ballarat (SMB), was an uneasy but ultimately very successful solution. Claiming its earliest origins from 1870, BTAS was the first technical art school in Victoria (excluding Mechanics' Institutes).¹⁵⁸ It avoided becoming a mere adjunct of the science and trade-based SMB thanks to Council foresight in effectively creating a dual principalship, providing significant autonomy to Herbert H. Smith.

¹⁵⁴ VED, *Examination Papers*. Bound collection of Ballarat School of Mines and Industries; Federation University Historical Collection. (Melbourne: Education Department, Victoria, 1915-1939), "Modelling the Head from Life," and "Drapery," 1915.

¹⁵⁵ "Courier, 21 March 1936," SMB Cuttings (1936-48).

¹⁵⁶ Teal Triggs, *Type Design: Radical Innovations and Experimentation* (New York: Harper Design International, 2003), 9.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, "29 February 1928," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 171.

¹⁵⁸ Quoting William Moore, "Courier, 2 December 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

Entering the twentieth century, Victorian primary school instruction was invigorated by an emerging atmosphere of educational reform and child-centred pedagogies. John Byatt instituted elementary craft work, founded on holistic sloyd principles, to State schools. However, special responsibility for art education sat with Inspector of Drawing, and later Art Inspector, Ponsonby Carew-Smyth who oversaw syllabi, examination, assessment, and art teacher training at all year levels, eventually with the aid of assistants. As early as 1922, historians emphasised his contribution to art education and its increasing value.¹⁵⁹ The oversight granted to the Art Inspector is a point of differentiation with other Australian States which may have advanced Victorian art education.¹⁶⁰

During almost thirty years as an Inspector, Carew-Smyth aimed for a broad creative curriculum founded on drawing, design, and modelling. Across year levels, he elevated drawing from an undervalued afterthought to a central pillar of education on par with academic subjects. His first Australian role was heading the Ballarat West Technical Art School, a predecessor of BTAS. As such, he had special and valuable connections with the city and its people, particularly former student and BTAS principal, Herbert H. Smith.

The influence of the State's art inspectors cannot be understated, yet there were other opinions which would shape the evolution of Victorian technical education; among them first Director of Education, Frank Tate, and Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark.

A passionate educationalist, Tate's reformist agenda aimed at the democratisation of education, where all children would have access to equal learning opportunities, thus he preferred generalist, multipurpose curricula. From 1910, this extended to newly established district State high schools. Problematically, high school teachers favoured academic classes over technical training subjects, limiting scope and leading to unfortunate student distinctions. Alarmed by this tendency, Donald Clark felt the solution was parallel institutes of secondary education: junior technical schools. Clark was perhaps Victorian technical education's most powerful defender, with strong opinions about its importance and the specialist nature of its teachers. Junior techs were established across Victoria to diversify educational opportunities for young teenagers and better prepare them for entry into senior technical schools. Frustratingly for Clark, existing prejudices migrated. Senior and junior schools embodied different intentions, philosophies and responsibilities but were sometimes conflated when discussed or criticised. This could reflect poorly on senior schools. Despite

¹⁵⁹ Sweetman, Long and Smyth, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 245.

¹⁶⁰ Dimmack, "Art Education in Australia," 3.

this, many stakeholders were supportive of senior technical education but differed in their ambition and approach.

Senior technical and schools of mines delivered classes to varied cohorts, including supplementary training for apprentices. Technical art schools prioritised the application of art to industry, which required a broader syllabus than standard ‘fine art’ schools.

The South Kensington system underscored the art education of British colonies for decades, centrally positioning London and prioritising Renaissance and classical aesthetics. Easily transplanted and adopted, it suited almost global franchise, but its instruction and value were limited. It met art-teacher needs to a point but failed to adequately prepare artists for industry. Over decades, South Kensington methods were modified to diversify instruction and content. Yet even as the Victorian curricula expanded, technical prowess, skill, and discipline ascended creativity in many subjects, particularly drawing and modelling.

Carew-Smyth reconfigured the established South Kensington framework and infused Art and Craft movement ideas, discarding distinctions between fine and applied art. He asserted the importance of modelling and the practical application of design to material. Despite seeking originality and innovation in student work, Carew-Smyth favoured systematic training, which tended to suppress experimentation and play.

Changes to senior technical art curricula were sluggish by comparison to other divisions, perhaps partly because suitably qualified teaching staff were largely South Kensington trained. The Art Inspectors’ over-arching responsibility meant standardised tests were necessary for efficient comparison and marking. However not all subjects were examined, and not all students undertook examination. Nor were pedagogies overly prescribed. In fact, technical art schools were encouraged to customise teaching to suit their staff, student cohorts and local industry requirements. BTAS was not wedded to an iron-clad system.

Chapter 2

Ballarat Technical Art School

COMMONALITIES AND DIVERGENCE

From its amalgamation in 1907, the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) went on to claim a unique reputation as “first Art School in the State” and boasted, its “qualified students are singled out by the Education Department as teachers and organisers of Industrial Art in other centres.”¹ The position was supported by local stakeholders and, significantly, by the Australian Natives’ Association (ANA) which in 1914 recognised it as “the best of its kind in the State.”² How did BTAS come to be identified as such?

The application of art to industrial processes, crafts and trades was of chief concern to technical art schools. Some offered a generalised program, others directed training toward local industries. Not all, however, were on an equal footing when it came to governance, staffing, funding, or engagement.

BTAS catered to working and prospective artists, designers, and teachers; some attended for a term or two, others spent several years achieving formal qualifications. The school’s success can be variously attributed to community, industry and administrative support, its infrastructure and equipment, its staff and, of course, its graduates. Yet, one man’s story is threaded throughout much of the school’s history.

HERBERT SMITH’S PRINCIPALSHIP

Let critics chaff: we students laugh / To hear their idle bleating.

The School advances—Herbie dances— / Time’s long; but art is fleeting.³

Between 1907 and 1940 most of Ballarat’s art students worked under the oversight of principal Herbert Henry Smith (1875-1957). Smith is conspicuous by his absence from biographical glossaries; perhaps another expression of the perceived inferiority of technical educators relative to private, pictorial art teachers. That is not to say Smith himself was

¹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1917), 3.

² SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 6; ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, 1914*, 65.

³ *SMB Magazine* (1922), 13.

disadvantaged. As the child of early Ballarat colonists, he was likely a well-connected member of the community.⁴



Figure 2.1
Herbert Henry Smith
(FedHC.)

Technical art school leaders had wide influence, both directly and as teachers of teachers, yet when they receive credit, it tends to be for long tenures that wrought institutional growth and stability. Perth's James W. R. Linton (1869-1947) and Hobart's Lucien Dechaineaux (1869-1957) are two such examples.⁵ The principalships of both men coincide with Smith's, thus deeper comparison would make interesting future research.

Smith was neither elite artist nor aloof bureaucrat, and engaged with the school's staff, students, graduates, and wider community. Smith was an enthusiastic advocate for his charges, supporting and promoting their activities, pushing for improved accommodations and equipment, forging industry networks and eliciting scholarships, particularly for those facing hardship. Despite his standing, Smith humbly described himself as an art teacher.⁶ The turn-out for his retirement alone indicates the warmth and respect with which he was held.

Smith had been one of Ponsonby Carew-Smyth's early students at the Ballarat West Technical Art School when it opened in 1892, later joining him as an assistant teacher.⁷ Smith afterward described Carew-Smyth's methods as revelatory.⁸ Smith won several prizes including the gold medal for best all-round work in 1893 and passed several subjects alongside Margaret Cromby Young, Martha Pinkerton and Albert E. Davies.⁹ Smith notes he also studied at Ballarat's East school and the School of Mines, but this training is often overlooked, perhaps to legitimise a superior position for the gallery school. In 1890 Smith passed three examinations at SMB, winning a First Certificate at the Ballarat stage of the

⁴ "Personal Items," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 20 July 1907, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article211065874>.

⁵ Anne Gray, "Linton, James Walter Robert (1869–1947)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (MUP, 1986), accessed 5 November 2019, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/linton-james-walter-robert-7202>; Margolin, *World History of Design*, 413; Erickson and Hugo, *Art & Design in Western Australia*.

⁶ Ancestry.com. *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

⁷ "Country News," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 17 March 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article9868531>; "Ballarat Art School," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 08 May 1895, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article203161277>; *SMB Magazine* (1916), 21.; Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 200.

⁸ "Courier, 8 April 1940," *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948).

⁹ "Ballarat School of Art and Design," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 14 March 1893, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209783816>; "Technical Schools Examinations," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 1 February 1894, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8727097>; "Art Gallery Technical Association Art School," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 10 June 1896, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article207487297>.

Australian Juvenile Industrial Exhibition the following year.¹⁰ These early studies informed his work as a lithographic artist at Rider and Mercer.¹¹

Around 1903 Smith studied at the Royal College of Art, London, exhibiting and winning at the National Art Competition. His qualification is variously described as an Art Masters' Certificate and Bachelor of Education. Either way, by 1907 he was a Certificated Teacher of the Board of Education, London.¹²

The relationship between Herbert Smith and Carew-Smyth, which spanned several decades, likely had significant implications for the Ballarat Technical Art School. As Smith's art teacher, Carew-Smyth later joked that Smith "made very careful enquiries" about him prior to joining the classes.¹³ On his promotion to the Sale Technical School in 1898, Smith registered deep regret at leaving Carew-Smyth, whom he praised "as a master and man."¹⁴ When Carew-Smyth became the Education Department's Inspector of Drawing the following year, he continued to receive Smith's support, particularly through favourable comparisons to art inspector Monkhouse, whom Smith believed old fashioned and ill-suited to the role.¹⁵ At the 1901 Royal Commission, Smith suggested "a first-class man who has had a great deal of experience, born and bred in a technical school; who is a good organiser, and who has proved himself as a teacher" should oversee Victorian art education. There was little doubt he was picturing Carew-Smyth, who also firmly believed all levels of State art education should fall under a single administrator.¹⁶ Both Carew-Smyth and Smith favoured practical art. They viewed the subject holistically, objected to the fee-per-subject model and supported implementation of a Technical Art Certificate. Both men recommended redevelopment of the outmoded South Kensington-born syllabus.¹⁷

¹⁰ *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 11 July 1890, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209708466>; "The Australian Juvenile Industrial Exhibition," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 26 May 1891, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209715593>.

¹¹ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 467; M. M. McCallum, *Ballarat and District: "Citizens and Sports" at Home and Abroad*, (Ballarat, 1916), 96, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-35901089>.

¹² McCallum, *Ballarat and District*, (1916), 96; "Advertising," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 27 September 1907, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article211073060>; SMB, *Ballarat School of Mines Technical Art and Trade Schools: Prospectus for Year 1908* (Ballarat: Ballarat School of Mines, 1907); "Courier, 11 June 1912" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹³ "Courier, 24 July 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907-1916).

¹⁴ *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 11 February 1898, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article215789612>.

¹⁵ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 467.

¹⁶ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 468, 498.

¹⁷ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 468, 499, 500.

Smith also used the Fink Commission platform to claim many schools of mines were kept afloat by their art departments and subsidised by inequitable art teacher pay. Smith was presumably an outlier, out-earning his science counterpart at Sale at the time.¹⁸ There was no doubt, however, that mining and metallurgical courses were suffering across Victoria. Under Smith, Sale students were producing “uniformly good, and often excellent” work.¹⁹ Yet Smith sought more. Driven by ambition or curiosity, he travelled to England to study in London and survey “the best and most modern methods of instructing the artisan.”²⁰ It was Ballarat students who would benefit from his experience.

When Carew-Smyth became drawing inspector in 1899, he was succeeded as director of the gallery’s Ballarat West school by South Australian artist and Education Department examiner, George Alfred Reynolds (1854-1939).²¹ The school was found to be “working on sound lines” by the 1901 Commission as Reynolds steered art toward greater industry application.²² However, following an unhappy five-year tenure, the Ballarat Fine Art Public Gallery council sought his resignation based on falling numbers, student complaints (mostly from women) and an unfavourable report by inspector Carew-Smyth. From Reynolds’ perspective, he had taken charge of “a sinking ship” with an undermining council, deaf to his concerns of being outpaced by competition from the East (library) school. That the gallery school’s failings should be pinned on him was infuriating; “I have not the slightest desire to retain my position as director of your school”, he responded. As a parting curse, Reynolds cast doubt on the future of both the gallery and its school.²³

Three months later, in April 1905, Herbert Smith (recently returned and brandishing a new qualification from London) was appointed Reynold’s replacement, from nine applicants.²⁴ In an irksome twist for Reynolds, the school reportedly went ahead “in proverbial leaps and

¹⁸ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 156, 468.

¹⁹ Quoting Carew-Smyth in “Sale Technical School,” *Gippsland Times* (Vic.), 5 November 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article65325484>.

²⁰ “Training of Teachers,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 22 January 1904, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197235713>; *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 04 May 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210356809>; William Moore, *The Story of Australian Art (Volume I)*, 2 vols. (Sydney, Australia: Angus & Robertson [Originally published 1934], 1980), 229.

²¹ “Mr. G.A. Reynolds,” *South Australian Register* (Adelaide, SA), 13 June 1899, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article54386094>.

²² Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 181, 182.

²³ “Art Gallery Association Technical Art School,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 20 January 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page21331901>.

²⁴ “Personal Items,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 12 April 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210354940>.

bounds”, attracting more students and higher fees.²⁵ Despite a brief but nasty brush with pleurisy, Smith ended the year in good spirits, marrying Florence Allender.²⁶

Building on his diverse student experiences, Smith aimed to render the gallery school “an increasingly valuable auxiliary in the cause of technical training.”²⁷ He proposed greater interaction with industry and community organisations with a view to eliciting donations. If achieved, this would allow curricula expansion and establishment of a scholarship fund. In direct competition with the East school, he sought to add carpentry, architecture, and needlework classes. Supported by gallery authorities, Smith began a series of deputations to win hearts and minds.²⁸

Smith also solicited for more physical space, particularly for the introduction of sloyd classes and to accommodate apprentices, but the Education Department stalled in reply.²⁹ The question of finance that led to the traumatic amalgamation of East and West schools was likely an unintended consequence of Smith’s ambition for his school. While James Powell was at pains to dispel the idea that “an animus exists” between East and West schools, the gallery school dominated media reports post amalgamation, despite the East’s strengths.³⁰

When the State government offered the SMB council absorption and control of both institutions, Smith’s elevated profile primed him to manage the new Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS).³¹ He was offered the role as principal, taking time to deliberate before he was likely pressured to decide. Smith began in a temporary role in May 1907, which became official in September.³²

Smith’s principalship was not without teething problems. When council suggested Smith had breached their instructions, he responded with a letter of complaint, only to be criticised for his intemperate tone. The administration sought to rein him in.³³ Yet it was Smith’s bold

²⁵ “School of Art,” *Geelong Advertiser*, 13 January 1906, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article149162538>; *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 17 June 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209019039>.

²⁶ “Personal Items,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 4 August 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209023704>.

²⁷ *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 16 May 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210357952>.

²⁸ “The Art Gallery Scholarships,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 23 May 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210358682>.

²⁹ “Art Gallery Technical School,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 12 January 1906, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209223675>; “Grenvilleshire Council,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 23 June 1906, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210677616>.

³⁰ “The East and West Again,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 31 May 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210359525>.

³¹ “Art Schools Amalgamation,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 15 February 1907, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210889331>.

³² Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 200.

³³ Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 260.

approach that contributed to the success of BTAS. The Education Department was often in receipt of requests from Smith, directly and via the SMB council, for improved funding, accommodation, equipment, and teacher training and pay.³⁴

As Smith settled into his role, he set about creating a collegiate culture, cultivating students as teaching staff. The SMB council later noted that Smith's position was "unique in that he has trained his own staff."³⁵ Smith boasted that BTAS "commanded a leading position in the State" and had achieved "a State and inter-State reputation", enabling students to "rise to the highest positions offered by their calling."³⁶ In 1916, Smith was in charge of "the only first-class Art [School]" in Victoria (apparently classified by the Education Department) and the largest drawing centre for school teachers.³⁷

Staffing decisions were often initiated on Smith's recommendations, with subsequent agreement by inspector Carew-Smyth acting as a conduit between Smith and the Department. On occasion he notified Smith of commission opportunities and graduate positions. Yet Carew-Smyth attempted to remain impartial. The *Ballarat Star* suggests it would be difficult for the school "to find a keener critic, albeit a sympathetic one."³⁸

In 1926 Carew-Smyth joined the WMC to establish an art teacher training college. No doubt delicate conversation ensued between Smith and Carew-Smyth. Not unreasonably, Ballarat feared the move would be to the detriment of local programs. However, the greater impediments were to be the appointment of Melbourne-centric William Dean as Art Inspector, and the retirement of Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark. The spectre of centralisation loomed.

Smith's power within SMB and his advocacy for art is demonstrated by his equal footing with science principal Charles Albert Fenner (1884-1955), and the parity of their remuneration, both earning £400 per annum in 1914. Smith's pay soon nudged ahead.³⁹ Smith, as principal/director worked alongside five SMB (science and trade) principals,

³⁴ For example: SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (January 1918); "Courier, 21 July 1937," SMB Cuttings (1936-1948) and throughout Smith, *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929* and *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*.

³⁵ Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 376.

³⁶ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 6.

³⁷ McCallum, *Ballarat and District*, (1916), 96.

³⁸ "Star, 5 September 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921-1924).

³⁹ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 30, 1914), 11; Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916).

including Maurice Copland whose untimely death in 1920 saw Smith act in both roles until Copland's replacement, Augustus Frederick Heseltine (1881-1957), was appointed.⁴⁰

In addition to his administrative load as principal, Smith taught a range of subjects, including advanced design, anatomy, and several drawing classes.⁴¹ He subsequently extended his teaching duties to junior boys and girls.⁴²

The value of providing technical education to women was clear to Smith, who was a strong voice in the development of a female counterpart to SMB's Junior Technical School, the Girls' Preparatory Technical Classes (GPS). When classes began in 1916, they were dominated by technical art subjects, and Smith added their oversight to his other duties, continuously pressing to extend its curriculum.⁴³ Huge student growth had left the art school overflowing, so the redundant gaol governor's cottage was repurposed for the GPS, with Education Department funds.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, it became highly unsatisfactory yet long-term accommodation. Throughout, the art school "maintained its reputation as the first Art School in the State", attracting students, commissions and many government scholarships while producing sought-after graduates.⁴⁵

The importance of scholarship opportunities was not lost on Smith, who continued to attract donations and gifts, key successes being the MacRobertson scholarship, the Pinkerton bequest, and ongoing support of the Ladies' Art Association of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery.⁴⁶

Smith was a shrewd promoter of the school. In 1934, nine years after his initial meeting with William Moore, BTAS was the only regional institution represented in the two-volume *Story of Australian Art*.⁴⁷ He was not averse to forwarding complimentary personal correspondence to the local newspapers. One such letter from architecture and draughting graduate, W. Elliot Gower, upon winning a competition to design the Spencer Street bridge, Melbourne, expressed "Any success I may have had is but the reflection of your personal interest and

⁴⁰ "Courier, 5 April 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁴¹ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 15.

⁴² SMB, *Annual Report* (1914), 3; Murray, *A History of the Ballarat Technical School*, 19.

⁴³ "Courier, 27 June 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁴⁴ SMB, *Annual Report* (1919), 4; "Courier, 29 January 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁴⁵ "Courier, 29 October 1921," "Star, 28 October 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 7.

⁴⁶ Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 1940, FedAHC, Ballarat, February 21, 1940.

⁴⁷ "Courier, 2 December 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934).

kindness so freely given me.” Gower went on to wish Smith “health and long life” to continue his work.⁴⁸

Smith actively championed technical art education in general. He had been vocal at the 1901 Royal Commission, and when the Technical Art Teachers’ Association was formed in 1904, Smith was elected Secretary.⁴⁹ Invited to represent Victoria at the Dresden Art Congress in 1912, it “weighed heavily with him” that he was unable to attend.⁵⁰ Smith made regular deputations to parliament and the Minister of Education seeking better funding and systemic changes for schools across Victoria.⁵¹ He frequented technical school conferences and, in 1924, was elected vice-president of the revived Victorian Art Teachers’ Association.⁵²

When the new BTAS building opened, Smith was clearly proud of the strides he and other advocates had made, noting he was “the happiest man in Ballarat that day”; and still he harnessed the opportunity to press for further government funding.⁵³

Smith advocated for, and corresponded with, past and current students. In 1921 he urged the SMB council to recognise their art studies with formal documentation, in line with certificates and diplomas offered by other disciplines.⁵⁴ He was quick to defend the reputation of students and the school against criticism and supported student-initiated endeavours, attending fundraising activities and contributing donations.⁵⁵ Smith accompanied students on excursions and, on several sad occasions attended their funerals, sometimes acting as pall-bearer.⁵⁶

Herbert Smith was not only an administrator and teacher, he also practised art where possible. Within the school, he directed or oversaw numerous commissions for student work, sometimes taking a hands-on role.⁵⁷ In 1915 he designed the BTAS building, its interior, and fittings. In 1918 he ultimately defeated eight competitors for the right to design Ballarat’s

⁴⁸ “Courier, 2 December 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁴⁹ “Technical Art Teachers,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 April 1904, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article10316707>.

⁵⁰ “Courier, 11 June 1912” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

⁵¹ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (January 1917); SMB, *Annual Report* (1917), 5.

⁵² “Missionaries of Art,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1921215>.

⁵³ “Courier, 24 July 1915,” “Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

⁵⁴ “Courier, 1 August 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁵⁵ *SMB Magazine* (1917), 6.

⁵⁶ “Courier, 7 September 1933,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); “July 1922,” “Courier, 7 April 1923” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁵⁷ For example: “Star, 15 August 1921,” “Courier, 27 May 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

Arch of Victory, the gateway to the city's Avenue of Honour.⁵⁸ This project alone illuminates much about Smith, whose designs were originally sought by those responsible for the avenue, local business, E. Lucas & Co. Pty Ltd and its 'Lucas Girls' association. Smith treated the project as an Art School commission, with students developing and prototyping Smith's design.⁵⁹ Lucas delegates largely approved designs, but some thought alternatives should be sought. Diplomatically, Smith suggested a public competition. Nine designs were submitted, including one by formidable Lucas supervisor, Mrs Matilda (Clennell) Thompson (1871-1959), reportedly the originator of the Ballarat avenue idea.⁶⁰ Messrs Lucas paid two representatives of the Institute of Architects to judge, which "they did in a flattering report in favour of the School's design."⁶¹ To Smith, this was a satisfactory result from a fair and open process; but the not-to-be-thwarted Thompson decided to veto the decision and have the Lucas Girls judge. Many designers would be familiar with the sentiment of Smith's response:

"Mrs Thompson considers [the School's design] not sufficiently impressive & freakish enough, & her own design & one of the others superior, [... there is...] a very big chance of an inartistic monstrosity being thrust upon the public for all time, resulting from such incompetent & immature judgement. Personally, I feel the Council & public bodies who have contributed to the avenue should enter a protest."⁶²

Indeed, protest was made, Smith and judges defended, and explanation sought.⁶³ Ultimately, design credit for the built Arch is contestable. Smith is credited by some sources.⁶⁴ Others at

⁵⁸ Bate, *Life After Gold*, 74; Beggs-Sunter, *A Centre of Culture*, 11.

⁵⁹ Smith, "30 August 1918," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 13.

⁶⁰ For an impression of Tilly Thompson, see Peter Mansfield, "Thompson, Matilda Louise (1871-1959)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 2 February 2020. <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/thompson-matilda-louise-8791/text15417>; and Philip Roberts, "Avenue and Arch: Ballarat's Commemoration," (PhD thesis, Ballarat, Australia), 2018, 181-82.

⁶¹ Smith, "30 November 1918," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 18-19; "Avenue of Honor Entrance," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 18 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154784692>.

⁶² Smith, "30 November 1918," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 18-19.

⁶³ Letter to the editor by 'Non-Competitor', "Entrance to the Avenue of Honor," *Ballarat Courier* (Vic.), 25 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article73546684> (also published in the *Evening Echo* (Vic.), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article241749189>, and *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154780958> on the same date); Letter to the editor by 'CMAV', "Avenue of Honor Design Competition," *Ballarat Courier* (Vic.), 27 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article73546968>; First letter to the editor by 'Excelsior', "Entrance to the Avenue of Honor," *Ballarat Courier* (Vic.), 28 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article73547045>; Second letter to the editor by 'Excelsior', "Entrance to Avenue of Honor," *Ballarat Courier* (Vic.), 07 December 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article73548200>.

⁶⁴ Victoria, Heritage Council, "Avenue of Honour and Arch of Victory," last modified 9 March 2006, accessed 2 February 2021, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/4220>.

least contributed to final working drawings.⁶⁵ Regardless, the project was a valuable experience for students, who reportedly also executed the arch's bronze tablets.⁶⁶

Anniversaries and reunions allowed students to express their respect and gratitude for Smith. Leading into his twentieth year as principal, students acknowledged BTAS owed its pre-eminent position to “the wise guidance, the persistent effort, the grit and determination of our Principal.”⁶⁷ April 1930 saw the jubilee of Smith's principalship (including two years at the Gallery school) and an overall association of thirty-two years. Celebrations included a soiree at Alexandra Tea Rooms for 120 guests and a reunion exhibition, where Smith was complimented for the “initiative and efficiency” with which he operated the school.⁶⁸

When Smith was obliged to retire in 1940 it marked the end of more than fifty years' association with BTAS and its predecessors as student, teacher, and principal. Smith's three-day retirement celebration began with an informal staff farewell on Thursday morning, followed by a livelier student gathering ending in “Three cheers for Mr Smith, given with plenty of volume and sincerity.” In what Smith described as “a glorious finish” a large student reunion was held on Saturday evening. His gifts included a ‘smoker's outfit’ and whiskey decanter and glasses.⁶⁹

On passing the baton to Donald I. Johnston (a former student and assistant of several years), Smith was presented with his likeness, captured in oils, by another celebrated graduate and former colleague, Amalie Feild Colquhoun. The portrait, purchased by the H. H. Smith Testimonial Committee, was unanimously accepted, and hung in the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery.⁷⁰ Perhaps the most telling gift was the attendance of more than 100 friends, associates, and past students.

Credited with building a school reputation “second to none in Victoria, if not in Australia”, Smith oversaw the success of hundreds of students, many landing leadership positions. He was complemented for keeping abreast of new developments and implementing his clear vision with “vigor, perseverance and personality.” Smith acknowledged his ambition to

⁶⁵ “Arch of Victory,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 29 May 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article211907444>; Roberts, “Avenue and Arch,” 149; Monuments Australia, “Arch of Victory,” accessed 2 February 2021, https://monumentaaustralia.org.au/australian_monument/display/30181.

⁶⁶ “Avenue of Honor,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 18 October 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213373445>.

⁶⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1924), 14.

⁶⁸ *SMB Magazine* (1930), 35.

⁶⁹ “Courier, 5 April 1940,” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948).

⁷⁰ “Courier, 19 April 1940” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948).

succeed. He paid tribute to Carew-Smyth and James Oddie for establishing the original gallery school and felt indebted to long-serving SMB president, William Middleton, who was absent due to illness. In acknowledging his staff, Smith singled out long-standing associates Margaret Crosbie Young and Thomas Trengrove (both present).⁷¹

Following retirement, Smith received an Acknowledgement of the City.⁷² He sometimes returned to the school to judge competitions, kept the local newspaper informed of alumni activities, and donated a collection of valuable books to the BTAS library, some of which have informed this research.⁷³

BTAS students believed Herbert Smith would “go down to posterity as one of the great pioneers in the development of Art Education in our State.”⁷⁴ This thesis may contribute to their prophesy.

GOVERNANCE TUG-OF-WAR

The School of Mines, Ballarat, (SMB) and its subdivisions were governed by its council, however, like all technical schools it relied heavily on financial grants from the State government, and as such was answerable to it. Slowly but surely the Victorian government pursued control of all technical schools, including schools of mines. For decades, SMB strenuously and emphatically resisted such efforts, on both practical and prideful grounds. Council-controlled schools had been historically successful, while governmental takeovers of technical schools in South Australia and New South Wales were considered unsuccessful.⁷⁵ Yet by 1927 all but four Victorian technical schools (Ballarat, Bendigo, Melbourne’s Working Men’s College, and Swinburne) had yielded to departmental control.⁷⁶

SMB president Middleton believed government management would limit initiative, innovation, and responsiveness, restricting schools’ ability to adapt to community needs. State control risked homogenised course delivery and teaching.⁷⁷ Yet, despite its independence, SMB operated within State frameworks, thus the government gained oversight in other ways; the ongoing provision of building and maintenance grants, teacher

⁷¹ “Courier, 22 February 1940,” “Courier, 8 April 1940” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 1940, FedAHC, Ballarat, February 21, 1940.

⁷² “Courier, 12 April 1940” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

⁷³ “Courier, 23 October 1940,” “Courier, 1 March 1941,” “Courier, 19 December 1941” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

⁷⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1924), 15.

⁷⁵ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 30-31.

⁷⁶ “Courier, 5 July 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁷⁷ “Courier, 7 May 1929,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

classification, and various other regulatory and compliance requirements were among the Education Department's points of leverage. The balance between autonomy and government recognition was a balancing act worthy of the most acclaimed tightrope walker.

The concept of training, as distinct from education, also opened technical instruction to influence from powerful community and industry groups. It may seem an additional burden but was in fact largely advantageous. After all, local stakeholders made valuable contributions to technical schools via council membership. These relationships allowed insight, information, and flexibility with regards to training and employment. Councils were the hub of networks that connected students with industry, and employers to a graduate pool. Donations were given, scholarships established, and advocates created. In comparison, a centralised bureaucracy might overlook these local interests.

To its advocates, technical education was so complicated and diverse compared to primary and secondary education, that it warranted different treatment. Council wished to govern SMB independently, in collaboration with industry, while demanding strong voices in parliament and the Education Department. BTAS was subject to most of the machinations affecting its parent institution.

THE MATERIAL THINGS

SHOW ME THE MONEY...

Victorian technical art schools were predominantly funded via three streams: government grants and subsidies; private subscriptions and donations; and student fees. Each funding body anticipated expenditure decisions to prioritise their political or social motivations, influencing institutional resilience and course delivery.

The Education Department supported both its own and council-operated schools with infrastructure, maintenance and equipment grants of varying value, and requests for extra assistance were not always met. As large institutions struggled, smaller regional schools battled for their very existence, stretching their meagre government subsidies. The State government urged town councils to contribute, maintaining it was they who benefited from industry stimulation and a locally developed workforce. In return, municipal representation would be provided for within school councils. Problematically, Education Department

attempts to control schools alienated communities and provided municipalities with an excuse to shirk responsibility. Diminished interest also reduced local fundraising.⁷⁸

Income from fees varied with student attendances, thus larger schools were advantaged. The Melbourne Working Men's College (WMC) was able to allocate 62 per cent of fee revenue to salaries and maintenance in 1922, while SMB assigned 15 per cent and smaller schools managed less than seven per cent.⁷⁹ Unsalaries teachers relied on per-capita fees for income, which no doubt encouraged them to maintain good student numbers. Some also received free tuition in higher-level courses as payment for teaching elementary subjects.⁸⁰ Single subject or short-term classes had fluctuating attendances, whereas consistent income from two to five-year courses assisted school planning, with higher fees paid pre-examination to avoid non-payment upon failure.

The cost of training excluded some students. Fee reductions and scholarships helped address the problem, but discounted fees curtailed schools' incomes.⁸¹ State investment to remove fees would have improved educational standards, but detractors felt the likelihood of non-completing students would render their education "a waste of money."⁸² An income-based fee structure was posited, but met with strenuous opposition.⁸³ The Commonwealth was unsuccessfully urged to shoulder some financial burden for technical education.

Technical schools were influenced by the fluctuating, and sometimes contrary, positions of ministerial and departmental personalities. However, supporters, advocates and allies could build institutional immunity to protect against the changing tides of social, economic, and governmental fortunes. Australian communities had no shortage of public spirit but lacked a leisured class of idle rich willing to fund schools in large measure, thus local contributions varied. Still, several philanthropists lent their social, political and fiscal support to Victorian technical training, believing "private wealth should be used for public benefit."⁸⁴

Magnanimous gifts were the wellspring of some technical schools, such as the Eastern Suburbs Technical School (Swinburne). Although lump sum contributions were few and far between, grass-roots campaigns were the lifeblood of several institutions; locals in

⁷⁸ VED, PP no. 12 (1920), 22.

⁷⁹ "Age, 1 May 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁸⁰ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (July 1915), 3.

⁸¹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1916), 1.

⁸² "Courier, 24 July 1915" and "Star, 19 November 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

⁸³ "Star, 30 May 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁸⁴ Alison Patrick, "Swinburne, George (1861–1928)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 20 April 2016, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/swinburne-george-8729>. For further examples, see MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*.

Warrnambool, Kyneton, Bairnsdale, Maryborough, and Castlemaine bore significant costs for their schools. Prahran Technical Art School was erected following extraordinary local effort, and the people of Geelong rallied to assist The Gordon.⁸⁵ For much of their early history, SMB and BTAS benefited from the generosity of locals and alumni through donations of cash, scholarships, prizes, equipment and specimens, and books and materials.⁸⁶

SMB initially received local support well above other technical schools.⁸⁷ In the 30 years to 1910 it received more than £13,000 in donations compared with £9,000 to WMC, £3,633 to Bendigo and £491 for Bairnsdale. Of course, all paled in comparison to the £22,000 gifted to the University of Melbourne, possibly advantaged by the tax-deductible nature of donated contributions. Despite efforts, gifts to other Victorian educational institutions did not share this status.⁸⁸ By 1927, Ballarat's fiscal generosity for its SMB was waning.

Accommodating art: infrastructure issues

Around 1908, Carew-Smyth believed Australia was losing work overseas because Australians were unable to translate specifications into reality.⁸⁹ Hamstrung by this visual illiteracy, industries realised art schools might have something to offer them.⁹⁰ Attitudes were shifting, but conversation did not necessarily convert to currency.

Carew-Smyth reported technical art schools languished in poor accommodation and claimed inadequate provision of advanced instruction in Melbourne. In 1901 he noted the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Art School was unsuitable and of negligible influence on applied art, while the run-down infrastructure of the WMC, considered an “elementary trade school”, rendered it ill-positioned to cope with increasing demand. He therefore recommended a new institution be built, a Central School of Technical Art, operating from Melbourne to serve Victoria.⁹¹ This specific vision did not materialise, not least because regional towns reacted

⁸⁵ Refer: VED, PP no. 1 (1906), 55; VED, PP no. 1 (1905), 64; “Prahran Technical Art School,” *Prahran Chronicle* (Vic.), 12 August 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article88440302>.; VED, PP no. 49 (1915), 79; and VED, PP no. 5 (1910), 94.

⁸⁶ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (April 1916).

⁸⁷ Murray-Smith and Dare, *The Tech*, 74.

⁸⁸ “Courier, 29 August 1911” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 33. The case for equal taxable status was made regularly by the Council of Public Education, see VCPE, PP no. 16 (1923), 5; VCPE, PP no. 23, (1925), 4; VCPE, PP no. 21 (1926), 7; VCPE, PP no. 19 (1928), 6; VCPE, PP no. 14 (1929), 7.

⁸⁹ “Technical Art School,” *The Riverine Herald* (Echuca, Vic.: *Moama, NSW: 1869 - 1954; 1998 - 1999*). Monday 20 July 1908, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article114868588>.

⁹⁰ VED, “General Report in Art in Technical Schools by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 5 (1910), 69.

⁹¹ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 207; “Technical Education,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), Wednesday 25 June 1902, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199393167>.

negatively to the “curse of centralisation.”⁹² Indeed, the Commission report warned it would be unwise in the extreme to ignore regional people in favour of centralisation.⁹³ Donald Clark agreed, asserting regional schools should cater to local industries. For a time, efforts toward centralisation were stalled.

Carew-Smyth’s recommendation of a central school is surprising, given his own success at the regional Ballarat gallery school. It perhaps reflects a poor view of his replacement, George Reynolds, and possibly fed an appetite for amalgamation of Ballarat’s art schools in 1907.

When Swinburne hit the drawing board in 1908, Carew-Smyth hoped it would be a model for blending art and trade, but “mistakes in both planning and lighting” handicapped the art curriculum until new rooms could be erected.⁹⁴ Art schools operated in sub-standard conditions across Victoria in 1914, including from an idle warehouse, a disused flour mill, and an old market building. Carew-Smyth pressed government for new buildings at WMC and the amalgamated Ballarat Technical Art School, and for improvements in Bendigo, Castlemaine, Stawell and Echuca.⁹⁵ The WMC, whose previous accommodation was condemnable, received a new building in 1915.⁹⁶ To cater to increased demand for art-based trade training, the Prahran Technical Art School opened in Melbourne’s south in 1916, headed by William Dean, who would later succeed Carew-Smyth as Art Inspector.⁹⁷

Other schools continued to struggle in inadequate, repurposed structures. By 1923, Gordon College was delivering applied art from its domestic art centre, Warrnambool was renting a leaky building, Sale was “hanging on by a thread” with a single art room, and Echuca was housed in an “old mill-building which was depressing and unattractive.” Several technical schools had ceased offering art altogether.⁹⁸ Poor housing for art schools was not isolated to Victoria.⁹⁹

⁹² “Courier, 30 August 1910” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 27; “Courier, 8 June 1916” (1907–1916), 99; “Courier, Tuesday 22 September 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹³ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 253.

⁹⁴ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 103.

⁹⁵ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 104.

⁹⁶ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 94; VED, PP no. 6, 1913), 131.

⁹⁷ “Prahran Technical Art School,” *Prahran Telegraph* (Vic.), 16 October 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article76603724>.

⁹⁸ Clark, *Reminiscences of Technical Education in Victoria*, 1923, 10.

⁹⁹ With special reference to South Australia, Weston’s thesis notes art schools commonly operated from repurposed buildings. Weston, “The Professional Training of Artists in Australia,” 245.

The new Ballarat Technical Art School: ‘magnificently-built and equipped structure’.¹⁰⁰

In 1915, BTAS students attending scattered Ballarat sites were at last assembled within a new, state-of-the art building. Principal Herbert Smith had the luxury of designing the brick building and many of its bespoke interior features and fittings using Australian timbers. The two-storey, centrally located, Lydiard Street South building featured separate, well-lit rooms for modelling, mechanical drawing, painting and life drawing, photography, and an ‘antique’ room to house the school’s collection.¹⁰¹ The opening was a grand, two-day affair that attracted politicians, public servants, educators and other stakeholders who praised their predecessors, and each other, in speeches that risked the audience being “bored to death.” The pomp and celebrations were a world away from the preparations being made at Gallipoli for the August offensive. The war had triggered debate about technical education and training globally, and these issues did not go unmentioned in the opening speeches.¹⁰²

The new accommodation was described as the largest and best equipped in the Commonwealth, and it was expected to further the school’s established celebrity.¹⁰³ The photography equipment was considered unsurpassed in Victoria.¹⁰⁴ The Victorian Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, intimated it should attract students from across the State, particularly as the government could not afford such a school in every regional centre.¹⁰⁵ For other schools suffering accommodation woes, this was probably not welcome news.

¹⁰⁰ “Courier, 1 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰¹ “Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰² “Courier, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰³ “Courier, 24 July 1915,” “Ballarat Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 66; and “Technical Education,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), July 24, 1915, 19.

¹⁰⁴ “Courier, 29 April 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁰⁵ “Ballarat Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

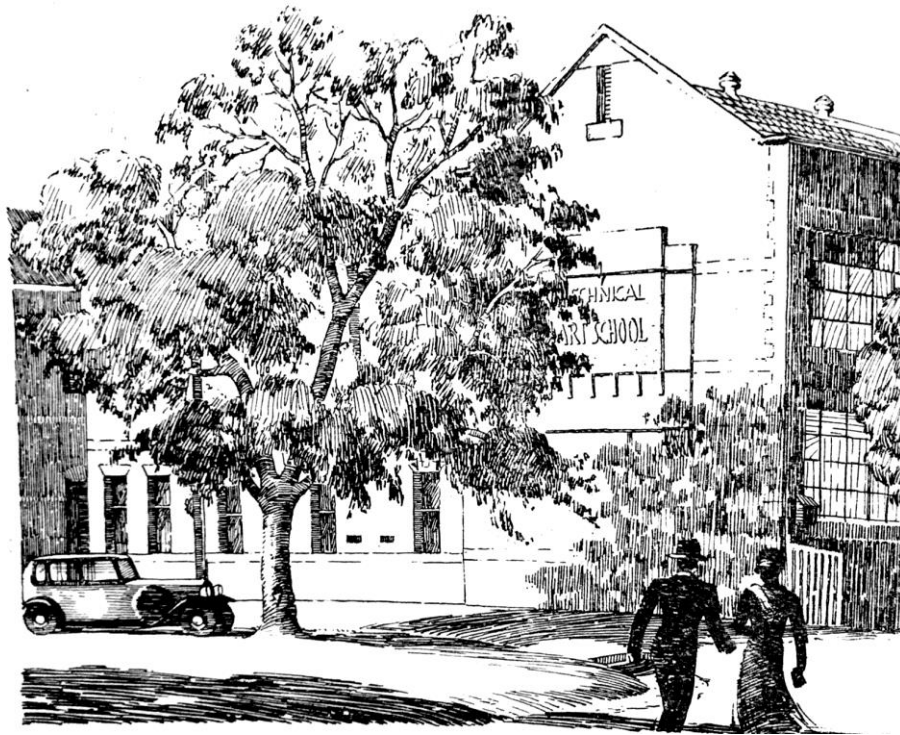


Figure 2.2 Donald Refshauge. *Ballarat Technical Art School*.
Pen and ink sketch. Reproduced from *SMB Magazine*, 1932, p17.
(Federation University Historical Collection. Public domain.)

Increasing enrolments continued to tax existing accommodation and equipment, so SMB and BTAS agitated for better government funding. When self-paced correspondence courses began to threaten bricks and mortar schools, SMB warned prospective students “Don’t Waste Your Time and Money”, instead promoting the personal attention and supervision of its expert instructors in well-equipped rooms.¹⁰⁶ Yet BTAS offered at least some correspondence tuition to students “residing at a distance.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ “Star, 24 November 1914” *SMB Cuttings* (1907–1916).

¹⁰⁷ Smith, “28 February 1919,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 22.

Libraries and Collections

Art and design collections of historical and contemporary examples were crucial to students learning from an archetype-centric curriculum like South Kensington. Even as pedagogies changed, collections were valuable sources of reference and inspiration, and a properly stocked and accessible library was a critical stepping-stone on a path of life-long learning.¹⁰⁸

Australian students had few opportunities to see original examples of the art canon, so a quality technical library and collection were essential.¹⁰⁹ Yet many technical art schools were disadvantaged for lack of them. In 1905, only six technical art schools had a standard book of reference on historic ornamental styles.¹¹⁰

Monkhouse suggested the Education Department, given it contributed nothing to student materials, should furnish each school with recommended books.¹¹¹ His successor, Carew-Smyth, concurred and suggested it create a circulating collection from which schools could borrow, similar to the long-standing South Kensington model in Britain. The Department already had a working base of books, photographs, casts, objects, and examples of applied art, as well as samples of student work. Carew-Smyth foresaw this collection operating from a central school and museum of technical art that never materialised.¹¹² Perhaps its closest iteration was the Melbourne Industrial and Technological Museum, located near the WMC. Ballarat students travelled to view its collection.¹¹³

The Ballarat West Technical Art School (gallery) library had been founded through the efforts of Carew-Smyth's earliest students and continued to operate post amalgamation through a nominal subscription of one shilling per term for students (later incorporated into school fees) and 10 shillings per year for the public.¹¹⁴ Some other schools created libraries under similar conditions, yet BTAS' library distinguished it from many. Carew-Smyth was

¹⁰⁸ Charles Long, "The School Library" in ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, 1914*, 9; MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 22.

¹⁰⁹ VED, "General Report on the Art Work done in the Technical Schools of Victoria, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1904), 69.

¹¹⁰ VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1905), 67.

¹¹¹ VED, "General Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse," PP no. 28 (1903), 89-90.

¹¹² Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 242; Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 500; VED, "General Report on the Art Work done in the Technical Schools of Victoria, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1904), 69; "Applied Art: Its Money Value," *Weekly Times (Melbourne, Vic.: 1869 - 1954)*, Saturday 30 July 1910, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article221771691>.

¹¹³ "19 August 1925," "15 September 1926," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 138, 152; "16 September 1931," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 33.

¹¹⁴ SMB, *School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, Official Calendar 1909*, (Ballarat, 1909), 64; Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 138.

still urging Bendigo to create a suitable art library in 1918.¹¹⁵ Remarkably, BTAS was years ahead of the Sydney Art School which opened its student library in 1930 with 109 books and 47 magazines.¹¹⁶ Within the new BTAS building, “a spacious apartment containing lofty walls lined with glazed cupboards filled with books” allowed expansion, including many new books, periodicals and art magazines. A Reading Club met quarterly to discuss new articles and a Library Fund was established.¹¹⁷ By 1920, BTAS teachers, such as Olive Fricke and Elsie Joy, undertook librarian duties.¹¹⁸ In 1922, a collection approved by the Education Department, who matched the school’s financial contribution, was purchased. By 1927 the library had grown to such an extent that a librarian position (female) was advertised. The role was undertaken by Miss Wright until 1931, when long-time student, Edwin Robinson, was appointed “Attendant Librarian” for free tuition and £1 per week during school weeks. More books were purchased.¹¹⁹

If quality libraries were scarce, limited reference material, such as plaster replicas, meant it was impossible to deliver some drawing subjects “in anything like a complete and systematic manner.”¹²⁰ Preparing students for State-wide examinations was impossible if schools did not have equitable access. The repetition of subject in some exams affirms the limited availability and diversity of casts.¹²¹

For decades, plaster copies of classical and renaissance statuary were distributed across the globe for the express purpose of artistic study. James A. Powell was conflicted about the Ballarat gallery school’s collection practices; wanting quality local displays while condemning the British government’s efforts to “ransack the world for rich and rare specimens of ancient and modern art, with which to enrich [its] great store-houses.”¹²²

¹¹⁵ “Bendigo Art School,” *Bendigo Independent* (Vic.), 19 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219782427>.

¹¹⁶ Sydney Art School, *The Art Student* (1930), 25.

¹¹⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1916), 23; *SMB, Annual Report* (1915), 4; Smith, “29 August 1919,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 32.

¹¹⁸ Smith, “30 July 1920,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 50.

¹¹⁹ “*Courier*, 27 November 1922,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924); Smith, “28 July 1922” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 80; Smith, “18 February 1931” and “17 June 1931,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 25, 29; “*Courier*, 11 June 1927,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

¹²⁰ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 1 (1905), 67.

¹²¹ For example, the ‘Clapping Faun’ in VED Exams, “Drawing the Antique from Memory,” 1915 and 1924 and “Drawing the Human Figure from Casts” in 1917; ‘Bronze Hercules’, “Drawing the Antique from Memory,” 1927 and 1930, “Drawing the Human Figure from Casts,” 1916, “Modelling the Human Figure from Cast,” 1924; Discobolus “Drawing the Antique from Memory,” 1926, “Drawing the Human Figure from Casts,” 1930, and “Modelling the Human Figure from Cast,” 1922. In the 1921 “Drawing the Antique from Memory” exam, Bendigo students drew ‘Suppliant Youth, while Ballarat was assigned ‘Diadumenos’.

¹²² Powell, *Retrospective Synopsis*. 15.



Figure 2.3 **Students working in the Antique Room at the Ballarat Technical Art School.**
Drawing from the Antique. Photograph, 22.0 x 16.5cm. c1920.
 (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 04247. Public domain.)

BTAS was one of the few schools with an excellent collection, advantaged by its inheritance from antecedent institutions. The assemblage consisted of copies of art and ornament, including replicas of the so-called Elgin Marbles; ancient Greek sculptures plundered from the Parthenon in Athens. Further consignments of European statuary were purchased from Brucciani and Co. London with a special grant of £148, and belatedly delivered in the early 1920s. The reproductions of “famous ancient and modern masters’ work” were predominantly figurative “life & heroic size statues, statuettes”, full length, bust and relief examples. Smith sought and received an additional £70 Departmental grant to purchase display pedestals. Partitions were removed and classrooms rearranged to accommodate the extended collection.¹²³ Smith also sought models for the Architecture & Building Construction classes, listed for £76 in the “Cussons Catalogue”, but their agents, Selby & Co., quoted a significant mark-up of £254. Smith thought the Department could bring their buying power to bear, particularly if other schools were seeking sets.¹²⁴ An additional three

¹²³ SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 27 October 1922, 11; “Courier, 30 April 1923,” “Courier, 27 October 1923” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); Smith, “27 April 1923” and “25 May 1923,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 93, 96.

¹²⁴ “27 May 1921,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 55.

dozen models, casts, carved panels and architectural examples were purchased in 1926, and a further £127 order for “Plaster Figure, Ornament & Architectural casts”, 12 building construction models and 25 large, architectural lecture diagrams was delivered in 1928.¹²⁵

Over the years, BTAS received gifts to further its collection, including reproductions of decorative panels from the Hotel de Ville, Paris, presented by Carew-Smyth in 1915 and a parcel of English advertising posters from Frank Tate in 1924.¹²⁶ Martha Pinkerton gifted a number of books in 1931, including Owen Jones’ *Grammar of Ornament*, *Nature in Ornament* by L. F. Day, and Redgraves’ *Manual of Design*.¹²⁷ Smith himself donated a collection of valuable books, some of which have informed this research. In 1941, Carew-Smyth’s daughter donated several of his drawings, architectural and ornamental designs.¹²⁸

BTAS students also had access to the SMB Museum; although it is unclear how much they referenced it, as a proposal to display local industries and arts did not proceed.¹²⁹ However, it housed some striking items. Miss Tinney donated a range of New Guinean weapons, domestic objects and crafts, raw materials, and even a canoe. Mrs Lilian Wooster Greaves gave her father’s collection of dried and mounted West Australian wildflowers. Mr Read Murphy, who unearthed the “skeletons of two blackfellows” near Narringat Creek, presented one to SMB and in 1922, Mr Cooper gave “a fine collection of [Australian] native weapons and utensils”, demonstrating how collecting practices have since altered.¹³⁰ Dilapidated accommodation and poor visitor numbers resulted in periodic museum closures. As funds dried up, its doors were permanently closed. In 1959 freshly appointed SMB principal, Harry Arblaster, unceremoniously dumped much of the collection in order to repurpose the museum as a recreation hall.¹³¹ The history of the museum warrants its own researched story.

It is important to note that the power of donations, particularly of cultural goods, transmits and reinforces cultural influences. In the case of stylistic innovation, donations can accelerate their diffusion and adoption. The nature of the relationship between donor and recipient also

¹²⁵ Smith, “28 July 1926,” “18 May 1927” and “16 May 1928,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 151, 161, 175; “Courier, 30 June 1928,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹²⁶ “Star, 29 March 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); “Courier, 14 June 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹²⁷ Smith, “16 September 1931,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 33; “Courier, 17 September 1931,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹²⁸ SMB, *Annual Report* (1940, 26 February 1941).

¹²⁹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 11.

¹³⁰ “Star, 15 September 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); “Star, 11 February 1922,” “Star, 6 March 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 15 May 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹³¹ Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 432; Beggs-Sunter, *Not for Self but for All*, 63.

affects its influence.¹³² The BTAS library and reference collection were financial and cultural investments that held both real and symbolic value, but the rise of modernism would eventually diminish its worth.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Technical teaching varied across Australia. The Fink Commission recommended standardised teacher qualifications across several States, but as late as 1943 a unified qualifications framework was yet to be established.¹³³ Donald Clark expressed the importance of professional development and occasional refreshment of industry-teacher cohorts, thus ensuring the relevance of courses. Still, he cautioned that a successful tradesperson did not necessarily make for a successful teacher.¹³⁴

For decades, the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) produced most of the State's art teachers, affording principal Smith first preference to approach any student he thought skilled, talented and a good fit for his own school. Many students completed their practical teacher training on site. Nurtured by Smith, BTAS boasted "highly trained and efficient teachers" whose role went beyond student instruction.¹³⁵ Smith explained, a "deep personal interest in the education and welfare of the students by the Staff has always been made a strong feature of this School."¹³⁶

Art teacher training is explored more deeply in a later chapter. However, some higher qualifications were so broad and time-consuming, that few people saw the value in undertaking them. Alongside qualification woes, teacher classifications and pay rates also generated confusion.

Staff remuneration and promotion

Teachers were pawns in the Education Department's long campaign for overarching control of technical schools. For many years, council-operated schools were directly responsible for the employment, pay and conditions of their teachers. The Department claimed these were

¹³² Dave D. Davis, "Investigating the Diffusion of Stylistic Innovations," *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 6 (1983): 54.

¹³³ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 138; and, Ernest P. Eltham, *Technical Education in War and Peace: An Address Delivered to the Members of the Institute of Industrial Management, Australia* (Melbourne: Institute of Industrial Management, 1943), 29.

¹³⁴ VED, PP no. 5 (1927), 31; and Clark, *The Future* (1927), 23.

¹³⁵ SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 11.

¹³⁶ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 6.

dead-end jobs with limited prospects, and promised its own staff better conditions, job security, entitlements, and greater opportunity for promotion. In 1923 the Education Department claimed equity for teachers across State school systems (excluding gender).¹³⁷

Councils unsurprisingly rejected this rhetoric; their teachers had freedom and flexibility, could enter and exit as required, and continue working beyond retirement age. At BTAS, industry practitioners were often employed to teach, particularly in single subjects and evening classes. Some were salaried, others paid a percentage of student fees.¹³⁸

Truthfully, the independent and isolated nature of council schools meant teachers found little opportunity for either pay rise or promotion. Competition for staff led to high turnover and disrupted teaching.¹³⁹ Salaries compared unfavourably with secondary high and junior technical school teachers.¹⁴⁰ For example BTAS instructor, Harold B. Herbert, a talented, experienced and qualified art instructor, earned almost £70 per annum less than the local secondary teachers who delivered elementary subjects on government wages.¹⁴¹ Without sufficient salaries, it was difficult for council-operated schools to attract and retain quality teachers.¹⁴² The pay disparity was exacerbated for women. The commencing salary for female manual arts teachers was less than 80 per cent of the male wage. Female teachers featured prominently at BTAS and were crucial to the success of most schools, yet the majority were greatly underpaid. With the Department requiring their resignation upon marriage, art schools were prone to lose valuable educators.¹⁴³ In his reports, Smith often lamented their departure.

In the 1910s, even general teachers were not adequately remunerated for their skills, making it difficult to recruit quality candidates into the profession. Technical teachers were harder to come by, and most applicants lacked knowledge or experience of technical education.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ “Age, 6 September 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹³⁸ For example, in 1915 the photography and art metal teachers were paid £40 per annum for 2 evenings teaching per week, while the instructor in drawing “for coach and motor body builders” received a percentage of student fees. SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (July 1915). In 1914, dressmaking teacher Mrs E Green took 85 per cent of student fees, while colleague, Miss J Wright, was paid £150 per year, Clark, Typewritten report from Chief Inspector on Technical Schools, 30 October 1914.

¹³⁹ “Courier, 17 May 1929,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 156.

¹⁴⁰ See: VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 86; and SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (September 1915).

¹⁴¹ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (September 1915).

¹⁴² VED, “Report of Donald Clark, Chief Inspector of Technical Schools,” PP no. 49 (1915), 78.

¹⁴³ “Courier, 10 November 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Victoria, Board of Inquiry into Certain Matters Concerning the Education Department, *Reports (Interim and Final) of the Board of Inquiry into Certain Matters Concerning the Education Department* (Melbourne, 1931), 13; ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts* (1914), 4. “General Report on Elementary Schools,” VED, PP no.5, 1927, 23.

¹⁴⁴ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 1 (1906), 55.

Even when suitably staffed, tensions could arise among personnel. Ongoing uncertainty from State government machinations left Victoria's technical teachers feeling insecure and devalued. In addition, staff with a commitment to the Education Department could be transferred with little notice, and even Council-appointed teachers required Departmental approval. Employment instability led to recruitment problems, unsatisfactory inspectorial reports could lead to sackings, and staff frictions affected school dynamics. In addition, administrators and teachers often held different views on both art and curriculum. In 1914, the WMC suffered a lack of camaraderie and cooperation which negatively affected student numbers.¹⁴⁵ The Gordon's art department suffered from change for almost three decades, only finding relative stability following the appointment of Clive Bate in 1928.¹⁴⁶ The Bendigo School of Mines blamed low art enrolments on friction between instructors, and raised the issue with inspector Carew-Smyth, who suggested, perhaps, it was council's expectation of teacher workload that was unrealistic.¹⁴⁷

The curriculum of smaller schools was restricted by the artistic specialities of a limited staff. In 1915 Sale, Horsham, Echuca, Kyneton and Nhill were all "practically one-man schools."¹⁴⁸ The addition of a Junior Technical School to SMB led to excessive workloads for some art staff who taught across both senior and junior sectors, sometimes up to 80 hours per week.¹⁴⁹

BTAS endeavoured to retain quality staff, but Herbert Smith felt he could not pay the salaries they deserved. At the opening of the new art building, Smith casually mentioned retrenchments to solicit more government funding, extorting, it would be a "pity after putting up such a fine building not to take full advantage of it."¹⁵⁰ The long tenure of many staff despite lower remuneration suggests strong loyalty to BTAS, or at least to Smith.

War compounded staffing difficulties. The Department were so concerned at losing qualified, specialist staff that teachers were required to communicate with the Director of Education prior to considering enlistment.¹⁵¹ Some schools were prepared to hold positions until teachers returned, even bridging the gap between their military pay and their school salary.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 45.

¹⁴⁶ Gordon Long, *The Gordon – A Century of Influence* (Geelong: Gordon Technical College, 1987). This history devotes only two pages to the institute's art programs.

¹⁴⁷ "Bendigo Art School," *Bendigo Independent* (Vic.), 19 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219782427>.

¹⁴⁸ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 93.

¹⁴⁹ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 105.

¹⁵⁰ "Courier, 24 July 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁵¹ Council of Public Education, Victoria (VCPE), "Report of the Council of Public Education", PP no. 18 (1916), 7; "Courier, 27 September 1915," SMB Cuttings (1907–1916). Triolo records that Donald Clark also sought to stem the flow of technical teachers enlisting. Rosalie Triolo, *Our Schools and the War*, Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012, 127.

¹⁵² "Argus, 24 July 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

A change in standing

Education Department rhetoric challenged council-governed staff arrangements and destabilised the special identity technical teachers had cultivated. Perhaps to regain some agency, the Victorian Art Teachers' Association, which had lapsed for several years, was resurrected in 1924. The all-male inaugural council included representatives from twelve schools. BTAS's Smith shared the vice-presidency with Prahran's William Dean, and Harold Brown was elected secretary.¹⁵³

Donald Clark continued to support the autonomy and advantages of council-operated schools. He argued for more studentships and better salaries to tempt successful tradespeople into senior technical teaching.¹⁵⁴ Disastrously, the 1926 *Teachers' Act* rendered the obstacles to appointing such teachers almost insurmountable.¹⁵⁵ The initial plan for three teacher classifications (primary, secondary and technical) was amended to two, despite forceful protest from Clark: "by the stroke of the pen ... all the teachers specially trained for technical work, [were] declared 'secondary teachers'."¹⁵⁶

Reclassification detracted from the specialist nature of technical teachers. Of 366 senior technical teachers, 342 were reclassified as secondary teachers, leaving only 24 within the professional division under the Public Service Commissioner.¹⁵⁷ New staff automatically went into the secondary division, and appointment as a senior technical teacher required glacial-speed approvals from three red-tape dispensers: The Education Department, the Public Service Commissioner, and a Cabinet Committee. Discouragingly, moving from primary or secondary to senior technical teaching was a one-way ticket. Teachers returning to primary or secondary level were sent to the back of the promotional queue.¹⁵⁸

SMB councillors were particularly concerned by the departmental approach to staff promotion. Formerly, their staff were selected, and promoted, based on their university study, senior technical training, or significant trade experience. State-paid teachers were instead promoted, in large part, according to seniority and length of service over merit, and were not necessarily suited to the industry standards of technical education. Union mergers in the same

¹⁵³ "Missionaries of Art," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1921215>, 11.

¹⁵⁴ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 23.

¹⁵⁵ VED, "Report on Secondary Education" and "Report on Technical Education," PP no. 5 (1927), 26.

¹⁵⁶ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 18.

Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 40.

¹⁵⁷ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 40.

¹⁵⁸ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 42-43.

year further muffled the voice of technical teachers.¹⁵⁹ The shortage continued as skilled people found industry wages more attractive than teacher conditions.¹⁶⁰ During the Depression, many institutions faced tough decisions. Ballarat had difficulty replacing art instructor John Rowell at a salary they could afford.¹⁶¹ Gordon staff took a 25 per cent wage cut, and single men were sent on leave without pay.¹⁶² The State's junior teachers had their wages frozen for 10 years. BTAS alumnus, Allan T. Bernaldo, explained his "financial equilibrium was often tilted into the red [...] by the miserly actions of certain officials in the Education Dept." To make ends meet he moonlighted as a commercial artist.¹⁶³ Salaries were not restored until the latter part of the 1930s.¹⁶⁴ The natural attrition of teachers to other roles was also to be expected.

When Clark vacated the Chief Inspector of Technical Schools role, only Education Department employees could apply, leaving senior ranks at council-controlled schools ineligible. The proviso was likely a deliberate turn of the screw in the battle for central control. If the Department hoped to avoid controversy when appointing Clark's replacement, they were to be disappointed.

ADVOCATES, ALLIES AND ENGAGEMENT

Competition and camaraderie

The changes that swept Victorian technical education post-Federation frayed administrative nerves as schools vied for finite government resources, strove to attract the best staff, and students competed for scholarships and prizes. Despite their rivalry, shared experiences and bureaucratic constraints fostered a sense of community and fraternity between technical school educators. Following a visit to Gordon Technical College in 1915, the SMB and BTAS principals reported; "close communications between the various technical schools can only be productive of greater efficiency and enthusiasm."¹⁶⁵ For example, in 1918, Daylesford Technical School invited Smith "to assist them in their efforts to advance that Institution."¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ "Courier, 22 November 1926," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁶⁰ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 23.

¹⁶¹ "Courier, 1 March 1928," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁶² Long, *The Gordon*, 28.

¹⁶³ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 16.

¹⁶⁴ "Courier, 18 February 1937," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁶⁵ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (April 1915).

¹⁶⁶ Smith, "28 June 1918," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 8.

Executive representatives of several Victorian technical schools attended the opening of the new BTAS building, indicating a supportive network; George Swinburne praised the new building as one of the most beautiful in Australia.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, collegiate toasts were raised following the formal opening of the Prahran Technical Art School where its director, William Dean, announced nothing was to be gained by one institution undermining another. In fact, Swinburne and Prahran promised to “be very good neighbours.”¹⁶⁸ Of course, such events satisfied rivals’ curiosity and provided access to government representatives yet, more importantly, they enabled teachers to network with one another. The formation of teacher associations formalised some of these relationships and generated a critical mass with which to pursue technical art agendas.

Perhaps students felt inter-school rivalry more keenly than their teachers, as it was encouraged via sport and other student activities.¹⁶⁹ When students lamented the loss of a favourite teacher, they cried “our good wishes follow you Miss Feild, even to the Working Men’s College.”¹⁷⁰

Of course, how each school fared was a matter of civic pride. Inter-town and inter-state rivalries had motivated such institutions for decades.¹⁷¹ According to Weston Bate, Ballarat’s rivalry with nearby cities, Bendigo and Geelong, “cemented localism.”¹⁷² SMB and BTAS were fortunate to have a range of advocates in their corner. Local newspapers, the *Courier* and *Star*, enthusiastically supported and defended them, reporting activities, letters from staff and council meeting minutes, and publishing examination results. On occasion, their reportage was also distributed to metropolitan and inter-state papers.

Ballarat Technical Art School Alumni

Past BTAS students were often referred to as ‘old boys and girls’ and their influence was widespread. Many students maintained a connection with the Art School, long after they had exited its halls. Some corresponded or made donations. Others visited, occasionally with guests in tow. Graduates maintained contact by subscribing to *The SMB Magazine*, or simply reading a newspaper. They were also invited to social gatherings, such as the annual ball.

¹⁶⁷ “*Ballarat Star*, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 66.

¹⁶⁸ “Prahran Technical Art School,” *Prahran Telegraph* (Vic.), 16 October 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article76603724>.

¹⁶⁹ The Ballarat *Courier* noted such activities maintained “a lively interest and rivalry in competition with other schools.” *Courier*, 17 February 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); see also “*Star*, 23 May 1924”, refer also to SMB Cuttings (1921–24).

¹⁷⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1927), 12

¹⁷¹ Candy, “The Light of Heaven,” in *Pioneering Culture*, 14.

¹⁷² Bate, *Life After Gold*, 116.

These connections were formalised from 1922 when the inaugural SMB Past Students' Association meeting was held (as distinct from the existing Old Boys' Association). An active group, members held meetings and reunions to maintain networks, and strove to "keep together for their mutual protection [and] advantage."¹⁷³ In doing so, they reinforced the reputation and status of the school. The Association financially supported *The SMB Magazine* and contributed its 'Echoes of the Past' pages. A Melbourne branch was established in 1928.¹⁷⁴

Alumni were central members of key art organisations including the Australian Art Association, the Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria, and the Australian Water Colour Institute.¹⁷⁵ Others represented teachers' associations.¹⁷⁶

Exhibitions were sometimes arranged to coincide with art school reunions. The first, held in 1930, drew 120 past students and featured works by A. E. Davies, Harold Herbert, Percy Trompf and Alan Bernaldo alongside that of current students.¹⁷⁷ The event amplified "the feeling of kinship" among past and present students.¹⁷⁸ Alumni were considered "one of the best advertising mediums" available to the school, so the Association and their functions were strongly supported.¹⁷⁹ Another forum of influence was the Annual Technical Schools Conference. In 1936 it hosted an impressive number of past student delegates.¹⁸⁰

A large gathering of alumni "representing practically every phase in the development of the Technical Art School" attended principal Smith's retirement function in 1940.¹⁸¹

Industry engagement

In 1901 the Royal Commission on Technical Education reported increasingly distant relationships between employer and employed, mostly owing to technological revolutions

¹⁷³ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (November 1930).

¹⁷⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1928), 36.

¹⁷⁵ Perhaps most notably, Harold Herbert, "Noted Artist's Death," *The Age*, (Melbourne, Vic.), 12 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206859826>. Moore, *The Story of Australian Art* (1980, 1934), 174, 176.

¹⁷⁶ For example, H. H. Smith championed the Technical Teachers Association, Trade Board, *Monthly Report, October 1914*, (1914), signed by chairman Frank N. King. When the new Victorian Art Teachers' Association was formed in 1924, Herbert Smith was elected Vice-President and Harold Brown as Secretary, alongside Victor Greenhalgh on its council, *SMB Magazine* (1924), 7; "Missionaries of Art," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1921215>.

¹⁷⁷ "Courier, 9 September 1930," "Courier, 2 August 1930," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁷⁸ *SMB Magazine* (1930), 1.

¹⁷⁹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1936), 6.

¹⁸⁰ SMB, *Annual Report* (1936), 4.

¹⁸¹ "Courier, 6 April 1940," SMB Cuttings (1936–48).

and the diminished nature of apprenticeship.¹⁸² Yet many education providers, industry groups and employers recognised the importance of mutual engagement. Frank Tate believed technical education needed to serve a range of interests and cater to workers, managers and employers.¹⁸³ The 1911 WMC inquiry claimed great benefits could be achieved if employer and artisan committees engaged with teaching institutions, even in an informal, advisory capacity.¹⁸⁴ Donald Clark also sought closer connection between schools and workshops, so that teachers and employers might be aware of each other's activities.¹⁸⁵

In Ballarat, members of the Master Employers' Association took an active interest, visiting SMB and officially attending demonstration nights to ensure classes met industry requirements, as did the Master Printers' Association. By September 1915, SMB was advertising their classes as a pre-requisite for employment with most Master Employers in Ballarat.¹⁸⁶ SMB staff liaised with local industries and employer groups, some represented on council. In return, the institution was appreciated for its contribution to local industrial development. President Middleton was himself a member of the Employers' Federation.¹⁸⁷ Vocational placement became important, particularly for the returned soldiers' cohort of World War I. Open channels of communication between schools and employers meant principals were often consulted when employees were sought. Technical school students were regularly exposed to industry through visiting lectures and site visits.¹⁸⁸ BTAS students among them.¹⁸⁹

BTAS reported strong employer uptake of its students.¹⁹⁰ The school received letters from businesses seeking suitable students, including commercial artists.¹⁹¹ Sometimes Smith was asked by employers to provide bespoke training to certain students preselected for a particular role; thus industry was directing teaching.¹⁹² Exhibitions of student work in various districts provided employers with the opportunity to recruit students directly.¹⁹³ A strong past-student network further facilitated industry engagement, employment and some important scholarships.

¹⁸² Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 94.

¹⁸³ Tate, *School-Power* (1908), 2.

¹⁸⁴ VED, PP no. 14 (1911), 11.

¹⁸⁵ VED, "Report of Donald Clark, Chief Inspector of Technical Schools," PP no. 49 (1915), 77.

¹⁸⁶ "Courier, 30 May 1915," "Courier, 9 June 1915," "Star, 18 September 1915," SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁸⁷ "Courier, 28 June 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁸⁸ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 29.

¹⁸⁹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1917).

¹⁹⁰ "Star, 28 October 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁹¹ "Stock & Station Journal, 14 February 1940," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁹² Smith, "17 July 1935" and "28 August 1935," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 87, 89.

¹⁹³ VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1938), 24.

Scholarships

Scholarships were important in the attraction and retention of technical students, and redressed decades in which scholarships were only awarded to intending university students. Merit-based, Government Senior Technical Scholarships provided free tuition and an allowance for certain three to five-year day or evening courses across Victoria. The quantity and disciplines were offered according to industry needs and included art subjects and technical art teacher training. Candidates were selected according to their qualifications and school records.¹⁹⁴

For several years, SMB was granted the largest regional proportion of these studentships, the bulk going to art students.¹⁹⁵ In 1918, 11 of SMB's 14 studentships went to the art department, compared with three at WMC and seven at Swinburne.¹⁹⁶ The next year, 13 of SMB's 17 scholarships went to the art school, including all the State's female evening and half the day scholarships.¹⁹⁷ Two years later, SMB won the largest number of student teacher scholarships in Victoria. BTAS alone received nine of the State's 55 technical scholarships.¹⁹⁸ The ongoing success of students in receiving these scholarships was used to endorse BTAS' reputation as "the first Art school in the State."¹⁹⁹ Donald Clark later hoped to extend international travel scholarships to promising teachers from a range of trades.²⁰⁰

In regions where agriculture was the key industry, schools of mines and art garnered little local support.²⁰¹ In 1915, the local Trade Board reported SMB's limited trade scholarships "compared very unfavourably" with other technical schools.²⁰² This likely prompted the SMB council to establish two full-course and ten evening scholarships of their own, which increased over the years.

Meanwhile, BTAS offered further scholarships, largely thanks to the efforts of principal Smith, who "vigorously solicited" them. He approached municipal councils, trade unions, industry and community associations, and private enterprise.²⁰³ Their value and diversity

¹⁹⁴ "Courier, 15 October 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); "Age, 14 September 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁹⁵ Clark, Report on the Ballarat Junior Technical School, 1915; SMB, *Annual Report* (1916), 5; SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (February 1917), 1; SMB, *Annual Report* (1917), 3.

¹⁹⁶ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (January 1918).

¹⁹⁷ SMB, *Annual Report* (1919), 2.

¹⁹⁸ "Courier, 4 February 1921," "Courier, 29 October 1921" SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁹⁹ "Star, 28 October 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁰⁰ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 24.

²⁰¹ VED, PP no. 28 (1903), 29.

²⁰² "Courier, 30 August 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²⁰³ Beggs-Sunter, *A Centre of Culture*, 9; Beggs-Sunter, *Not for Self but for All*, 62.

added to the school's ability to recruit and retain students. The Ballarat East Town Council donated over £10 in 1907, while some art classes still resided in the East's Public Library, and were asked to match it the following year.²⁰⁴ In 1918 they gave £6 to scholarships for Science, Art and Trade.²⁰⁵ From 1915 the Ballarat City Council offered ten studentships to BTAS, usually covering two sessions per week. However, by 1921 students from more than 100 state schools were competing for just five of them. Herbert Smith pressed for more.²⁰⁶ In addition, Education Department State School Studentships funded four sessions per week at the Junior and Intermediate Certificate levels, awarded by competitive examination.²⁰⁷

Local industries also stepped up. Stanfield & Smith provided two scholarships for boys undertaking Signwriting and/or House Decorating.²⁰⁸ From at least 1915 into the late 1930s, the Ballarat Typographical Association, later Society, (BTA) and the Ballarat Master Printers' Association (MPA) annually provided four 12-month scholarships to local printing students. Awarded on class work and examination results, they were clearly designed to keep students in school.²⁰⁹ From 1938 a group of Melbourne firms added to the available prizes.²¹⁰

The Ballarat Art Gallery Ladies' Art Association "cheerfully undertook" fundraising efforts toward a BTAS scholarship, on condition the recipient had artistic merit but was unable to pay the requisite fees. Their enthusiasm resulted in five such scholarships in 1908, and they provided at least £20 annually. The Association was the first women's art society in Australia and, by 1934 and with 300 members on the books, had distributed more than £1,000 in scholarships and prizes.²¹¹ By the time Smith retired, it had proudly assisted more than 100 students, who had "acquitted themselves with distinction."²¹²

²⁰⁴ Fred J. Martell, "Scholarship Request to Ballarat East Town Council," photocopy of letter: From Fred J. Martell, Director, SMB, to Mayor and Councillors, Town of Ballarat East, requesting funds of £10.10.0 for scholarships to students at the Art School, FedAHC, October 26, 1908.

²⁰⁵ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (February 1918).

²⁰⁶ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 10; "Star, 18 October 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁰⁷ Initially these junior scholarships provided four sessions per week at SMB but dropped to two in 1938. Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria*, 265; "Age, 14 September 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); Smith, "21 March 1934," "17 March 1937," "27 April 1938," "15 March 1939" *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 68, 119, 137, 152.

²⁰⁸ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 10.

²⁰⁹ "Courier, 4 February 1915," "Star, 15 December 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²¹⁰ SMB, *Annual Report* (1921), 2; "Courier, 11 September 1922," "Courier, 14 February 1923" SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); SMB, *Annual Report* (1938, February 22, 1939); SMB, *Annual Report* (1939, February 21, 1940), 6.

²¹¹ "Ladies' Art Association" *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 9 December 1908, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article-216773523>; SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 10; Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 172.

²¹² "Courier, 14 July 1938," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

Records indicate the Exhibition Commission also presented occasional scholarships, and in the mid-1920s, Smith facilitated two particularly valuable and recurring prizes, the Pinkerton and MacRobertson scholarships.²¹³ Smith was grateful to all scholarship donors, particularly for providing assistance to deserving and talented students to “secure an education which would otherwise have been denied them.”²¹⁴

STUDENT LIFE

To contextualise the relatively detached discussions of funding, infrastructure, and governance, it is important to gain a sense of the human experience of the School of Mines (SMB) and its Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS). One 1922 student prophesied their student group would one day peer from old photographs, “like clocks that have stopped hundreds of years ago,” yet these young students were active and vivacious.²¹⁵

Students attended BTAS from all over the district. Some travelled by tram, rattling the length of Sturt Street and alighting to the ding of its bell. Others tackled Ballarat’s numerous hills and diverse surfaces by bicycle or on foot, grappling against the city’s notoriously unpredictable weather; seeking shade to escape unrelenting summer heat, or bent under the weight of a grey winter sky. Students from further afield arrived by train, then walked the length of Lydiard Street to the campus at its southern end, which was neighboured by churches, a museum, and less salubriously, a brewery and gaol. One junior tech demonstrated his love of school by riding his horse “from Bullarook and home again every day.”²¹⁶ Between them, the schools catered to diverse cohorts of differing age, studies, and intentions.

The BTAS building was modern, but the lack of street lighting left its exterior dark and uninviting in winter. The paths between buildings were unpaved and muddy. Bizarrely, the construction tender failed to account for heating, and SMB council clamoured for a solution. ‘Coke’ stoves were installed temporarily, but one imagines the burning of metallurgical coal for heat was a pyrrhic victory. Students and staff rugged up for class, and some were reduced to drawing in gloves. Eventually, steam pipes were installed.²¹⁷

²¹³ Ballarat Technical Art School, *Technical Art School Scholarship Record 1915-1927*.

²¹⁴ Smith, “13 December 1933,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 64.

²¹⁵ *SMB Magazine* (1922), 10.

²¹⁶ This was young Oliver Pye. “Star, 14 December 1922,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924).

²¹⁷ *SMB, Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (February 1915), (May 1916); “*Courier*, 4 April 1922,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924); *SMB Magazine* (1920), 28.



Figure 2.4 **Looking south along Lydiard Street, Ballarat, toward SMB and BTAS.** Possibly c1910.
(With permission, Max Harris Photography Collection, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, MH1863. ©BMI.)

Soon after art students inhabited their new building, SMB experienced rapid growth of “School Spirit” which had barely existed two years prior. Pride in the school and its traditions was fostered through student associations, sporting teams and social networks. Students fundraised energetically to support these and other activities.²¹⁸

Between 1915 and 1918, students formed a Reading Club to take advantage of the growing library, a Dramatic Society, and an Art Students’ Club “for the purpose of stimulating interest in artistic matters.” They unveiled a Sport Club Room with furniture designed by art students, and the SMB cadet team brought home £34 in prize money.²¹⁹ By 1923, a Literary Society was operating.²²⁰ Students and staff lobbied for space and fundraised to improve facilities which included netball and basketball courts, shelter and bike sheds, a rifle range, and sport fields at White Flat. The adjacent steep hill was terraced to form a playground for younger students.²²¹ Smith championed a separate space where junior girls could “skip & play without being molested by other students,” again partially funded by students.²²²

²¹⁸ SMB, Details of Student Activities, handwritten pages (1918).

²¹⁹ SMB, Details of Student Activities, (1918); *SMB Magazine* (1917), 6.

²²⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1923), 7.

²²¹ “Star, 25 May 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Star, 21 February 1923,” “Courier, 3 September 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²²² Smith, “26 June 1929,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 6.

The SMB community participated in a range of sports, practising regularly to compete in local and Victorian school pennants. Girls played hockey, basketball, and tennis. Boys engaged in football, rowing, and rifle shooting.²²³ Boys also participated in athletic events while the girls settled for skipping, sack, and egg and spoon races.²²⁴ Through competition with other schools, students forged a strong esprit-de-corps.

While physical activity was encouraged, the Victorian Education Department was concerned new “picture-shows and other amusements” undermined student studies, tempting them instead into “a butterfly existence.”²²⁵ Within SMB and BTAS, students were happy to create their own entertainment.

SMB’s contribution to annual processions was a source of frivolity, weirdness and mirth for students, staff, and the Ballarat residents who turned out to witness it. Led by the Ballarat Orphanage Band, costumed students paraded trucks, cars, bicycles, carts, and themselves, attracting a solid crowd and occasional controversy. Floats ranged from decorative to derogatory, with parodies of contemporary issues testing the boundaries of taste and correctness—their concepts sometimes only clear to their originators. Some caricatures were relatively benign, such as Nellie Melba or the Prince of Wales following a hunt. The ‘Australian Eleven’, seated in a bathtub holding umbrellas, suggests 1926 cricket was a washout. Others made comment on contemporary issues of the day, such as the glacial-speed development of Ballarat’s sewerage infrastructure.²²⁶ Most skits in the parade were attempts to lampoon, however the motivation for some floats is ambiguous; a Ku Klux Klan float, complete with “manacled ‘nigger’ [sic]” would cause outrage today.²²⁷ Another display intimated that babies are “Australia’s best immigrants”, leaving one unamused reporter struggling to determine whether the students were promoting a higher birth rate or rejecting immigration. The range of costumed “foreigners” suggests it was perhaps the latter.²²⁸

Students of the senior and junior schools revelled in this opportunity to perform outside school boundaries. The art school skeleton and the “ancient ape of the museum collection” regularly featured, as did the various chemical experiments of the science students who

²²³ SMB, Details of Student Activities, (1918); Smith, “16 April 1930,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929–1940*, 15.

²²⁴ “Courier, 16 September 1939,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²²⁵ VED, PP no. 12 (1912), 115.

²²⁶ “Courier, 14 August 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 24 June 1926,” “Courier, 9 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²²⁷ “Star, 6 August 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²²⁸ “Courier, 9 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

conjured small explosions and “dispensed the vilest of odors.” Ballarat’s unpredictable weather caused occasional havoc, with winds upending floats and strewing students and streamers the length of Lydiard Street. One half-naked actor playing the “Queen of Sheba visiting King Sollo” (Solomon) found the August climate less “reminiscent of Arabia than of the North Pole.” The following year, Amundsen’s airmen were wisely clad in leather and fur.²²⁹ In part, the antics likely raised funds for the Ballarat Orphanage.²³⁰

Until the mid-1920s the procession, or ‘Rag’, appears dominated by male students. Its gradual cultural elevation was partially explained by “the refining influence of the young ladies of the Art School.” Yet, antics of the science students (almost universally male at this time) continued to offer “more primitive and robust humor.”²³¹ The opportunity for near-nudity and cross-dressing was rarely passed up. Hardy male youths presented themselves as fifth avenue models, “native girls”, adult babies and their nurses.²³² A theatre night continued the parade’s party atmosphere. The social morés of these processions offer an opportunity for further research.

Students less inclined to public displays might have preferred the annual, fancy dress Girl Students’ Frolic for juniors and seniors. Prize winners in 1924 included a scarecrow, a pillar box, a “Japanese couple” and “a true South Sea Island Cannibal.” In 1936, witches, fairy godmothers and little red riding hoods were accompanied by cohorts of “gipsy” and “Nigger [sic] Minstrels”, racial smears which, printed in the local paper, were presumably thought inoffensive to its readership.²³³

The classier annual SMB ball was “essentially a young people’s entertainment.”²³⁴ Each year, themed decorations were created by BTAS students. Dancing *Amorini* featured in 1924, a Japanese display in 1925, and an Egyptian temple the following year.²³⁵ In 1927, the student committee broke with convention to produce “futuristic” decorations which “clearly displayed the developments of modern art, [and were] at once grotesque and alluring”, including a palette of primary colours plus black.²³⁶ Dances, theatrical ‘follies’, card parties

²²⁹ “Courier, 14 August 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 9 July 1925,” “Courier, 28 June 1929,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³⁰ Smith, “15 March 1933,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 51.

²³¹ “Courier, 2 July 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³² “Courier, 9 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³³ “Courier, 30 August 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 8 August 1936,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²³⁴ “Courier, 23 July 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³⁵ “Star, 26 July 1924” and “Courier, 26 July 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 27 June 1925” and “Courier, 10 July 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²³⁶ “Courier, 23 July 1927” and “Courier, 24 July 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

and other social gatherings contributed to student association coffers, patriotic funds, and other pertinent causes.²³⁷

Another outlet for student ideas was the *SMB Magazine*, produced annually through the collaborative creative and fundraising efforts of junior and senior students across disciplines. The magazine's content was structured much like school departments yet presents a strong sense of cross-school collegiality, despite some rivalry. A student committee gathered contributions and oversaw design and editing, they sourced funds and sought advertisers. Sold locally and to past students, the *Mag* soon turned a profit.²³⁸

The widespread student esprit-de-corps was not without mischief or chafing against authority. From clay fights in the modelling room to letting cows onto the grounds, we are reminded that SMB and BTAS students were largely teenagers.²³⁹ They lamented nine o'clock starts and the length of time between meal breaks. They feared retribution for arriving late to class, complained about rules, and even took pleasure in imagining their school president found in Lake Wendouree. Some determined the work "dry" and monotonous.²⁴⁰ Unfortunately, evening students, isolated from day students and teachers, did not necessarily benefit from the collegiate spirit of the school.²⁴¹

Youth was a challenge for out-of-town students requiring accommodation away from their families. The Girls' Friendly Society Lodge claimed to offer "Christian surroundings and safety in the midst of strange associations."²⁴² One student joked about the cramped conditions and dodgy dealings of formidable 'land-ladies' known to fiddle the bill and provide insubstantial meals.²⁴³ Away from parents, teenagers elicited social angst. SMB students attempting intimate interludes in quiet corners were often called out in the school *Mag*. Despite warnings about "the deadly fag" (cigarettes), the odd student boldly continued to light up indoors.²⁴⁴ Proximity to the SMB and its junior techs caused occasional irritation within the City Police Court, where sombre legal proceedings were punctuated with cheering

²³⁷ For example: Smith, "26 May 1922," "31 August 1923," "15 October 1924," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*; Smith, "26 June 1929," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*; "Courier, 15 September 1921", "Star, 10 April 1922," "Star, 21 February 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²³⁸ SMB, *Details of Student Activities*, (1918).

²³⁹ "Courier, 16 June 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁴⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1921), 19, 22, 25.

²⁴¹ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 30, 1914).

²⁴² "G.F.S. Hostel," *Camperdown Chronicle* (Vic.), 12 June 1928, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article64993473>.

²⁴³ *SMB Magazine* (1929), 29.

²⁴⁴ "Courier, 16 June 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); "It is said," *SMB Magazine* (1928), 21.

from the sport fields.²⁴⁵ Despite the hijinks, innocence was also evident. When a lithe junior tech unassumingly retrieved a football from the neighbouring gaol by clambering over the fence, it demonstrated at least one security issue.²⁴⁶

While school parades entertained spectators who “could scarcely have been more amused, even had they been viewing a six-reel comedy of Charlie Chaplin”, students contributed to the community in other ways and, on occasion, behaved as a volunteer workforce.²⁴⁷ Students regularly planted trees, including 500 pines at Vale Park in Ballarat North.²⁴⁸ During World War I, Victorian students collected money for allied nations and donated provisions to local hospitals.²⁴⁹ Ballarat’s junior techs, whose workmanship was considered excellent, made bed warmers, bed tables and camp stools for wounded Australians.²⁵⁰ Stalls alongside the annual procession and social evenings raised funds for the Red Cross.²⁵¹ This was in keeping with wider societal expectations; William Moore notes practically every Australian artist contributed to the Red Cross or other institution.²⁵² Obituaries demonstrate some individuals were also heavily involved with their local communities.²⁵³ Students’ good works continued during the 1920s and into the approaching Depression.

A friendly rivalry

SMB Magazine sub-editors represented the branches of science, art, trade, and commerce, as well as the junior schools and evening trade classes. It aimed to unite departments under the overarching SMB umbrella.²⁵⁴ Given art students counted their science peers among mice, flies and “other pests which frequent the class rooms,” it is easy to see why efforts were necessary to build overall school spirit.²⁵⁵ Further sledging insulted science students’ intelligence and appearance (phiz), with art students claiming their school had overtaken SMB’s global reputation and fame.²⁵⁶ A school snowball fight reveals the extent of playful

²⁴⁵ “Courier, 20 December 1933,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁴⁶ “Courier, 11 April 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁴⁷ “Courier, 9 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936). For State-wide context of student citizenship, refer to Triolo, “State Schooling,” and Triolo, *Our Schools and the War*.

²⁴⁸ “Courier, 23 June 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁴⁹ VED, PP no. 3 (1917), 17.

²⁵⁰ “Ballarat Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); Clark, Report on the Ballarat Junior Technical School (1915), 6.

²⁵¹ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (July 1915).

²⁵² Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 55.

²⁵³ For example, Kenneth Moss, “Star, 14 November 1921,” and Clyde Lukies, “Courier, 14 July 1922”, SMB Cuttings (1921–24).

²⁵⁴ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (August 1916).

²⁵⁵ *SMB Magazine* (1919), 15.

²⁵⁶ *SMB Magazine* (1917), 15.

animosity: “Never in the annals of the school has there been such a fight, the difference of opinion between the Art and Science. B.C.53 couldn’t be compared to it,” presumably referring to the downfall of the First Triumvirate of Rome following years of civil war.²⁵⁷

By the early 1920s, the art school boasted at least equal numbers to the science department, but the gender disparity was pronounced. In 1927, the registrar reported 228 female art students compared to 91 male students. In science, 134 males vastly outnumbered the seven female students. Three female trade students were swamped by 169 males. In the commercial classes, females to males represented an almost 2:1 ratio.²⁵⁸

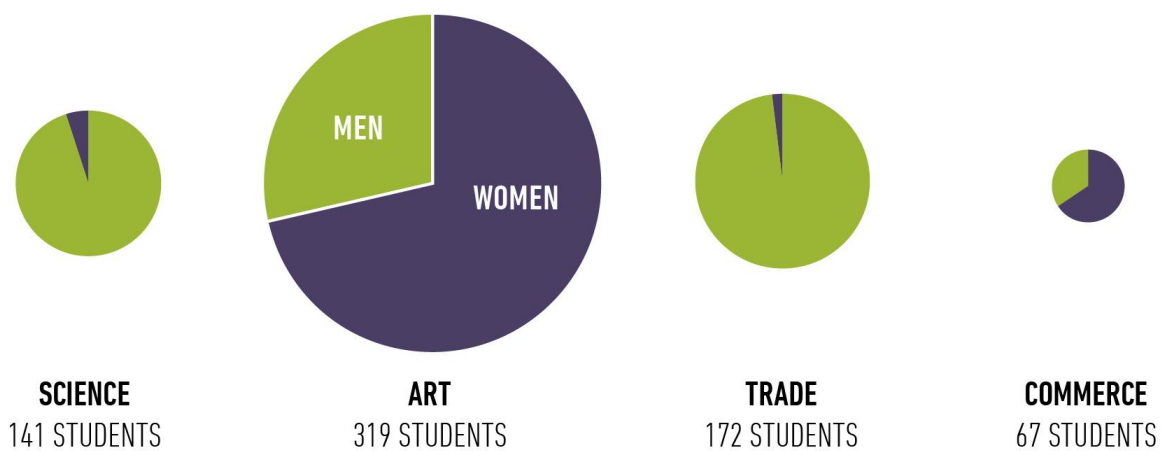


Figure 2.5 **Ratios of male and female students by discipline, as identified by SMB registrar.**
Registrar’s Monthly Report to Council: July 1927, School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, Federation University Australia Historical Collection.

The wider community reinforced assumptions about gender and suitable school subjects. Thus, the rivalry between applied art and applied science may have had more to do with adolescent gender tensions than disciplinary frictions. The dressmaking students were thrilled when a girls’ common room was furnished, allowing them to avoid the “unwelcome (?) society of the engineering drawing students.” The question mark is original.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1921), 12.
²⁵⁸ *SMB, Registrar’s Monthly Report to Council* (July 1927).
²⁵⁹ *SMB Magazine* (1920), 29.

Female proportions

In the early 1900s, the only State-aided technical instruction for women was delivered by technical art schools (excepting the Melbourne College of Domestic Economy).²⁶⁰ This structurally elevates the importance of art education in female workforce participation.

With the onset of World War I, one suspects a relaxed attitude to female technical training would be irresponsible and ill-advised. Carew-Smyth asked, “What shall we do with our girls?” while Herbert Smith pressed the importance of education for girls who would likely “be compelled to be self-supporting, and bread-winners for their homes.”²⁶¹ BTAS marketed many art streams as “good avenues for successful [female] employment”, either within a business or as a freelance operator.²⁶² Historian Weston Bate explained women’s work was “part of a social revolution” and a key growth area in Ballarat.²⁶³

Women were perceived to hold the necessary gender-specific skills for technical art and craft, including patience, a light touch, and dextrous fingers.²⁶⁴ Messy work had not been considered appropriate for women and their cleanly sensibilities, but by the 1920s “acid-stained hands” did not deter women in the metal work classes.²⁶⁵ Perceived feminine qualities such as “patience and care, observation, concentration, taste, and determination to succeed” also equipped women to undertake traditionally male forms of manual training, including woodwork.²⁶⁶ Assumptions of sex-specific skills do not correlate with the present-day conception of a gender spectrum.

By the 1920s, marriage could be viewed as an advantage or disadvantage. In the *SMB Mag* we read the cautionary tale of Peggy, a young lady sent to art school to make her a lady and “finish her off.” Peggy’s parents were disappointed, however, when she instead brought home an engagement ring which, according to the author, “was the finishing off of Peggy.”²⁶⁷

Girls were always in the majority at BTAS; their numbers perhaps bolstered by Girls’ Preparatory Technical Classes (GPS) and burgeoning Dressmaking Department.²⁶⁸ Art

²⁶⁰ VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 49 (1915), 79.

²⁶¹ VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 15 (1915), 94; “Star, 15 October 1915” *SMB Cuttings* (1907–1916).

²⁶² *SMB, Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

²⁶³ Bate, *Life After Gold*, 31.

²⁶⁴ Thomson, “Alms for Oblivion,” 37.

²⁶⁵ *SMB Magazine* (1923), 5.

²⁶⁶ “Echo, 3 November 1915” in *SMB Cuttings*

²⁶⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1922), 16.

²⁶⁸ *SMB Magazine* (1927), 13.

schools offered a supportive environment, allowing women to work and socialise together. BTAS girls arranged several sporting groups, even designing their own sport uniforms to be both comfortable and attractive.²⁶⁹ In 1920 an all-female common room was designated for students and staff who delighted in brewing tea and grilling sausages away from the engineering boys.²⁷⁰ By 1922, the Art School Girls' Association was in full swing, holding fundraising events and social activities that included both junior and senior girls. As one student explained, "A social movement such as this tends to illuminate even more the great organising power which the girls of this century have the honor of calling their own."²⁷¹ These women were empowered to be seen, heard and organised.



Doing art for t'arts sake.

Figure 2.6
Gilda Gude,
"Doing art for t'arts sake,"
Reproduced from *SMB Magazine*, 1938, p11.
(FedHC. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

A disparaging but humoured rhyme titled 'The Art School Skirts' or 'Mavericks' is evidence that young BTAS women were occasionally both fearsome and fearless. The anonymous male scribe, who would rather step on thistles in bare feet than upset Penny's temper, described Gwen's "shinty stunts", and Lora's golf prowess which readied her to serve as a "trooper." The women's sexuality was not beyond comment either. Evelyn, in Easter fancy dress, was considered suitable for a harem, while Hiryll was accused of eyeing off a plaster cast of Hercules. Ethel challenged gender boundaries by wearing a male friend's clothes at the Art School Frolic Night, mocking the men who, to be fair, regularly dressed in women's clothing at the annual parades.²⁷²

In 1929, Donald Clark confessed that female vocational and technical training had received scant attention and was advocating for a Working Women's College.²⁷³ That criticism could not be said to extend to art and teacher training at BTAS. In a West Australian article on female careers directed at applied art training, BTAS was nominated as "one of the finest [schools] in Australia."²⁷⁴ As we shall see, a great many graduates found their way into schools and studios across Victoria and beyond.

²⁶⁹ *SMB Magazine* (1927), 50.

²⁷⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1920), 29.

²⁷¹ "Courier, 27 June 1922," *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924); and *SMB Magazine* (1922), 15.

²⁷² *SMB Magazine* (1922), 15.

²⁷³ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 49.

²⁷⁴ "Your Daughter's Career: No. 2: Occupational Art," *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8.

Student recruitment and retention

BTAS' good reputation attracted prospective students, which is why disparaging views were challenged and centralisation was fought. Smith and Dare suggest enrolments across Victorian technical colleges between Federation and World War I were low. However, SMB enrolments were consistently above 200 between 1901 and 1906, jumping to 512 with the addition of BTAS in 1907, even though mining courses had all but ceased.²⁷⁵

At the turn of the century, small country art schools maintained good student numbers, but many students attended for accomplishment rather than vocational training, causing some to ask; was there a need for such schools “in the wilderness”?²⁷⁶ Even though BTAS attracted some hobbyists, the majority were working toward a vocation and the bulk of the school's marketing was directed as such. “Trained men make their own terms” explained one advert, “Good positions are awaiting those who will qualify themselves” stated another.²⁷⁷ During wartime, adverts invoked prospective students' sense of duty with cries of “Australia's Urgent Need” and “In this crisis, Australia needs trained men.”²⁷⁸ By the end of the depression, the art school lured enrollees with “Remunerative Careers.”²⁷⁹

BTAS prospectuses restated the demand for “competent and specially trained artists” and in 1921 a “propaganda committee” was established to promote the school.²⁸⁰ Later, a State-wide mail-out to schools, Mechanics' Institutes and boarding houses consisted of 500 school almanacs, 300 abbreviated syllabuses, and a personal letter. BTAS continued to look beyond the local potential student pool, advertising widely in district newspapers.²⁸¹

SMB and BTAS worked with local primary and secondary schools, industries, and the community to access prospective students and shore-up local support. Open evenings, exhibitions and demonstrations raised public awareness of the schools' facilities and capabilities and were usually well attended by prospective students and the public. Art students demonstrated and exhibited their work. Alumni success, too, raised the BTAS profile, attracted new students and inspired course completion and success.²⁸²

²⁷⁵ Murray-Smith and Dare, *The Tech*, 75; Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 16.

²⁷⁶ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 272.

²⁷⁷ “Star, 22 December 1915,” “Courier, 21 January 1914” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²⁷⁸ “Courier, 12 February 1916,” “Courier, 14 January 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²⁷⁹ “Mail, 28 January 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²⁸⁰ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 12; SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (November 1915); “6 August 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁸¹ SMB, *Registrar's Monthly Report to Council* (December 1924).

²⁸² SMB, *Annual Report* (1936), 6.

BTAS invited older State school children to introductory and supplementary art classes, a somewhat successful approach later adopted by other technical schools.²⁸³ The SMB Junior Technical School and Girls' Preparatory Technical Classes provided well-prepared students with streamlined pathways to the senior art school, where they were already familiar with the campus, staff and culture.

Annual WMC enrolments were approximately four times that of SMB between 1905 and 1915, but Ballarat seems to have had a greater proportion of art students. In 1909, BTAS had 19 design exam candidates, the State's highest, followed by 18 in Bendigo with just three at WMC. In 1912, Ballarat's 613 art candidates greatly outnumbered WMC's 461 and Bendigo's 168.²⁸⁴ When the new BTAS building opened in 1915, enrolments increased considerably, particularly full-course students who could now attend all classes in the one location.²⁸⁵

Victorian technical enrolments (including junior techs) climbed over the course of the World War I (refer appendices).²⁸⁶ However military recruitment reduced SMB's senior student numbers significantly. By 1916 at least 116 students had enlisted, including almost all senior male art students. New male intakes were also affected.²⁸⁷ In 1917, 282 students were enrolled across thirty-six art school day, evening and short courses, the bulk of whom were women.²⁸⁸ The 1919 influenza epidemic interrupted single subject and part time art enrolments.²⁸⁹ The "counter attractions" of Ballarat's annual South Street competitions also affected this cohort.²⁹⁰

First term (February) usually saw the largest student intake, yet enrolments were ongoing throughout the year, often 20 or 30 and even 60, per term.²⁹¹ Valuable, full course students made up almost half the enrolments in 1920, as girls' preparatory numbers almost doubled. Accommodations were straining. Between 1924 and 1928, the school averaged about 350

²⁸³ Smith, "27 February 1920," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 40; Clark, *Reminiscences of Technical Education in Victoria*, 1923, 5.

²⁸⁴ VED, PP Second Session no. 3 (1909), 33; VED, PP no. 12 (1912), 38.

²⁸⁵ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (February 1915), (August 1915).

²⁸⁶ Aggregate of average number of individual students enrolled per term, per year, per VED PP.

²⁸⁷ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 2; "Courier, 2 August 1915," *Star*, 2 August 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²⁸⁸ SMB, *Annual Report* (1917), 2.

²⁸⁹ Smith, "28 March 1919," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 23.

²⁹⁰ Smith, "5 October 1923," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 103.

²⁹¹ Smith, "30 July 1920," "30 September 1921," "24 February 1922," "25 May 1923," "30 July 1924," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 50, 62, 70, 96, 116.

enrolments, including junior girls.²⁹² Four years later, Bendigo School of Mines had just 51 art enrolments, among the school's total 86 students.²⁹³

War notwithstanding, there were several causes of student attrition, including parental and employer influence, a lack of funds, limited available time, and travel. Ballarat winters, and associated illness, caused some absenteeism.²⁹⁴ In 1914 only about one fifth of WMC students completed “any course of training which may be regarded as satisfactory.” By contrast, smaller schools boasted a higher proportion of “effective students.”²⁹⁵ This was likely due to a greater percentage of evening students at WMC, among whom attrition rates were high, particularly where subjects were theoretical. The carpentry course had a 90 per cent drop out rate, with 60 per cent abandoning fitting and turning.²⁹⁶ Evening classes at SMB also suffered irregular attendance and discontinuance of tired students, but retention improved in 1916.²⁹⁷ A later apprenticeship bill aimed to address the problem.²⁹⁸

Meanwhile, students undertaking a full course of study, with graded progression, seemed to demonstrate better rates of ongoing commitment.²⁹⁹ This suggests schools like BTAS, with a solid proportion of full-course students, benefited from good attendance and retention.

²⁹² Smith, “27 February 1920,” *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 40; SMB, *Annual Report* (1923), 7; “Star, 28 February 1922,” “Courier, 12 February 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); SMB, *Annual Report* (1927), 2.

²⁹³ Cusack, *Canvas to Campus*, 101.

²⁹⁴ Smith, “17 June 1925,” *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 133.

²⁹⁵ VED, PP no. 49 (1915), 37.

²⁹⁶ VED, PP no. 3 (1917), 15.

²⁹⁷ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 2.

²⁹⁸ Brereton, “Origins of the Victorian Apprenticeship Commission,” 228.

²⁹⁹ VED, PP no. 49 (1915), 37; VED, PP no. 3 (1917), 15.

MAKING A MARK

Claims

The Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) certainly boasted of its own success, but its reputation was supported externally and for some time. Just eight years after amalgamation, it was already considered to have had “a distinct influence upon technical art education in Victoria” and reportedly classified “the only first-class Art School in Victoria” by the Education Department.³⁰⁰ SMB claimed its art school held “a leading position” and “unique reputation as the first Technical Art School” in Victoria, with inter-State standing.³⁰¹ BTAS students echoed the sentiment, professing to inhabit the “finest Art School in the Commonwealth, both as regards building, equipment, and results obtained.”³⁰² Principal Smith himself had “a celebrity” which extended far beyond Victoria.³⁰³

As new schools were established, SMB contended BTAS was yet unmatched, either in reputation or for the excellence of its training. In 1925, students maintained the school held “a unique position in Australia” with an “astonishing” record of success. No institution, they claimed, had turned out more students who “made good.” SMB Council President, W. H. Middleton concurred, “there are no students in the State more successful than those whose training has been acquired in our Art School.”³⁰⁴

Such declarations were affirmed by external observers. In 1914, the ANA described BTAS as “the best of its kind in the State.” Local papers declared it had “a record which no other Art School in the State can approach.”³⁰⁵ The cheerleading continued into the 1920s, although by the start of the Depression the papers were more inclined to let the school’s achievements speak for it. Still, BTAS is the only regional Australian art school mentioned in William Moore’s 1934 book, *The Story of Australian Art*, in which he highlights some key students and notes the school’s output of art teachers and contribution to ceramic research.³⁰⁶ In 1938, an author in *The West Australian* still identified BTAS as “one of the finest in Australia.”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁰ “Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 66; McCallum, *Ballarat and District*, (1916), 96.

³⁰¹ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 6; SMB, *Annual Report* (1916), 3; SMB, *Annual Report* (1917), 4; SMB, *Annual Report* (1921), 4; SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 7;

³⁰² *SMB Magazine* (1916), 21.

³⁰³ “Courier, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

³⁰⁴ SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 11; *SMB Magazine* (1920), 6; *SMB Magazine* (1924), 12; SMB, *Annual Report* (1926).

³⁰⁵ ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, 1914* (1914), 65; “Courier, 20 June 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³⁰⁶ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 228.

³⁰⁷ “Your Daughter’s Career: No. 2: Occupational Art,” *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8.

BTAS' success was notable in several areas including at examination, exhibition and prizes, occupational outcomes, commission output, and the strength of its alumni network.

Commissions

Students at BTAS undertook a range of commissions that supported their learning (refer appendices). Staff and students worked collaboratively on private and government commissions, enmeshing the creation, development, and application of knowledge, and reaffirming their experience with materials. In contemporary terms, it was a dynamic community of practice.³⁰⁸ For Smith, these opportunities provided students with excellent practical experience and useful, transferable skills.

World War I escalated demand for memorials to honour the enlisted and remember the dead. State schools, workplaces and other associations commissioned timber honour boards, commemorative metal plaques and stained-glass windows. Technical art schools, including BTAS, were approached to design and create them. In 1916, art inspector Carew-Smyth collaborated with technical teachers to promote a series of designs considered appropriate for memorialisation work. Some items were made in bulk for subsequent individualisation.³⁰⁹ However, many commissions were directed to BTAS by the State School Decoration Society or Education Department and developed from scratch under the direction of Herbert Smith.³¹⁰ Private commissions were also undertaken.³¹¹

With the onset of war, the Department suggested commemorative honour books be distributed to State schools in which multiple students' service details could be inscribed. These were to be "made of the very best hand-made paper, very strongly bound in leather, with a special designed title page of a symbolic character." An optional wall-mounted blackwood case with a glass front could be commissioned for its preservation.³¹² BTAS provided multiple book inscriptions and cases. In addition, *The Education Department's Record of War Service, 1914-1919*, was published in 1921.³¹³ BTAS produced "designs for

³⁰⁸ For more information, see Etienne Wenger, Beverly Trayner, and Maarten de Laat, *Promoting and Assessing Value Creation in Communities and Networks: A Conceptual Framework* (The Netherlands: Rapport18, Ruud de Moor Centrum, Open University of the Netherlands, 2011).

³⁰⁹ "Honor Tablets Should Be Artistic," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 5 May 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article132733769>.

³¹⁰ SMB, *Annual Report* (1916).

³¹¹ Refer Appendix, Table A-4, Table of Commissioned Work.

³¹² "Honor Books or Boards," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 9 December 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article130672031>.

³¹³ EDV, *The Education Department's Record of War Service, 1914-1919*, Albert J. Mullett, Melbourne, 1921. Further reading: Triolo, "Our Grief and Obligations," in *Our Schools and the War*, 219-58.

the title page, chapter headings and initial letters.” Several were completed by Harold Herbert, and more were subsequently requested.³¹⁴

The requests for BTAS commissions were numerous and extensive, from Avoca to Yulecant. The school was reputed for the quality and artistic nature of its output, attracting work that might otherwise have been undertaken in Melbourne.³¹⁵ Ballarat students produced tablets and shields in repoussé or etched metal, and boards were carved from fiddleback blackwood and Queensland maple. Leather books were embossed and encased. By comparison, Britain was unable to adequately produce its own war memorials.³¹⁶

Not all commissions were mournful. In 1916, BTAS students were asked to design and create furniture and fittings for a forthcoming ANA Exhibition in Melbourne. The same year, Amalie Feild’s design submission for a tourists’ guide to the Ballarat and Creswick region was selected.³¹⁷ Commercial and industrial enterprises also commissioned work. The New South Wales Sports Club believed their BTAS-produced honour board was “second to none in Sydney.”³¹⁸ A similar board was produced for the Ballarat Old Colonists Club.³¹⁹

In 1918, commercial requests came from the Waratah Stamped Metal Co. and, in addition to developing stencilled fabric work, students experimented with painting ceramic doll faces for Lucas & Co.³²⁰ Partnerships with industry could be problematic, particularly where BTAS outsourced an element, as local firms sometimes attempted to pass off work as entirely their own, without crediting the school or students.³²¹

Most BTAS commissions are not traceable to their originating artist, perhaps given the collaborative nature of the work. However, some are attributable, such as Amalie Feild’s stained-glass work and Harold Herbert’s design for a Young Worker’s Patriotic Guild certificate.³²²

³¹⁴ Refer Appendix, Table A-4, Table of Commissioned Work; SMB, *Annual Report* (1920), 5; “Courier, 5 April 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³¹⁵ SMB, *Annual Report* (1919), 3.

³¹⁶ Geoffrey Holme, ed. *The Studio’ Year-Book of Decorative Art, 1919* (London: The Studio, 1919), 89.

³¹⁷ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (August 1916); SMB, *Annual Report* (1916), 4.

³¹⁸ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (February 1918).

³¹⁹ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (October 1917), 1.

³²⁰ Smith, “31 May 1918,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 6.

³²¹ Smith, “29 August 1919,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 33.

³²² Image, see <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/254340>

As the demand for memorial objects waned, sporting shields and cups, enamelled medallions and certificates replaced them. Commercial illustrations for adverts and catalogues were requested annually, some consisting of more than 300 drawings.³²³ Students lettered inscriptions, designed textiles, shoes and magazines, and in 1920, produced an illuminated address and casket for presentation to the Prince of Wales.³²⁴

Students undertook commissions with “happy enthusiasm” but accommodating it alongside studies must have been challenging.³²⁵ A Swinburne commission, the ANA School Choral Shield, which was won by a Melbourne school in March 1922, was still unfinished in October. Carew-Smyth was quick to assert that fine craft work took time, declaring “Fairy wands [are] out of date. There is no wizardry in Victoria.”³²⁶ The accounting of “Boys’ Wages” at Ballarat suggests students received payment for some commission work. Students creating adverts and illustrations, at least, were remunerated for their commercial work.³²⁷

In a sting to their reputation, BTAS was overlooked for a commission by Western Australian SMB ‘old boys’. Instead, the memorialisation of their esteemed patriarch, Professor Mica Smith, went to Paul Montford, art master at the Gordon Technical College.³²⁸ Montford does not appear to have been a Ballarat ‘old boy’ himself. Meanwhile, BTAS commissions continued, including the official commemorative program for a visit of the British First Fleet to Victoria.³²⁹

Commission work slowed significantly in 1927, aligning with the retirement of Art Inspector Carew-Smyth. It is unclear if demand halted or new Inspector Dean simply directed them elsewhere. However, in 1931 students created a range of designs and illustrations for various Education Department school publications, after which they were gifted the printing blocks to make their own reproductions. Designs for local businesses and Ballarat City Council were produced as “drawings on stone” for lithographic reproduction in 1932, and in 1936 students and staff created four proposals for Ballarat’s King George V Memorial Committee.³³⁰

³²³ For example, Wm. Paterson Pty Ltd; Harry Davies and Co.; and Harris, Powell and Sandford. SMB, *Annual Report* (1919), 3; “Star, 27 March 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Star, 30 August 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 26 August 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³²⁴ SMB, *Annual Report* (1920), 4; Smith, “15 September 1926,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 153.

³²⁵ SMB, *Annual Report* (1923), 7.

³²⁶ “A.N.A. Choral Shield Not Ready,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 19 October 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243775928>.

³²⁷ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916); “Star, 30 August 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 12.

³²⁸ “Courier, 17 October 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³²⁹ “Star, 12 February 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³³⁰ Smith, “18 November 1931,” “19 October 1932,” and “15 July 1936,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 35, 47, 107.

Exhibitions and prizes

Prize giving was central to South Kensington culture whereby students who executed “highly meritorious works” at examination or at the National Competition were rewarded.³³¹ Principal Herbert Smith, was one such ‘Prizeman’.³³² In 1910, BTAS “was conspicuous for the excellence of its work” and compared favourably to a travelling exhibition of British students’ work selected from the National Art Competition Exhibition.³³³ Examination prizes were not offered in Victoria during the period of this research, but students participated in a wide range of exhibitions and competitions which encouraged quality work and provided an occasion to examine and compare that of others. Some provided the opportunity for sales. In addition to promoting the school, Smith found competitions, particularly those offered by industry, to be excellent incentives for students. He often accompanied prize winners to exhibitions, sometimes personally driving them to Melbourne.³³⁴

Organisations such as the ANA, art and craft societies and others provided the opportunity for students and non-students alike to compete. Cash prizes could be quite generous, some worth several pounds.³³⁵ Carew-Smyth discouraged competitions from including copies as a “waste of time and materials” but, if included, should not attract the same quality of prize as original artworks.³³⁶ Ballarat students’ success was credited with stimulating art education elsewhere.³³⁷

BTAS students were fortunate in their proximity to the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery and its Ladies’ Art Association which, according to Carew-Smyth, was the only society in the Commonwealth to encourage students with the provision of prizes, medals and scholarships.³³⁸ The Association held competitive inter-State exhibitions which aimed to

³³¹ Royal Commission on Science and Art Department in Ireland, *Report on the Science and Art Department in Ireland, Together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index: Vol. II. Minutes of Evidence, Appendix &c.* (London: HMSO, 1868), 611, <http://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/documents/15350>

³³² SMB, *Prospectus for Year 1908*, (1907).

³³³ VED, “Report on Instruction in Art in Technical Schools,” PP no. 44 (1910), 94.

³³⁴ “Courier, 24 August 1932” and “Courier, 7 September 1933,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Smith, “31 October 1919,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 36; Smith, “20 September 1933,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 61.

³³⁵ ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, 1914* (1914) 68.

³³⁶ “A.N.A. Competitions,” *Mount Alexander Mail* (Vic.), 10 March 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199570723>; “The Art Exhibits,” *Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle* (Vic.), 18 April 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article86409347>.

³³⁷ “Star, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

³³⁸ “Ladies’ Art Association,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 9 December 1908, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article216773523>.

“cultivate the aesthetic and cultural in art”, and thus featured pictorial work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, BTAS students secured the bulk of the prizes.³³⁹

Businesses, too, created competitive activities. Ballarat printers, Berry, Anderson & Co., offered a £3 student prize to design a cover for the *Courier* Christmas edition. The winning entry by Elsie McKissock, “a view of Fairyland at Lake Wendouree”, made skilful use of the two-colour reproduction limitation.³⁴⁰ Harris, Powell and Sandford commissioned catalogue illustrations from BTAS and offered a £2 prize for the design of its cover.³⁴¹ A label competition for chocolate manufacturer, A. W. Allen (Carew-Smyth acted as judge), resulted in several students receiving “elaborate boxes of sweets” as prizes, and a letter to Smith congratulating them on their excellent work.³⁴² One of the most valuable scholarships later available to students was also courtesy of a confectionery manufacturer, the MacRobertson prize.³⁴³

Both the school and individual students embraced opportunities to exhibit at local, state, and national levels, from galleries to local shop window displays. Staff and graduates, too, exhibited widely and engaged in speaking opportunities. On occasion, the Ballarat Art Gallery invited teachers to conduct tours.³⁴⁴

At the Jubilee Education Exhibitions in Ballarat and Melbourne, BTAS students delivered live demonstrations alongside static displays and won seven of the ten prizes awarded by the *Herald* newspaper in the Applied Art Section.³⁴⁵ The following year, Carew-Smyth requested examples to forward to the Empire Exhibition in London. Unfortunately, the work the British ultimately selected drew criticism as kitsch, vulgar, commonplace, and undignified, and was considered unrepresentative of Australian design and damaging to its reputation. Such censure might have tarnished the bronze medallion won by BTAS graduate and art master, Herbert Malin.³⁴⁶

³³⁹ “*Courier*, 31 October 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “*Courier*, 21 October 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); Smith, “28 October 1921,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 64.

³⁴⁰ SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 13; “*Courier*, 7 November 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³⁴¹ “*Courier*, 1 October 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³⁴² “*Star*, 23 August 1924” and “*Courier*, 23 August 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³⁴³ SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 11. For a case study of MacRobertson’s Confectionery, and founder Macpherson Robertson, see Fry, *Design History Australia*, 98-115.

³⁴⁴ “*Argus*, 2 August 1910” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); Smith, “15 March 1933,” 51; “19 April 1933,” 53, *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*; “*Courier*, 7 July 1938,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

³⁴⁵ “*Courier*, 12 June 1922,” “*Star*, 3 July 1922,” “*Courier*, 26 August 1922,” “*Courier*, 28 August 1922” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); Trade Board Report to SMB Council: October 1916, SMB, FedAHC (Item 1110.15, c7-5-box26, handwritten report); Smith, “27 October 1922,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 84.

³⁴⁶ SMB, *Annual Report* (1923), 9; “Art at Wembley, Geelong’s Protest,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 15 October 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article211549229>; “*Courier*, 1 June 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

SMB also held its own prize nights, delivering 80 individual certificates in 1916, designed by Harold Herbert, to encourage greater “effort and emulation” among students.³⁴⁷ Herbert was “the most successful competitor” at the 1910 Victorian Arts and Crafts Society exhibition in Melbourne, and his jewellery based on Australian motifs was particularly note-worthy. The same year, he won more than ten prizes at the Sixth Australian Exhibition, two in some categories. A contemporary of Herbert’s, Stanley Tompkins also won many prizes at these competitions.³⁴⁸

Agricultural shows provided opportunity for students to exhibit alongside the public in diverse sections. When asked to judge at such shows, Harold Herbert, now art critic, recalled the advice of his old boss, Carew-Smyth; “always imagine that a chap is putting a revolver to your head” and choose.³⁴⁹ While such exhibitions were often considered amateur, they offer an interesting area of research that has been overlooked.

Larger collections prepared for competition were often displayed, post or prior, in the SMB Museum or on BTAS’ own walls. Drawing, design, and craft works intended for teacher certification were also exhibited prior to despatch to the Education Department for assessment. Reunion exhibitions provided reflection on decades of student work.³⁵⁰

During the nineteenth century, applied artists had fewer opportunities to promote their work than their fine art counterparts, which disadvantaged women disproportionately. Among efforts to increase the visibility of female work was the 1907 Australian Exhibition of Women’s Work, which housed more than 16,000 exhibits including applied art and photography. ANA exhibitions also featured special exhibits of women’s work.³⁵¹ Perhaps encouraged by their success, in 1911, fifty years after its establishment, the Royal

³⁴⁷ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (March 1916).

³⁴⁸ “Argus, 2 August 1910,” “Courier, 2 August 1910,” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); Exhibition of Australian Manufactures and Products and Australian Natives’ Association (ANA), *Sixth Exhibition of Australian Manufactures and Products, promoted by the Metropolitan Committee of the Australian Natives’ Association, Exhibition Building, Melbourne, January 31st to February 26th, 1910* (Melbourne: ANA Metropolitan Committee, 1910), 61-71.

³⁴⁹ “‘That Reminds Me...’; Says Harold Herbert,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 January 1939, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12084931>.

³⁵⁰ Smith, “26 May 1922,” “17 August 1927,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 76, 163; Smith, “26 June 1929,” “16 July 1930,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*.

³⁵¹ VED, ed., “Australian Exhibition of Women’s Work,” *Education Gazette*, June 29, 1907, 201; Exhibition of Australian Manufactures and Products and Australian Natives’ Association (ANA), *Fifth Exhibition of Australian Manufactures and Products, promoted by the Metropolitan Committee of the Australian Natives’ Association, Exhibition Building, Melbourne, February 1st to February 27th, 1909* (Melbourne: ANA Metropolitan Committee, 1909).

Agricultural Society of Victoria introduced a Women’s Industries Section.³⁵² Five years later, the Victorian conference on Technical Instruction would posit the idea of a school specifically for “women’s industries.”³⁵³ The frequent appearance of female winners at American exhibitions suggests a much more substantive presence of women designers than has been acknowledged in histories.³⁵⁴ A similar conclusion might be drawn for Australia.

Donald Clark felt competitions for vocational work were “either unknown or ignored”, creating bias toward academic subjects.³⁵⁵ It is important to consider the context of scholarships and prizes in evaluating their value as symbolic capital. Blackwell *et al* found that designers placed higher value on praise received from “those who know.”³⁵⁶ Thus, prizes and scholarships awarded by individuals or groups deemed to be visually literate would be considered a valuable endorsement. Yet, Bourdieu tells us all forms of recognition co-opt the recipient into a hierarchy consecrated by the institutions that offer it.³⁵⁷ Thus prizes are only measures of success as distilled through very particular authorities.

Nonetheless, such activities incentivised students, promoted the Ballarat Technical Art School and reinforced its reputation.

Examination success

Analysis of cohort success via examination results is fraught, particularly due to a lack of consistent, comparable data for the number of sitting candidates compared with number of passes. In addition, art examinations were not compulsory except for whole-course certificates. That exams were unnecessary for some students renders them absent by this measure. Other students, perhaps recognising they were yet to achieve a pass standard, self-eliminated. That said, SMB reported high levels of examination attendance in 1917, approaching 100 per cent in some classes.³⁵⁸ This was not always ideal, as some students attempted examination before they were ready.

³⁵² Kate Darian-Smith, “Royal Melbourne Show,” last modified 2008, accessed 13 May 2020, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01279b.htm>.

³⁵³ Extract from the 1916 Victorian conference on Technical Instruction, quoted in Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 25.

³⁵⁴ Thomson, “Alms for Oblivion,” 38–39.

³⁵⁵ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 98.

³⁵⁶ Blackwell et al., “Witnesses to Design,” 45.

³⁵⁷ Bourdieu, “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” 24.

³⁵⁸ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (June 1917), 1.

From 1915, SMB student progress was internally assessed each term, and the detailed examination data available in previous parliamentary papers ceases. However, end of year technical art examinations remained the responsibility of the Education Department. If we accept, as Bourdieu explains, “examinations always express, inculcate and consecrate” the dominant educational structure and values, the effect is exacerbated by limited assessors, in this case the Art Inspector and assistants. Bringing to bear their habitus, an examiner might read subtle cues within student work that indicate personal attributes or qualities that influence assessment.³⁵⁹ Still, Departmental examination papers provide insight into the knowledge and skills expected of students. Further information on specific examinations appears in later chapters.

What information we have on Victorian art examinations indicates the pass-bar was high, and difficult to attain without significant, exam-specific, preparation and practise. In 1909, the State pass rate across all technical subjects was 65 per cent, falling to 56 per cent in 1910, compared with 44 per cent and 47 per cent across art exams. BTAS sat very close to this average. By comparison, only 27 per cent of private students passed indicating, in 1910 at least, the value of studying with a technical art institution.³⁶⁰

Given staggered enrolments, BTAS staff issued student reports at the end of each term, to indicated student progress, however, successful examination was requisite to a certified qualification. When students favoured Certificate or Diploma courses, a higher standard of work reportedly resulted.³⁶¹

Problematically, curricula in lockstep with examination can be prone to stagnation.³⁶² In secondary schools, examination outcomes led to exam-specific teaching, restricting teacher initiative and limiting learning opportunities. Similar concerns had been raised at the Royal Commission on Technical Education 35 years earlier. By the late 1930s, secondary school administrators determined teachers were better placed to assess overall student learning and achievement than an external examiner could ever elicit from a three-hour annual exam.³⁶³

³⁵⁹ Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, 143, 162.

³⁶⁰ VED, PP Second Session no. 3 (1909), 28; VED, PP no. 44 (1910), 47.

³⁶¹ VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 1 (1936), 21.

³⁶² Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, vi.

³⁶³ “Victorian Education,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 October 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205912785>; Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 162; “Aim to Lift School Age,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 September 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article248545539>.

Occupational outcomes

In 1915, Donald Clark was pessimistic for the future of trained designers within Australia's under-developed industries.³⁶⁴ As such, successful student employment was an important measure of success for technical schools which, by the 1930s, kept their own employment registers. BTAS claimed there were “no students in the State more successful” in finding employment than its own.³⁶⁵ SMB offered vocational guidance and assisted student placements through formal channels such as employer associations.³⁶⁶ The informal, personal networks of graduate diaspora who stayed in touch with the school were also beneficial. The Past Students' Association maintained contact lists. The myriad roles undertaken by graduates throughout their careers is beyond the scope of this thesis, however an overview of employment outcomes is warranted. The careers of many BTAS students are explored in more depth in subsequent chapters.

The bulk of BTAS' art teaching graduates occupied “important positions in almost every school in the State.”³⁶⁷ Individuals distinguished themselves at metropolitan, rural and regional primary, secondary, junior and senior technical schools. Many took their first teaching positions within BTAS itself. However, the original remit of technical art schools was to serve industry.

During World War I, art-trained enlistees found their creative skills in demand. Some unofficially documented their experience; others sketched their environment to assist troop placement and planning. Creative jobs ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous; from assisting medical teams in preparing reconstructive surgeries to producing bawdy trench papers.

³⁶⁴ VED, PP no. 15 (1915), 91.

³⁶⁵ “Courier, 17 February 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³⁶⁶ “Courier, 20 February 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

³⁶⁷ “Courier, 17 February 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

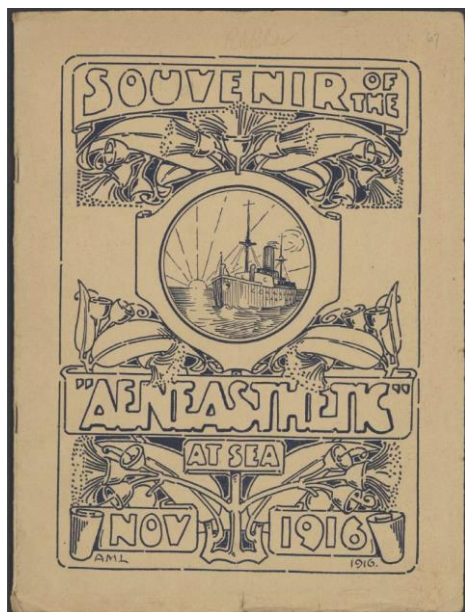


Figure 2.7
 Arthur M. Lilburne (cover artist). *Souvenir of the "Aeneasthetic" at Sea, Nov 1916*. London: Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1916, 32 p; 26 cm. (Courtesy National Library of Australia [NLA]. FERG/4216. Public domain.)

BTAS alumni, Arthur Melville Lilburne (1888-1918), contributed to his troopship's publication.³⁶⁸ While not a BTAS graduate, Ballarat's Will Dyson is credited with the concept of modelling battlefields to indicate conditions. Other jobs included cartography and camouflage.³⁶⁹

BTAS students were employed in diverse commercial positions. Draughting graduates worked with architects and government departments. Female designers worked at local mills, including Jean Rogers at Lucas & Co., and Olive Scott and M. Hutchinson at Myer Mills.³⁷⁰ Olga Lyons worked at a local photographic studio, Clemence Hill as a jeweller and Harold Symons as a sculptor's assistant.³⁷¹ Many students went on to describe themselves as artists on census forms and electoral rolls, even if they undertook other work to supplement their income; for

example, Harry Fern worked as an auctioneer while painting.³⁷² Entrepreneurial opportunities also existed. On completion of their repatriation classes at Ballarat, several returned servicemen established the Decorative Metal Craft Co. Less is recorded of individual art-trade student outcomes, particularly as many undertook only a handful of subjects for a short period. Apprentices, however, often noted their employer on enrolment cards. The Ballarat Lithography Company employed several students (including Keith and Reginald Davey) as did many printeries and sign writing firms.³⁷³

The second world war again shifted employment opportunities, particularly for women who were required to back-fill male positions. A 10-week art school class for 'lady tracers' to draft mechanical and electrical diagrams was highly successful.³⁷⁴ Again, artists were sought to document the war, this time through more official channels. Harold Herbert was the first

³⁶⁸ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 53-54.

³⁶⁹ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 50.

³⁷⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1928), 16; "Courier, 24 September 1932," *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936).

³⁷¹ *SMB Magazine* (1928), 16; Clark, *Report on the Ballarat Junior Technical School* (1915), 14; "Courier, 21 September 1937," *SMB Cuttings* (1936-1948).

³⁷² "Courier, 17 December 1927," *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936).

³⁷³ Refer Appendix, Table A-2, Student and Staff Database, DOI: 10.25955/604d8c6d9c78a.

³⁷⁴ "Courier, 9 May 1941," *SMB Cuttings* (1936-1948).

official Australian war artist of this war, appointed in January 1941 and sent to the Middle East.³⁷⁵ He became one of the nation's most esteemed art critics. Sculptor and ceramicist, Jeffrey Wilkinson, worked informally throughout the Pacific aboard troopship HMAS *Westralia*. For other students, particularly those focussed on non-vocational art, their BTAS education led them to further studies at gallery or private schools of art in Australia and abroad.³⁷⁶

Whatever their venture, as early as 1924, the Art School boasted: "no institution of its kind has turned out a greater number of men and women students who have since 'made good'."³⁷⁷

EXTRINSIC INFLUENCES AND VISITING AUTHORITIES

Various factors affect the transmission and diffusion of ideas, innovation, and artistic styles, but in the early twentieth century, expanding human and media networks countered Australia's 'distance decay', improving local responses to, and maintaining the potency of, innovations and events.³⁷⁸ BTAS staff and students were exposed to ideologies, ideas and material culture disseminated through traditional and emerging pathways. In considering what and who influenced them, we must be mindful that, according to Bourdieu, artists depend heavily on others, particularly their peers, when constructing their self-image.³⁷⁹ Individuals also tend toward homophily, and a deference for the opinions of those with higher cultural status.³⁸⁰

In 1901, the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) was felt to have "little influence", partly because Melburnians did not recognise the value of local artists, preferring the "imported potboilers of inferior men."³⁸¹ In the absence of local confidence, Australian art students were inundated with cultural imports, as educators like Carew-Smyth noted the "beneficial

³⁷⁵ Gwenda Robb, Elaine Smith, and Robert Smith, *Concise Dictionary of Australian Artists* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 119; "Their Work Is Now Being Exhibited: These Are the Australian Official War Artists," *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 25 September 1943, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article142147499>.

³⁷⁶ For example, Francis N. King (student and later Junior School teacher) studied at London University and the Naas Seminarium in Sweden in 1912-13, McCallum, *Ballarat and District* (1916), 56; Annie and Effie Holmes toured art schools in tour of art schools in Britain, Europe and America, "Courier, 24 September 1930," *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936); Nornie Gude continued studies at the National Gallery Drawing School, Melbourne, Germaine, *A Dictionary of Women Artists of Australia*, 184; "Courier, 20 November 1936," *SMB Cuttings* (1936-1948); and Amalie Feild studied with Max Meldrum, and later with future husband, Archie Colquhoun, "Courier, 1 February 1936", *SMB Cuttings* (1936-1948), Katherine Kovacic, *Archie & Amalie Colquhoun* (Castlemaine, Vic.: Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 2010), 15-16.

³⁷⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1924), 12

³⁷⁸ Davis, "Investigating the Diffusion of Stylistic Innovations," 13.

³⁷⁹ Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods," 19.

³⁸⁰ Davis, "Investigating the Diffusion of Stylistic Innovations," 60, 70.

³⁸¹ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 206.

influence” of visiting exhibitions.³⁸² In 1910, 30,000 visitors attended a Melbourne exhibition of British and Irish technical art schoolwork, many selected from South Kensington’s highly prescribed National Competition.³⁸³ Teacher exchanges between “Mother Country and the Dominions” were also considered advantageous for their “importation of new ideas.”³⁸⁴ Such practices reinforced British authority over Victorian art education.

Publications provided a broader perspective on technical art. The excellent BTAS library was packed with beautifully illustrated books and regular editions of international magazines and journals, the bulk imported from Britain, the USA and Europe. Australian popular culture was also modified by consumption of English and American literature.³⁸⁵ Perhaps such imports were a double-edged sword, limiting local innovation.

Through publications like *Art in Australia*, students accessed pertinent conversations and persuasive advertisements.³⁸⁶ The *SMB Magazine* also discussed art, sometimes within a global context. A 1920 article considered the beautifully intricate and decorative work produced in India, while “the ancestors of the British race were still mere animal-chasers.”³⁸⁷ It possibly reflected the experience of instructor Walter Rowbotham (1879-1951), who had travelled extensively through Europe and “Eastern countries” and was vice-principal at India’s Bombay School of Arts prior to teaching at the Bendigo then Ballarat art schools between 1919 and 1922.³⁸⁸ His cultural insights offered students a different perspective; albeit through the eyes of an Englishman with first class honours from the RCA.

Travelling alumni relayed their adventures and experiences to BTAS. Ted Cannon sent letters and illustrations from military training in the Middle East, later published in the *SMB Magazine*. As a favourite alumnus, his work was esteemed.³⁸⁹ Harold Herbert kept principal Smith abreast of his travels, sending photographs of “Moorish and Arabian” architecture from Morocco. On occasion he would visit the school.³⁹⁰ Renowned poster artist, Percy Trompf, made return trips to his alma mater, including a lecture to commercial art students in

³⁸² “Report on Instruction in Art in Technical Schools,” VED, PP no. 44 (1910), 94.

³⁸³ VED, ed., “Exhibition of Technical Art Students’ Work” *Education Gazette*, February 21, 1910, 32.

³⁸⁴ VED, PP no. 1 (1931), 8.

³⁸⁵ Carter, “Esprit De Nation,” 74.13-14.

³⁸⁶ For example: “Advert: The Weston Company Ltd,” eds. Smith, Stevens and Jones, *Art in Australia*, no. 3 (1917), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-347075105>

³⁸⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1920), 27.

³⁸⁸ “Personal,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 1 August 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article212648392>;
“Personal,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 28 July 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242591056>;
“Courier, 21 September 1921,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924).

³⁸⁹ *SMB Magazine* (1916), 18, 19, 24, 27.

³⁹⁰ “Courier, 16 June 1922,” “Courier, 28 March 1923,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924).

1947.³⁹¹ Graduates of the pre-amalgamated art schools also occasionally shared their experience, such as scenic artist, Mr. Matthews (possibly William Matthews who was associated with Ballarat's Academy of Music, working in Ballarat, Bendigo and New Zealand during the 1880s and 90s).³⁹²

Even within a standardised curriculum, students may be swayed by the approaches, ideologies and predispositions of individual teachers.³⁹³ Several BTAS teachers are discussed in later chapters, but one notable staff member was John Thomas Nightingale Rowell (1894–1973), a prize-winning artist and founding member of the Society of Twenty Melbourne Painters, who taught at BTAS from 1919. Rowell was considered modern, if not modernist. Primarily producing realist, rural landscapes, he was thought a superb draughtsman among Australian impressionists, “influenced by Chinese and Japanese techniques.”³⁹⁴ His oversight of the 1925 SMB ball decorations also featured a Japanese theme.³⁹⁵ By 1922, Rowell's exhibitions were receiving complementary reviews.³⁹⁶ He had spent six years at the NGV school, so one might assume he favoured fine art, yet he also studied at Melbourne's West Technical Art School and the WMC, and apprenticed as a scenic artist at King's Theatre. While teaching financially enabled Rowell to travel and exhibit widely, his students were not neglected; he was considered an excellent and devoted teacher.³⁹⁷ Rowell likely exposed students to the highs and lows of professional practice. Winning the inaugural Crouch Prize in 1927 perhaps motivated him to return to Melbourne, where he painted from his Bayswater home, and taught part time at the WMC at the invitation of BTAS alumnus, Harold Brown. Ballarat had great difficulty replacing Rowell at the original salary.³⁹⁸

³⁹¹ “Courier, 9 September 1947,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

³⁹² “Courier, 2 October 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Ballarat Liodertafel,” *Table Talk* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 August 1889, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article147279685>; “Arrah-Na-Pogue,” *Bendigo Advertiser* (Vic.), 25 December 1893, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article88923637>; *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 24 November 1885, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206304188>; *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 21 February 1890, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209579971>.

³⁹³ Swift, “Birmingham and Its Art School: Changing Views 1800–1921,” (2005), 80; Hammond, “Changes in Art Education Ideologies,” 7.

³⁹⁴ Andrew Mackenzie, “Rowell, John Thomas Nightingale (1894–1973),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (MUP, 1988), accessed 5 September 2019, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rowell-john-thomas-nightingale-8284>; Robb, Smith, and Smith, *Concise Dictionary of Australian Artists*, 226; Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 219.

³⁹⁵ “Courier, 18 July 1925,” “Courier, 23 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³⁹⁶ “Nature in Paint,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 2 October 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243778789>.

³⁹⁷ “Courier, 24 October 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); *SMB Mag*, 1927, 15.

³⁹⁸ “Courier, 12 August 1927,” “Courier, 1 March 1928” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); SMB, *Annual Report, 1927* (1928), 3; Lane, *Australian Art Pottery 1900–1950*, 17.

It was perhaps owing to his friendship with Rowell that Max Meldrum visited BTAS in 1923, finding “much that called forth his hearty commendation.”³⁹⁹ This may have been when Amalie Feild, who later studied with Meldrum, first met him, as he admired the pottery she was eliciting from students. Meldrum returned to Ballarat in April to paint around Lake Wendouree, in June for a private exhibition of his work in the town hall (in which he strived for ‘naturalness’), and in August to deliver a talk to the Ballarat Ladies’ Art Association. An *SMB Magazine* contributor described two opposing views in Australian contemporary art: realists attempting truthful representations of nature; and conventionalists who expressed nature through “a personality”; placing Meldrum in the realist camp.⁴⁰⁰ This assessment would have suited Meldrum, who was a critic of the Modern Art movement.⁴⁰¹ Therefore, his approval of BTAS students’ painting suggests it, too, was relatively conservative. Subsequent BTAS staff, including Victor Greenhalgh and May Grigg, led excursions to view exhibitions by both Rowell and Meldrum in 1931, indicating the ongoing influence of these men.⁴⁰²

In 1934, Meldrum’s portrait of SMB’s late Professor Mica Smith was purchased for the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, many of the funds raised by SMB registrar, J. B. Robinson.⁴⁰³ Robinson strongly defended Meldrum against criticism, writing “his work will outlive the controversies of us all.”⁴⁰⁴ In 1952, again speaking in Ballarat, Meldrum stated he “deplored the modern trend” that prevented art from being the international language it once had. Students, he felt, had lost the grounding influence of artistic craftsmanship.⁴⁰⁵

As we shall discuss later, Stoke-on-Trent pottery manufacturer, Leonard Lumsden Grimwade (1864–1931), founder of Royal Winton, brought his opinions to bear on the school’s ceramic efforts in 1922, as did the chief architect and assistant of the Victorian Public Works Department.⁴⁰⁶

³⁹⁹ “27 January 1923,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924).

⁴⁰⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1923), 16.

⁴⁰¹ Smith, *Place, Taste, and Tradition*, 209.

⁴⁰² “Courier, 22 August 1931,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

⁴⁰³ “Ballarat Gossip,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 11 April 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243800074>; “Max Meldrum’s Pictures,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 2 June 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213815074>; “Ladies’ Art Association,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 7 August 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213822633>; “Ballarat and District,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 August 1934, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article10978258>; “Ballarat and District,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 2 November 1934, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article10990862>.

⁴⁰⁴ “Meldrum Picture Removal Protests,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 18 February 1931, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242875540>; “Independent Judge Suggested,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 21 February 1931, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242880854>.

⁴⁰⁵ “Artist Deplores Modern Trend,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 9 April 1952, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206204156>.

⁴⁰⁶ “Courier, 11 October 1922,” “Courier, 29 November 1922,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924).

A significant visitor of 1923 was Ethel Margaret Campbell MBE (1886-1954), affectionately known as the ‘Angel of Durban’ for her semaphore greetings, gifts, and commitment to the welfare of Australian and New Zealand troops passing through South Africa during World War I. In peacetime, the Returned Services League (RSL) arranged an exhaustive, four-month Australian tour for Campbell and her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Samuel George Campbell. ‘Angel Ettie’ was a celebrity visitor, drawing large crowds. She planned to report on her BTAS visit to authorities at home.⁴⁰⁷ Campbell was involved with the Natal Technical School (*Technikon Natal*) in Durban, an institution her father founded in 1907. She was particularly interested in the Ballarat school’s “art pottery, art enamelling, and allied crafts.”⁴⁰⁸ Ethel Campbell “represented the links that bound the Empire together” and exemplifies a period of ‘sisterhood’ among dominions under mother England.⁴⁰⁹ Her visit may have reinforced this ideology within the school.

In 1922, early Australian modernist, Gladys Reynell (1881-1956) and her new husband, George Osborne were producing blue glazed ceramics from their Ballarat-based Osrey Pottery, having left their Reynella operation in South Australia.⁴¹⁰ Osborne and Reynell described themselves as potter and “potter artist”, respectively.⁴¹¹ George gathered and prepared the clay while Gladys focused on decorative elements, predominantly sgraffito. It is possible some of their work was fired at BTAS, given a joint mention in a 1922 edition of the *Herald*, although they did construct a back-yard kiln of their own. By 1926, George had fallen victim to poisonous glazes, and Osrey closed shortly after.⁴¹²

When three BTAS teachers decided to complete studies interrupted by war, the Education Department appointed Thomas Henderson of the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) to assume

⁴⁰⁷ Lynn Meyers, “The Queensland Connection of Ethel Campbell: The Angel of Durban,” State Library of Queensland, last modified 5 April 2016, accessed 30 August 2019, <http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/ww1/2016/04/05/the-queensland-connection-of-ethel-campbell-the-angel-of-durban/>; “The Angel of Durban,” Australian National University, accessed 30 August 2019. <https://onehundredstories.anu.edu.au/stories/angel-durban>.

⁴⁰⁸ “Courier, 13 July 1923,” “Star, 30 July 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁴⁰⁹ Bruce Scates, Rebecca Wheatley, and Laura James, “The Angel of Durban, Ethel Campbell,” in *World War One: A History in 100 Stories* (Australia: Viking, 2015), 93.

⁴¹⁰ “Art Notes,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 25 March 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204082551>.

⁴¹¹ Ancestry.com. *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Original data: Australian Electoral Commission. [*Electoral roll*]. Victoria, Ballarat East, Subdivision of Soldiers Hill; 1926, 1927.

⁴¹² Duggan, *Ghost Nation*, 193; Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 44, 47; Topliss, *Modernism and Feminism*, 63, 95, “New Pottery Works,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 28 September 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243779210>; Peter Timms, *Australian Studio Pottery and China Painting* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986), 102.

some duties.⁴¹³ The GSA was identified as an aspirational model to the Fink Commission in 1901.⁴¹⁴ However, it was transitioning between directors as Henderson arrived in Australia, possibly aboard the *Osterley*, in early 1926.⁴¹⁵ Henderson possibly injected some of the GSA ethos to Ballarat. He certainly applied his skills to set-dressing and scenery production at BTAS and worked with students to create “ultra modern” decorations for the school ball, and a production of *The Rivals*. Following the loss of key staff, Henderson became Art Master in 1928 but was himself transferred to Stawell in 1929.⁴¹⁶

Adelaide artist, Mabel (May) Grigg (1885-1969), was enjoying a flourishing career in portrait and landscape painting when she joined BTAS staff in 1930. Grigg was familiar with both institutional and private art schools, having studied at Harry Gill’s South Australian School of Design, followed by time with Hans Heysen (as his first student) and later, Margaret Preston. In between she travelled to Europe. Grigg honed her teaching at the Wilderness School in northern Adelaide, four kilometres from the studio she shared with her violinist father.⁴¹⁷ Accepting the role of senior art mistress in Ballarat was a geographic leap for the 45-year-old. She lived a stone’s throw from the school, at Booth’s Buildings in Lydiard Street South, and taught painting and etching.⁴¹⁸ After approximately sixteen years, Grigg returned to South Australia. In addition to the value of their work, female teachers such as Grigg presented young women with an example of an alternative path through life—a long-term career of their own making.

Authoritative individuals aside, other influences and feedback percolated students’ subconscious and affected their subsequent approaches to work. For example, success at examination encouraged examination-like results down the track. Even illustrated examples provided subliminal guidance that could limit student creativity. Competitions too, through

⁴¹³ “Personal,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 September 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243704027>; “Courier, 10 September 1926,” “Courier, 18 September 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁴¹⁴ Evidence given by Arthur T Woodward, Art Instructor at Bendigo School of Mines, to Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 309.

⁴¹⁵ National Archives of Australia (NAA), *Inward passenger manifests for ships and aircraft arriving at Fremantle, Perth Airport and Western Australian outports from 1897-1963*; Series Number: K 269; Reel Number: 53.

⁴¹⁶ “Courier, 24 July 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); SMB, *Annual Report* (1927), 4; *SMB Magazine* (1928), 16; “Personal,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 8 February 1928, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243911652>; Smith, “26 June 1929,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 6.

⁴¹⁷ “May Grigg Self Portrait,” State Library of South Australia, accessed 10 September 2019, <https://digital.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/nodes/view/633>; “News from Country Centres,” *Table Talk* (Melbourne, Vic.), 18 September 1930, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146454421>; “Adelaide Artist for Ballarat School,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 4 September 1930, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242752447>.

⁴¹⁸ “Courier, 10 September 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

their prescriptive nature, influenced creative minds. Macdonald explains British guilds “propagated their convictions on art-work” through societies and the National Competition, thus influencing the work of schools of art.⁴¹⁹ Groups such as the ANA influenced Australian politics and opinion, and their encouragement of Australian motifs is evident in the work of BTAS students.

The spontaneity and self-expression of the New Education encouraged at elementary schools was slow to infiltrate technical art schools. Even as greater individual expression became permissible, adults were not immune to external pressure. In an article on George Lambert and modernism, Howard Ashton questioned the type of (perceived negative) influences Sydney students were becoming subject to.⁴²⁰ Of course, acceptance of the modernist spectrum became conceivable once a critical mass of influential people developed to support it.⁴²¹ Despite many shared pressures and influences, some Victorian art schools were able to differentiate their “style of design and technique.”⁴²² Part conscious act, part the result of local forces.

Some designers and educationalists were cognisant of what Bourdieu would later tag *habitus*. Catterson-Smith noted “...everything seen, heard or felt, tasted or smelled, every thought or action has left an impression on the brain.”⁴²³ Ultimately, the extent to which any influence is felt, absorbed or translated, although predisposed by *habitus*, is at the discretion of the individual.

CHAPTER TWO CONCLUSION

Technical schools were influenced by the fluctuating, and sometimes contrary, positions of ministerial and departmental personalities. However, supporters, advocates and allies could build institutional immunity to protect against the changing tides of social, economic, and governmental fortunes.

The 1907 amalgamation of Ballarat’s art schools within a school of mining science risked their diminishment. Instead, the new Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) benefited from the long-standing reputation, institutional stability and supportive governing council of

⁴¹⁹ Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 36.

⁴²⁰ Sydney Art School, *The Art Student* (1930), 8.

⁴²¹ Peter Gay, *Modernism*, 18.

⁴²² VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 1 (1933), 22.

⁴²³ Robert Catterson-Smith, *Drawing from Memory and Mind Picturing* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd, 1922), 7.

Victoria's oldest tertiary technical institution, the School of Mines, Ballarat (SMB), which was expanding its remit. BTAS also built upon the generosity enjoyed by its antecedent art institutions, condensed its accommodations but expanded its resources, and was granted funds for a purpose-designed building that opened to fanfare in 1915.

For more than 20 years, BTAS' excellent accommodation, equipment, library, and collection set it apart, not only from other regional art schools but metropolitan ones. Several were already in a sorry state when their control was assumed by the Victorian Education Department, and many were pressured to relinquish space to new secondary high schools. The comparative wealth of civic governments, the strength of district industries, and the power of local unions and industry groups contributed to financial disparity between institutions.

BTAS' first principal, Herbert H. Smith, had studied at each of Ballarat's technical art schools; East, West and SMB, as well as internationally at the Royal College of Art, London (RCA). Smith wasn't shy in expressing his views on technical art education or seeking support for them. Even when BTAS' enviable, state-of-the-art building was opened in 1915, Smith seized the opportunity to press for additional funding. He was a practical administrator who maintained both teaching and art practice, and championed technical education for young women. Smith favoured collegiality over competition, engaging frequently with colleagues and peers. He was an executive member of the Technical Art Teachers' Association, a regular attendee of technical school conferences, and remained abreast of changes and innovations in the sector.

Distinctively, Smith was able to train and select most of his own teaching staff. Many demonstrated loyalty to the school by staying the course despite poorer remuneration and conditions than secondary teachers. The reclassification of teachers in 1926 created a more level playing field, but not without diminishing the special nature of technical art teachers.

Students were the litmus paper of government decision-making and perhaps most affected by policy, curricula, insufficient funding, or dilapidated buildings. BTAS drew students from the greater Ballarat area, and some from further afield lived as boarders. They were a community of teenagers before the term was coined, mostly training for a certain job or career. The *SMB Magazine* fostered an esprit-de-corps across the wider student cohort, as did participation in clubs and societies, social events, annual processions, and competitive inter-school sport. Many students also took their civic responsibilities seriously.

While SMB mining courses struggled to attract students, the art school was well attended, perhaps contributing to some friendly sledging. However, the rivalry between science and art might better be expressed as tensions between boys and girls; males predominating the science cohort and females a majority in the art school. BTAS appears to have been particularly encouraging of women. Occasionally, student retention was affected by wartime enlistments and economic depression, but SMB made efforts to alleviate students' financial strain. The endowment of several advocates and benefactors manifested as valuable student scholarships.

SMB junior and senior sections were managed as one school, sharing a governing body, campus, and staff. Many BTAS students completed at least two years' schooling within SMB's junior section, expediting their training and streamlining their pathway to senior study. To attract other prospective students BTAS, in conjunction with SMB, hosted public open evenings to demonstrate student opportunity and institutional capability. BTAS also implemented marketing strategies, including press advertising and mailouts, and promoted student success at exhibitions, through scholarships and prizes, and commission work. BTAS students' success at competition was credited with stimulating art education elsewhere.⁴²⁴

A chief object of BTAS pride was the occupational success of alumni. Many graduates joined the Past Students' Association, and some visited or corresponded with the school for decades. Staff (many of whom were alumni) were perhaps some of its greatest champions.

Despite its regional location and many house-trained teachers, BTAS was not insular. Its students and staff often sought external experience and input, while welcoming a range of individuals to visit their influence upon the school.

Claims were regularly made as to BTAS' pre-eminent position among Victoria's technical art schools. Certainly, SMB and BTAS benefited from media support, governmental champions, industry engagement, community contributions and individual philanthropy. Mindful that success is measured through criteria endorsed by agencies of varying, sometimes self-appointed, legitimacy, BTAS demonstrated relative success, when positioned against other technical art schools, for much of the early twentieth century.

⁴²⁴ "Star, 24 July 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

Chapter 3

Transformations: 1926-1940

From the mid-1920s, the Ballarat Technical Art School's (BTAS) operational environment altered in the face of Education Department changes, legislative developments, and the long tail of a global economic depression. BTAS strove to maintain visibility and success amid the struggle.

THE OLD GUARD MAKES WAY

In the late 1920s, the Victorian Education Department lost several technical education advocates; Ponsonby Carew-Smyth retired as Art Inspector in December 1925, Frank Tate retired in July 1928, followed by Donald Clark and John Byatt in 1930. (In addition, George Swinburne and J. Trantham-Fryer, two pillars of technical education, died in 1928.) These educationalists had worked independently and collaboratively for years; some issues uniting them, others causing friction. The length of their tenures, and ability to work together despite undercurrents of educational disagreement, explains in some measure the relative stability in Victorian education claimed by some sources.¹

During his 26-year oversight as Inspector of Art (and Drawing) Carew-Smyth's "unswerving adherence to a high ideal" was credited with raising the standard of art in Victorian schools at all levels.² He had particularly high expectations of senior technical students. When Carew-Smyth is described as a proponent of South Kensington, such as by Alan Young, it does not provide a full picture of his ideology and approach.³ Throughout his career, Carew-Smyth promoted his philosophy of 'everyday art', urging that even the most mundane and utilitarian objects should be designed artistically.⁴ He was a firm but sympathetic arbiter of art education, and schools generally welcomed his inspections as a valuable opportunity for feedback. The council of the Echuca Technical Art School "were much impressed by his

¹ Including: "Education Department," Research Data Australia, accessed 8 July 2018. <https://researchdata.ands.org.au/education-department/490526>.

² VED, PP no. 45, 1925.

³ Young, "Commercial Art to Graphic Design," 9.

⁴ "Simplicity in Art," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 5 May 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article232258110>.

earnestness and thorough knowledge of our requirements.”⁵ “Tall, lean, dignified, serious-faced,” Carew-Smyth’s sober countenance could become “irresistibly jovial” and many teachers “looked upon him as their guiding star and greatest friend.”⁶ His departure and replacement would impact the visibility of regional technical art schools.

Carew-Smyth subsequently joined the Working Men’s College (WMC) for a time, and later acted as temporary director of the NGV in 1936.⁷ He lectured to clubs, societies and chambers of manufacturing, countering the “voice of the Philistine, who scoffs at art.”⁸ A passionate art educator, administrator and advocate, Carew-Smyth died in October 1939, the same year as colleague and friend, Frank Tate, and just a few weeks after the world again erupted in war.

Most Ballarat schools reportedly flourished under the intelligent, innovative and dynamic directorship of Frank Tate.⁹ He unenviably oversaw the amalgamation of the city’s art schools and ensured the government stumped up to pay for a new art building.¹⁰ His ongoing support is reflected through commissions, attendance at events and exhibitions, and the provision of gifts. His support of the Department’s centralising tendencies was perhaps less welcome. Tate was unafraid to look outward to investigate alternative educational practices. His regular travel led one parliamentarian to declare there was “too much gadding about” from which the State would not benefit, given Tate’s proximity to retirement in 1926.¹¹ One suspects this was water off a duck’s back, given Tate had served sixteen ministries and nineteen ministers when he finally retired in 1928, aged 65.¹² He remained committed to ongoing educational development. One colleague described him as an outstanding educationalist with an international reputation, deserving of a knighthood.¹³

As his own retirement approached, Chief Inspector of Technical Education, Donald Clark, became even more outspoken as he emerged from the shadow cast by the Education

⁵ “Technical Art School,” *Riverine Herald* (Echuca, Vic., Moama, NSW), 20 July 1908, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article114868588>.

⁶ Croll, *I Recall*, (1939), online; “Missionaries of Art,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1921215>.

⁷ “Courier, 19 March 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁸ Carew-Smyth in “Art in Industry,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 28 April 1934, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article10931894>.

⁹ Bate, *Life After Gold*, 136.

¹⁰ “Echo, 17 June 1911” SMB Cuttings 1907–1916, 32.

¹¹ “Too Much Gadding About,” *Horsham Times* (Vic.), 20 August 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article73013763>.

¹² Selleck, “Tate, Frank (1864–1939)”, online.

¹³ Croll, *I Recall*, (1939), online.

Department. In his 1929 essay Clark boasted that his role, performed solo for most of his tenure, had oversight of more than 100 subjects and therefore required a much broader knowledge than primary and secondary school inspectors. He also suggested too many overseers of technical education policy had never set foot in a technical school and did not understand their unique challenges; an assertion supported by the recollections of others.¹⁴ Clark was affectionately remembered by SMB as a firm, patient and able administrator prepared to go to great lengths to assist teachers. A principals' report acknowledges he had 'opponents' (the original term 'enemies' is scratched out), noting he often crossed swords in the interests of technical education. Still, they credited him with establishing a system of technical education "second to none in the world."¹⁵

The departure, and replacement, of Carew-Smyth, Tate, and Clark created a perfect storm that would impact the authority and visibility of regional technical art schools in general, and SMB and BTAS particularly. The long-standing relationship with Carew-Smyth and advocacy of Clark were perhaps most keenly missed.

NEW ADMINISTRATIVE PLAYERS

Frank Tate may have been a visionary Director of Education, but he failed to adequately succession plan. Without him, the Department struggled to improve.¹⁶ Tate's assistant, an opinionated champion of the patriarchy, Martin P. Hansen (1874-1932), filled his shoes between 1928 and 1932.¹⁷ Like Tate, Hansen believed in suppressing class distinctions through a structure of general, multi-course secondary schools, but found his own efforts at reform frustrated. His intention to simplify secondary high and junior technical schools raised the ire of technical schools and their Chief Inspector, Donald Clark, who steadfastly held that technical education was a very different beast to general secondary education. The new (and former) Minister, John Lemmon (1875-1955) agreed. At ideological loggerheads, Hansen no doubt breathed a sigh of relief upon Clark's retirement in 1930; but was to be bitterly disappointed with his replacement.

Two names were floated to replace Clark: Frank Ellis (1886-1964), principal of the WMC, and Ernest Percy Eltham (1892-1964). A selection committee unanimously decided Ellis was

¹⁴ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 48; Croll, *I Recall*, (1939), online.

¹⁵ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (April 1932).

¹⁶ "Education in Victoria: Will a New Era Open" by Tanjilian in "Age, 21 January 1933," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

¹⁷ L. J. Blake, "Hansen, Martin Peter (1874-1932)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (MUP, 1983), accessed 4 August 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hansen-martin-peter-6556>.

the most suitable candidate, but against its findings, the State appointed Eltham; a vocational education activist and eight-year assistant to Clark. Eltham had suggested his own role as chair of the Apprenticeship Commission be combined with the Chief Inspector position to reduce red tape and save money, a handy power grab. Hansen was furious, as were members of the Victorian Teachers' Union. The debacle played out for a few more months. Hansen insisted Eltham's appointment be probationary, complained about his reports and then sacked him. Cabinet swiftly reinstated Eltham the following day, this time to a permanent position.¹⁸ Eltham would remain in the post until World War II.

Hansen's term as Director of Education was short-lived, controversial and had little long-term impact on technical art education. His replacement, enthusiastic idealist James McRae (1871-1939) spent much of his three-year tenure liaising between the ministry, Education Department, Teachers' Union and teachers to establish some hard-won stability.¹⁹ McRae spent much of his career advocating for young people, but his experience and interest sat largely within elementary education where he championed the principles of child-centred learning.²⁰ McRae's enthusiasm for vocational guidance and experimental psychology saw him introduce a system of intelligence testing that would, for better or worse, adjoin Victorian teaching methods.²¹ Despite some criticism, he was heralded as an enlightened manager who oversaw "one of the most progressive phases of education."²² However, McRae appears to have left the bulk of technical education oversight to others.

From 1936, the Director's reins were handed to John Arnold (Arnie) Seitz (1883-1963).²³ He was characterised as "neither philosophical nor progressive."²⁴ Sandwiched by acrimony between the Teachers' Union and government members, Seitz was perhaps content to let McRae's substantial changes bed in. However, his approach to art is important to note. Seitz held that fostering individual potential and creativity was critical to developing flexibility and

¹⁸ "Age, 6 August 1930" SMB Cuttings (1925–1936);

¹⁹ Andrew Spaul, "McRae, James (1871–1939)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (MUP, 1986), accessed 9 August 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mcrae-james-7443>.

²⁰ "Prominent Personalities: James McRae, M.A. Director of Education," *Table Talk* (Melbourne, Vic.), 20 July 1933, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article149548149>; VED, "Report of the Director of Education," PP no. 1 (1936), 15; VED, "Report on Elementary Education," PP no. 1 (1936), 16.

²¹ "School Inspectors Confer," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 23 October 1934, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article10990256>, 7.

²² "Victorian Education," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 October 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205912785>; "The Schools Retirement of Mr. McRae," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 21 November 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11939193>, 41.

²³ "Director of Education," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 September 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11919923>, 9.

²⁴ Andrew Spaul, "Seitz, John Arnold (1883–1963)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (MUP, 1988), accessed 4 August 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/seitz-john-arnold-8382>.

adaptation in a changing world.²⁵ He promoted the linking of manual and theoretical subjects within primary and secondary schools while aiming to increase access to handwork in regional areas, and encouraged schools to decorate with the works of Australian artists. Technical education was less familiar to Seitz, however he promoted its value to industry and the “welfare of the State.”²⁶ He defended State education for showing students “how to think and reason intelligently: how to live with their fellow-men; how to look after their health; and how to follow a sound moral code.”²⁷ For Seitz, no level of education was wasted.

Education Department changes had varied impact on SMB and BTAS, but arguably the most pronounced was the appointment of a new Inspector of Art.

ART INSPECTOR DEAN

When Carew-Smyth retired as Art Inspector in 1926, departmental recruiters expected his replacement to furnish a London diploma or ‘equivalent’. William Rupert Dean (c1884–1947) met the criteria, first studying at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Art School, then England’s RCA. He visited art schools in France, Belgium and Italy, returning to Australia with fresh ideas, experiences and opinions on the grim state of Australian technical school equipment.²⁸ As first principal of the Prahran Technical Art School, Dean had demonstrated the requisite organisational skills, teaching experience and advanced knowledge of art’s application to industry. The advertised salary was £780 per annum.²⁹ Between 1926 and 1947, Dean worked under Directors Tate, Hansen, McRae, and Seitz, and alongside Chief Inspector Eltham for much of his tenure.

Blake claims Dean “finally blasted the Carew-Smyth influence”, and instead promoted imagination.³⁰ It is true art education was shifting in line with wider pedagogical changes, but Blake’s presentation of Carew-Smyth does him a disservice. Blake takes his impression of

²⁵ “Teaching for Citizenship,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 21 February 1939, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205970148>.

²⁶ “Aim to Lift School Age,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 September 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article248545539>; “Director Praises State Schools,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 November 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article244667764>, 2.

²⁷ “High School ‘Misfits’” *Telegraph (Brisbane, Qld.: 1872 - 1947)*. 03 May 1934, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article184722417>; “Aim to Lift School Age,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 September 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article248545539>.

²⁸ “Special Article: Laying the Foundation Stone,” *Prahran Mechanics’ Institute, Victorian and Local History Library Newsletter*. August 2005, accessed 3 August 2018, <http://www.pmi.net.au/wp-content/uploads/Newsletter%20Archive/40NewsletterAug05.pdf>, 6.

²⁹ “Chief Art Inspector,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 1 May 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3779145>.

³⁰ Blake, “The Primary Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 368.

Carew-Smyth's approach from the *Austral Drawing Books*, which "contained formalised shapes to be copied by the children."³¹ Yet he overlooks that Carew-Smyth rejected the value of copy, preferring children to work from observation of real objects. Still, Carew-Smyth's approach is retrospectively labelled conservative. Terence Lane suggests his attachment to Arts and Crafts philosophies and plant-based design contributed to the "longevity of the Art Nouveau style in Victoria."³² There is certainly evidence for this in Education Department examinations.

Primary School art

Conscious of Carew-Smyth's legacy, Dean hoped minor adjustments might make the role his own.³³ In a book co-authored with his assistant, BTAS alumnus Harold Jolly, Dean explained their philosophy:

"A training in art makes observation more sensitive to form and colour; it increases the power of memory, encourages self-expression, and gives pleasure through creative achievement."³⁴

According to Dean, primary school children should be exposed to diverse images and objects while their "mind is plastic and capable of receiving and retaining impressions."³⁵ Dean encouraged flexibility and scope for individual development by injecting greater freedom, energy and colour into the syllabus.³⁶ The introduction of pastels, which could be blended, mixed and smeared, allowed children to represent forms as mass beyond outline, and in a broader colour palette, if only 12 base shades.³⁷ The promotion of colour cannot all be credited to Dean, however; at the time it was being more widely embraced by modern artists.

For Dean, free expression was a fundamental stage in children's art, but it did not replace learned skills, such as observation and accuracy, that required training and practise.³⁸ Students drew common objects, brought from home or made in class, plant and fruit forms, as they had under Carew-Smyth, plus imaginative work. Teachers were encouraged to

³¹ Blake, "The Primary Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 298.

³² Terence Lane, "Melbourne Studio Pottery of the 1930s: The Melbourne Tech Group," in *Australian Art Pottery 1900-1950* (2004), 17.

³³ "Complimentary Social to Mr. W. R. Dean," *Prahran Telegraph* (Vic.), 1 October 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165138925>.

³⁴ William Rupert Dean and Harold Jolly, *Drawing with Pastels*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1947, originally published 1933), xi.

³⁵ VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1933), 22.

³⁶ VED, PP no. 2 (1929), 5; and VED, PP no. 1 (1932), 5.

³⁷ Dean and Jolly, *Drawing with Pastels* (1933), xii.

³⁸ Dean and Jolly, *Drawing with Pastels* (1933), 1.

instruct students as young as Grades 1 and 2 in the basics of formal composition, such as scale, placement, and focal points, observing the effects of perspective and foreshortening without suffering through the theory. Students progressed to landscape drawing and, where possible, ventured outdoors. These activities aimed to help children develop memories they could later access for imaginative works.

Pattern arrangement was also taught, from simple step-and-repeat borders and all over patterns (or diapers), through to gridded nets and reflected motifs. The implementation of geometric nets such as squares, triangles, and other polygons, built on children's mathematical understanding without explicit maths teaching. Critically, these patterns were not to be copied, but generated from the student's own imagination. All children were exposed to a colour chart and older students generated their own colour wheels to enable palette selection. Dean's approach did not dispense with traditional formal methods.³⁹

Ten years into Dean's tenure, handwork was regarded as general education. Small coloured squares of craft paper, introduced to primary schools in 1936, became ubiquitous for decades. Inventive teachers utilised inexpensive and waste materials. Changing educational philosophies, director McRae's child-centred curricula, and the introduction of new materials led to greater creative freedom and an increase in "imaginative work" at this level.⁴⁰ Similarly, Dean's high school curriculum encouraged teachers and students alike to embrace a freedom of approach and expression.

Secondary High School art

Carew-Smyth's apparent lack of interest in secondary high school art (as distinct from junior technical schools) left something of a vacuum which, in 1933, Dean attempted to fill with two distinct art syllabi. Syllabus A was designed to broaden students' knowledge and appreciation of art, its history and developments, while cultivating critical skills and imbuing taste. Syllabus B was directed toward training for art-based employment. It included craft subjects which had barely been attempted at high schools.⁴¹ To Dean's frustration, however, this split created problems. Some high schools solely adopted Syllabus A then adhered to its written content too strictly, contributing little to applied art. Syllabus B was shunned and, according to Dean, important practical concepts were overlooked.⁴²

³⁹ Dean and Jolly, *Drawing with Pastels* (1933), 39.

⁴⁰ VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1936), 21.

⁴¹ VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1933), 22.

⁴² VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 2 (1934), 22.

Many teachers likely considered Syllabus B the purview of junior technical schools, thus overlooking it. However, the dual syllabi also exposed and created gaps in teacher knowledge. Academically oriented staff had little interest in, or knowledge of, technical art to teach it effectively. Some preferred teaching to the University of Melbourne's Intermediate and Leaving examinations, thus restricting student expression. Where specialist technical teachers were employed in high schools, they suffered from a "spirit of domination" at the hands of other academic staff.⁴³ In addition, tertiary technical training continued to be considered substandard to University study, a sense of inferiority which Dimmack, in 1955, suggested extended to the status of art within secondary education.⁴⁴

Of course, some high school educators urged students to greater expression within their art, particularly outside school hours. They also gathered samples and reproductions of fine art, craft, and applied art to display in their classrooms. The many BTAS graduates teaching into secondary schools would have directly experienced the tensions created by the dual syllabi.

Dean's reforms unravelled Carew-Smyth's integrated approach to art and, intentionally or not, cemented the distinction between fine and applied art for years to come. By 1938, high schoolers were deemed unlikely to enter art vocations, and Dean reinstalled a single syllabus focussed on appreciation. Applied art was now formally the remit of Junior Technical Schools.⁴⁵

Technical Art Schools

According to some research, technical art school curricula changed little during the inter-war period; inhibited by administrative structures which reinforced conformity and emphasised skill over creativity.⁴⁶ However, the public became more interested in the work of technical art schools following a craft revival and demand for Australian, hand-produced articles during the 1930s. Patriotic marketing and import tariffs encouraged local buying and increased demand for craftspeople.⁴⁷ Burgeoning technical art school enrolments increased demand for more highly qualified teachers with advanced art skills. More will be said on this level of art teacher training in a later chapter.

⁴³ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 18–19.

⁴⁴ Dimmack, "Art Education in Australia," 5.

⁴⁵ VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1938), 23.

⁴⁶ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 39; and Hammond, "Changes in Art Education Ideologies," 515.

⁴⁷ VED, PP no. 1 (1932), 5.

Like so many before him, Dean called for “design which is national and characteristic of Australia” to further the development of secondary industries.⁴⁸ He revised the syllabi for technical art schools, including new courses in commercial art. Dean explained the revision was due to “changing artistic outlook and the various forms of modern art requirements.” Art teachers were compelled to upgrade their skills which Dean encouraged, albeit (as he acknowledged) mostly at their own private expense. Some departmental teachers were granted leave to travel for further study.⁴⁹

Dean reported that senior technical art schools had begun to develop unique styles and techniques.⁵⁰ This may have been due to the influence of certain staff members, available technologies, or funding. However, it appears the metropolitan art schools might have consciously specialised to differentiate themselves and avoid competition for the student pool. Swinburne was known for applied art and advertising, Prahran for decorative metal and cabinet making, Box Hill and Brighton for decoration, and Emily McPherson College for costuming and soft furnishings. The Melbourne Technical College (MTC, formerly WMC) maintained a reputation for applied art.⁵¹

Dean did not have the allegiance to regional schools that Carew-Smyth had demonstrated. Carew-Smyth had crossed oceans to emigrate to Ballarat, and built many long-standing relationships with its citizens, among them, Herbert Smith. Dean focused on the work of the metropolitan schools, offering only a passing, combined mention of the regional schools in his reports. Without the good will and protection of Carew-Smyth and Donald Clark in the Education Department, BTAS’ visibility appears to have suffered.

FAMILIAR CONCERNS AND CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

The push toward centralisation

With changes to personnel, Education Department efforts to centralise control of Council-governed technical schools were revived. In 1927, Donald Clark feared that should autonomous Councils be abolished, or become mere figureheads, “it would be a deathblow to what is best in Technical Education.”⁵² Just one year out from Frank Tate’s retirement in 1928, all but four Victorian technical schools (Ballarat, Bendigo, the Working Men’s College

⁴⁸ VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 1 (1933), 23; and PP no. 2 (1934), 22.

⁴⁹ VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 5 (1935), 21.

⁵⁰ VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 1 (1933), 22.

⁵¹ VED, PP no.1, 1932), 5.

⁵² Clark, *The Future* (1927), 29.

and Swinburne) had yielded to departmental control.⁵³ When the short-term Minister of Public Instruction, Henry Isaac Cohen (1872-1942), showed clear intention to centralise control of all junior and senior technical schools, opponents feared his directorship would become a dictatorship.⁵⁴

Where Council-governed technical schools would not relinquish full control, the State took it incrementally. Delivery of the three-year Trained Teacher's Certificate (Manual Arts), discussed in Chapter Seven, provides an example of the wrangling. In fact, by 1927 Clark believed the Victorian government had instituted so many regulations that it already held de-facto control over the Council schools.⁵⁵ After technical educators were re-classified as secondary teachers under Education Department control, BTAS lost several of its best teachers to Melbourne schools. Where Smith sought to appoint industry specialists for certain subjects, departmental permission was required.⁵⁶

Council-controlled institutions, like SMB, feared centralisation would lead to the loss of "local knowledge and interest, especially in relation to guidance and placement of students."⁵⁷ Delegates at the 1929 annual Technical Schools Association Conference left the acting Minister in no doubt that they would not submit to departmental control, but the push continued through the 1930s.⁵⁸ Fees were another sticking point. Varied institutional fees created competition, but in 1931 a Board of Inquiry recommended a standardised, State-wide fee structure. More controversially, it suggested rationalisation of small classes through mergers and specialisation, particularly in metropolitan areas. The WMC, it argued, could absorb at least three Melbourne technical schools.⁵⁹ Problematically, specialisation at regional institutions could limit options for local students.

SMB would eventually feel the consequences of its resistance, despite reporting it had a "sympathetic Minister" in Dr John Harris, who had oversight of Public Instruction between

⁵³ "Courier, 5 July 1927," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁵⁴ "Age, 13 May 1929," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁵⁵ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 28.

⁵⁶ For example, signwriting instructor Henderson, "20 February 1929," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 188; weaving class instructor and signwriting instructor again, Smith, "17 July 1935," "23 February 1938" *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 87, 133.

⁵⁷ "Technical Education," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 May 1929, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205027295>

⁵⁸ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (October 1929); "Courier, 4 March 1933," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁵⁹ Victoria, Board of Inquiry into Certain Matters Concerning the Education Department, *Reports (Interim and Final)* (1931), 22.

1935 and 1942.⁶⁰ SMB had enjoyed an enviable position during the first three decades of the twentieth century, but as the second world war loomed, State money was being directed elsewhere.

Material change

Despite donations to SMB having outstripped other technical schools for years, in 1925 donations totalling just £90 left it short-changed. The council approached locals cap-in-hand to sustain some courses.⁶¹ The Education Department also tightened its belt, frustrating Smith's requests for improved spaces for printing, signwriting, dressmaking, and the Girls' Preparatory Technical Classes (GPS) for years. Department changes to entrance conditions in 1928 exacerbated problems for the GPS, leaving enrolments the "poorest since their establishment." SMB council push back resulted in 43 new student enrolments at the start of 1929, but Smith had to refuse 20 applications, in accordance with a "promise" to the Director of Education.⁶² The motivations for limiting junior technical female enrolment warrant further investigation, and may explain the tremendous difficulties Smith faced attempting to acquire suitable class accommodations for the female-centred Dressmaking, Needlework and Millinery department.⁶³

Education Department machinations were overshadowed by the Great Depression which, from 1929, further tested institutional finances. Most technical schools entered maintenance-only mode, with minimum expenditure and zero expansion. Still, BTAS signwriting, printing, pottery and dressmaking classes maintained good numbers.⁶⁴ SMB reduced fees or deferred payments for struggling students and allowed unemployed trade students to continue studying until they were re-employed and could pay their fees.⁶⁵ This innovative post-pay scheme kept students active and engaged and would have alleviated a little stress. Reduced railway fares assisted country students and establishment of a residential hostel was suggested to attract students from further afield.⁶⁶ It was in this atmosphere that former student, Miss Martha Kenny Pinkerton (1864-1939) began contributing annual scholarships to alleviate the

⁶⁰ "Courier, 18 February 1937," SMB Cuttings (1936–48).

⁶¹ SMB, *Registrar's Monthly Report to Council* (September 1925); and SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 4.

⁶² Smith, "29 February 1928," "20 February 1929," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 170, 187.

⁶³ For example: Smith, "19 September 1928," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 181; Smith, "18 September 1929," "23 October 1929," "16 July 1930," "20 April 1932," "16 August 1934," "21 November 1934," "20 February 1935," "20 November 1935," "17 June 1936," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 9, 10, 19, 39, 72, 77, 79, 95, 103.

⁶⁴ Smith, "18 February 1931," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 24.

⁶⁵ "Courier, (no date, probably July) 1931," "Courier, 18 February 1932," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); and SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (July 1931).

⁶⁶ "Courier, 19 February 1931," "Courier, 22 February 1933" SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

difficulties of talented and deserving students. These were delivered per term, based on need, for fees, part fees or materials.⁶⁷ Smith personally advocated for disadvantaged students, making numerous applications to the department for book and material allowances. Sometimes he appealed directly to SMB council on behalf of disadvantaged students.⁶⁸

SMB's financial position and falling student numbers saw inspectors Eltham and Dean threaten to transfer four teachers away from BTAS at the beginning of 1933. This was galling given that the Education Department continued to strip the school of teacher cohorts, resulting in the loss of 67 students in 1932.⁶⁹ Teacher transfers increased the load of retained teachers across junior and senior divisions, and student teachers were engaged more heavily. Signwriting teacher, Angus Henderson, volunteered to deliver one of his classes without charge. Smith hoped the economic rationalisation would be temporary.⁷⁰ Further student and staff losses would reduce the school's critical mass and expose it to the problems historically faced by smaller institutions.

Over the next few years, fee income was impacted State-wide. Ballarat's 20 per cent attendance decrease seems almost manageable compared to Sunshine Technical School, which lost 45 per cent of its students. At Geelong attendance was reduced by a relatively gentle 14 per cent.⁷¹ SMB council considered raising fees in 1933, in some cases by 100 per cent, but Smith warned that, while there was some socio-economic advantage among full course students, the worst effects would be borne by those least able to pay, resulting in fewer students, and subsequently fewer staff. Smith worried the Girls' Preparatory Technical Classes would become non-existent. His fears were not fully realised, however evening class attendance dropped considerably, and he urged council to reconsider their fees.⁷²

Australian Federal policy stimulated industrial growth which increased demand for State-funded technical education. In response, the Victorian State Government offered free senior technical tuition to approved students and 300 took the opportunity. In the first term of 1935 record numbers enrolled in junior and senior classes.⁷³ Most of the gains were at metropolitan

⁶⁷ Smith, "15 July 1931," "21 June 1933," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 31, 58.

⁶⁸ Smith, "17 February 1932," "21 June 1933," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 38, 57.

⁶⁹ Smith, "17 February 1932," "22 February 1933," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 38, 50.

⁷⁰ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (August 1932); Smith, "22 February 1933," "19 April 1933," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 50, 54.

⁷¹ VED, "Report on Technical Education," PP no. 1 (1933), 19; and "Courier, 22 February 1933," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

⁷² Smith, "19 October 1932," "13 December 1933," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 48, 64.

⁷³ VED, "Extracts from the Report on Technical Education," PP no. 1 (1932), 22; VED, "Report on Technical Education," PP no. 1 (1936), 20.

schools, with more modest increases in the country. Between 1931 and 1935 the Melbourne Technical College (MTC) experienced an 80 per cent increase in student numbers compared with 23 per cent at SMB.⁷⁴ Inspector Eltham suggested Victorian technical schools required £500,000 for new buildings, and a further £150,000 for equipment (combined, almost \$65 million at 2019 value).⁷⁵ As early as 1927, Donald Clark noted the State could not meet such costs alone, however, any efforts to secure significant Commonwealth contributions fell short. A decade later, Eltham was so frustrated by Federal inaction, he hatched a plan to subsidize technical education via defence arrangements. Its success affirmed Smith's earlier observation (while seeking to upgrade girls' school accommodations) that money was forthcoming when soldiers needed it.⁷⁶

SMB remained ready and willing to train more unemployed people in a range of areas, but the State was not prepared to financially support them.⁷⁷ By 1939, SMB was over-crowded and underfunded, with student waiting lists and a desperate need to upgrade facilities. Smith felt robbed when Vic Greenhalgh and Levi Molineaux were transferred respectively to MTC and Caulfield in 1938 and 1940, further compromising school functions.⁷⁸ SMB council believed itself the neglected victim of an unsympathetic State that was forcing Ballarat's young people to travel to Melbourne or Geelong to study. Scathing of contemporary education policy, local commentators feared the social implications for young people who might "find the doors of the school banged, barred and bolted."⁷⁹

Administrators were particularly irked by the seemingly disproportionate flow of funds to metropolitan counterparts.⁸⁰ Once again, Melbourne appeared to be granted preferential treatment. The ideology of academic streaming at State high schools continued to stigmatise technical school recruitment.⁸¹ Problematically, there were also indications that industry had begun to "distrust the fully-trained art school student as being unpractical and difficult." Instead, they recruited students out of primary school to train in-house, impairing original

⁷⁴ Edquist and Grierson, *A Skilled Hand and Cultivated Mind*, 37.

⁷⁵ "Courier, September 1936," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); <https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html>

⁷⁶ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 27; Andrew Spaul, "Eltham, Ernest Percy (1892–1964)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (MUP, 1996), accessed 4 August 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/eltham-ernest-percy-10119>; Eltham, *Technical Education in War and Peace* (1943), 6; Smith, "20 April 1932," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

⁷⁷ "Courier, 21 June 1938," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

⁷⁸ Smith, "15 June 1938," "21 February 1940," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 139, 167.

⁷⁹ "Courier, 11 May 1939," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

⁸⁰ "Courier, 11 May 1939," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

⁸¹ McCallum, "Educational Expansion," 235.

design.⁸² Sadly, from 1939 unemployed youth had an alternative to technical training or employment; enlist in a new world war.

Foreign comparisons

Old fears resurfaced in response to the Great Depression, and from the late 1920s local and imported products again came in for scrutiny and comparison. A member of the ‘Made in Australia’ movement, speaking to SMB students in 1928, suggested purchasers of imported wares “showed a peculiar lack of vision, initiative, and patriotic sentiment.”⁸³ Art Inspector Dean linked the combination of design education, local raw materials and Australian ideas and characteristics, to job creation.⁸⁴ Such efforts to promote and protect Australian manufactures and artware revived nationalistic feeling.⁸⁵

To gauge the standing of its technical education, Australia once again looked abroad. Chief Inspector Eltham toured Britain, Europe, and North America, and was astounded that Germany, which had lost World War, was positioned to fund a robust system of compulsory technical education. Another expert claimed Japan was in advance of Australia by decades.⁸⁶ During a local radio broadcast, he noted American schools “were an agency for social control created by the community in self defence” and that Australia would soon need to address its own educational shortcomings. Eltham feared untrained young Australians would flounder in the world.⁸⁷

With the onset of war, Eltham saw the opportunity to overcome government apathy by suggesting technical education could be subsidised as part of defence arrangements. The Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme injected funds for accommodation, equipment, and teaching personnel. The art-based subjects within this scheme were limited to areas with a defence benefit, such as printing, photography and drafting, and intensive, full-time training was delivered in production illustration to facilitate the creation of special, three-dimensional engineering drawings and illustrations.⁸⁸

⁸² VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 36.

⁸³ Attributed to Mr V. L. Ginn. “Courier, 28 June 1928,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁸⁴ VED, PP no. 1 (1932), 5.

⁸⁵ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 37; Timms, *Australian Studio Pottery and China Painting*, 74.

⁸⁶ “Lag in Technical Education,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 3 March 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205264512>, 10.

⁸⁷ “Courier, 25 June 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–48).

⁸⁸ Eltham, *Technical Education in War and Peace* (1943), 17.

Eltham suggested a complete review of technical training post-war. His vision for a restructure would see all vocational training delivered during the day and general adult education in the evenings to “raise the standard of citizenship.”⁸⁹ The ethos of the Mechanics’ Institutes echoed down the years.

Frivolity subdued

On leaving BTAS’ protective environment, a graduate might become “less the carefree happy art student, more the cynical spectator studying humanity.”⁹⁰ The Depression further shifted attitudes and expectations, and what once passed for youthful exuberance began to be reined in. At the annual SMB parade, students continued to “expose their beauty unadorned to the biting cold” but much mischief was suppressed, and the event lost some lustre. Even the once requisite, exploding chemistry car was prohibited. In 1933, a group of subdued, dark-clad ‘mourners’ marched in memory of the procession they hoped to have, which had instead been “censored by the School of Mines Council.”⁹¹

Similarly, after years without incident, an initiation of painting new student faces with green watercolour met pushback in 1932 when a parent decried SMB’s description of “merely good, clean, schoolboy fun” as a display of “hooliganism.” In response to the accusation and to evince “decency and fair play”, all new students signed a statement supporting the practice, available for viewing at the *Ballarat Courier* offices.⁹² One wonders how much coercion elicited these young autographs.

World War II redirected student fundraising activities. SMB’s Junior Red Cross girls created and donated hundreds of articles of clothing from gifted and recycled material for distribution to people in need.⁹³ Not to be outdone, the boys made and sold wooden Air Raid Precaution rattles. Elsewhere, Victorian boys were selling rabbit skins, wattle bark and, less successfully, leeches, to fundraise.⁹⁴ By the end of the war, students had adopted a more serious, restrained attitude as frivolity became unseemly.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Eltham, *Technical Education in War and Peace* (1943), 28.

⁹⁰ “Letter to ‘Dear old S.M.B.’,” *SMB Magazine* (1928), 42.

⁹¹ “Courier, 25 June 1931”; “Courier, 29 June 1933”; and “Mail, 29 June 1933,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

⁹² “Courier, 9 February 1932” and “Courier, 10 February 1932,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

⁹³ “Courier, 2 July 1938”; “Courier, 14 July 1938” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948).

⁹⁴ “Courier, 18 May 1939”; “Courier, 16 May 1940,” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948). Further reading, Triolo, “Doing Good for Others,” in *Our Schools and the War*, 69-104.

⁹⁵ “Courier, 22 February 1946,” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948).

Success amid struggle

The Depression dampened many spirits, yet BTAS endeavoured to provide students with the best opportunities and experience within its capacity. In 1930, the *Courier* felt safe claiming work to “the same extent and of the same quality” as BTAS was to be found nowhere else in the State.⁹⁶ Students continued to enjoy success with exhibitions, scholarships and prizes, although countered by a significant reduction in commission work.

Following a successful decade of State and privately commissioned work, reports of the activity at BTAS almost cease in 1927. Certainly, the demand for war memorialisation was waning, but the timing aligns with the installation of Art Inspector Dean and Chief Inspector Eltham, suggesting any Education Department commissions were directed elsewhere.⁹⁷ Perhaps student work was stymied by apprenticeship debate in 1927 and 1928, which at least one commentator felt favoured “narrow-minded and selfish workmen” over “intelligent citizens and craftsmen.”⁹⁸ Thus, when William Moore reported in 1934 that BTAS received “thousands of pounds” of commissions, his findings were likely out of date.⁹⁹

In 1936, only four senior technical scholarships were awarded to industrial art students across the State, and just one in Ballarat. The applied arts were losing ground to other trades, yet success in competitive scholarships continued to be a selling point for SMB.¹⁰⁰ The first Australian Exhibition Commission emerged to coordinate antipodean preparations for the Great Exhibition of 1851 and, following the 1924 Wembley exhibition, made regular scholarship donations to SMB of up to £20 between 1927 and 1939.¹⁰¹

BTAS continued to seek, foster, and facilitate local student scholarships. Principal Smith’s passionate networking brought two particularly significant benefactors to the art school in the 1920s; Miss Martha Pinkerton and Sir Macpherson Robertson (1859-1945).¹⁰² Pinkerton was a student peer of Smith’s who, despite not applying her studies vocationally, gave generously to BTAS throughout her life, providing multiple scholarships each term for ten years prior to

⁹⁶ “*Courier*, 27 August 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹⁷ “*Courier*, 18 February 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹⁸ Comment by C. H. Beanland in *SMB Magazine* (1929).

⁹⁹ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 229.

¹⁰⁰ “*Courier*, 12 February 1936,” “*Courier*, 18 February 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁰¹ British Empire Exhibition & Australian Exhibition Commission, *Official Catalogue: Australian Pavilion, British Empire Exhibition, April-October, 1924, Wembley, Middlesex, England*. (British Empire Exhibition & Australian Exhibition Commission. 1924), online, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-52862617>; SMB, *Annual Report* (1934), 5.

¹⁰² SMB, *Minutes of the Annual General Meeting* (21 February 1940), 1.

her death in 1939.¹⁰³ She subsequently bequeathed approximately £1,000 to maintain a scholarship “for talented and deserving students” in perpetuity, and a similar amount to the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery.¹⁰⁴ In 1941, Pinkerton’s solicitor brother, Frank, matched the bequest to provide SMB council scholarships.¹⁰⁵

From 1924 one of the largest and most prestigious scholarships “of any Art institution in Australia” was established at BTAS. The MacRobertson signature of Sir Macpherson Robertson (1859-1945) served as brand mark for one of Australia’s largest confectionery makers and provided the title for the annual scholarship. Students from anywhere in the Commonwealth could apply for the scholarship to attend BTAS, described as “the Mecca of art students in the future.”¹⁰⁶ Ballarat-born Robertson left school aged nine, yet became a successful entrepreneur. Hard-working, imaginative and practised in modern publicity, the paternalistic but “ethical capitalist” was an ideal mark for Smith who convinced Robertson to establish the scholarship for industrial design and architecture.¹⁰⁷ Robertson initially donated £500 for distribution over five years, with awardees receiving £100. The only scholarship comparable at the time was the National Gallery’s Travelling Scholarship, valued at £150 per year.¹⁰⁸

Robertson had a professional interest in commercial art as his company produced its own advertising, marketing, printing, and packaging.¹⁰⁹ However, it is unclear if any students were subsequently employed there. The prize was so generous, that BTAS usually awarded it jointly between two students, occasionally three and, in 1938, four prizes of £25 each. To ensure commitment, the scholarship was paid in instalments at the end of each school term. To encourage excellence, awardees were eligible for a second year should they maintain quality work. Smith and several senior staff were charged with selecting the awardees.¹¹⁰ The initial bursary was extended, although reduced to £50 for the duration of the Depression, and

¹⁰³ “Courier, 12 April 1939,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁰⁴ SMB, *Annual Report* (1934), 5; “Courier, 11 May 1939,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); “Bequests in Ballarat,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 26 April 1939, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12121752>.

¹⁰⁵ “Courier, 27 February 1942,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁰⁶ SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 11; “Technical Scholarships,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), February 13, 1924, 15; “Courier, 12 February 1924” n SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁰⁷ Fry, *Design History Australia*, 100, 104.

¹⁰⁸ “Courier, 12 February 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁰⁹ Fry, *Design History Australia*, 109.

¹¹⁰ “Star, 23 February 1924,” “Star, 25 February 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 18 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); *SMB Magazine* (1927), 13; *SMB Magazine* (1928), 16; *SMB Magazine* (1929), 4.

the scholarship continued until at least 1938.¹¹¹ In 1936, several past and present scholarship holders presented Robertson with an “artistically prepared letter of thanks.”¹¹² Beyond BTAS, Robertson’s philanthropy extended to Antarctic expeditions, international air races, public works and the MacRobertson Girls’ High School.¹¹³

BTAS students and staff continued to participate in competitive exhibitions and win prizes during the 1930s. From local shop fronts to international exhibitions, student work was on display. An anonymous donation of 16 guineas in 1939 enabled the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery council to hold a “miniature Crouch Memorial competition” for BTAS painting students.¹¹⁴ Elsewhere, applied art and design were exhibited alongside traditional pictorial art. Examples at the Technical Schools Centenary Exhibition of 1934 included commercial art, fashion drawing, stencilled posters, light metal and pottery.¹¹⁵ In addition, the Ballarat public continued to support open evenings and exhibitions at the school. Student work was regularly complimented in the local newspapers.¹¹⁶

In line with the period, the poster was prominent at several competitions. BTAS alumnus and famed poster artist, Percival (Percy) Trompf (1902-1964), returned in 1933 to judge posters for the first Ideal Homes’ Exhibition, open to all recognised schools in Victoria. BTAS students were awarded first and second place, plus two honourable mentions.¹¹⁷ Their contributions to this competition are some of the most modern and interesting works held in the Federation University collection from this period, as are poster entries promoting the Department of Agriculture official journal, for which the school took second and third place.¹¹⁸ BTAS students regularly placed at the annual Wiltshire Pty. Ltd. poster competition for technical schools, winning 16 of 22 available prizes, from more than 300 entries, in 1936.¹¹⁹

¹¹¹ “Courier, 19 February 1931,” “Courier, 7 February 1933” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); “Courier, 20 February 1936,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹¹² “Courier, 13 February 1936,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹¹³ John Lack, “Robertson, Sir Macpherson (1859–1945),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (MUP, 1988), accessed 10 April 2016, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robertson-sir-macpherson-8237>.

¹¹⁴ “Courier, 13 April 1939,” “Courier, 24 September 1932,” “Courier, 22 July 1933,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹¹⁵ SMB, *Annual Report* (1934).

¹¹⁶ Smith, “19 April 1933,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 53; SMB, *Annual Report* (1934), 3-4; SMB, *Annual Report* (1940), 5. For examples, “Courier, 6 August 1926”, “Courier, 27 August 1930”, “Courier, 25 March 1933”, SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); “Courier, 31 July 1936,” “Courier, 21 October 1937,” “Courier, 18 October 1939,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹¹⁷ “Courier, 21 October 1933” and “Courier, 20 November 1933”; SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹¹⁸ “Courier, 9 November 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹¹⁹ “Courier, 9 September 1936” and “Courier, 11 September 1936” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

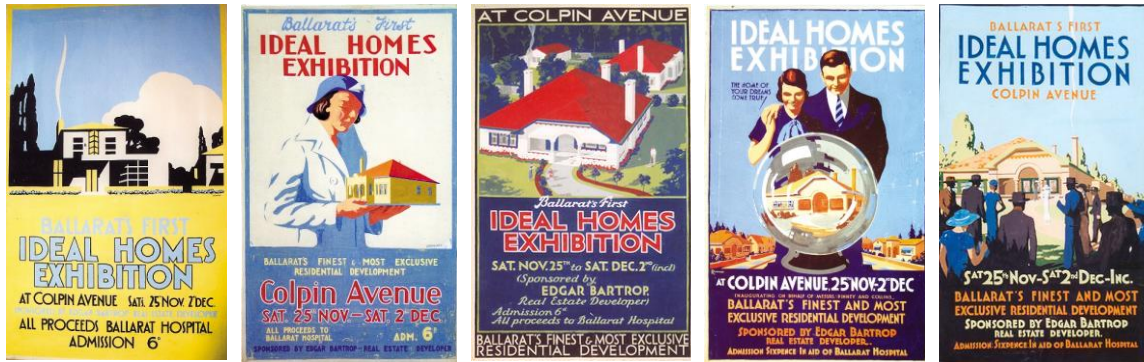


Figure 3.1 **Example of student posters produced for Ballarat’s ‘Ideal Homes’ exhibition.** From left, by Jesse Hopwood, Fred Longhurst, Evelyn Shaw, and two by Donald Refshauge. Gouache, approx. 97cm x 58cm, c1935. (Federation University Art Collection, items A00435, A00389, A00390, A00388, A00377. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Levi Molineux (1911-c1980) may have been frustrated by consistently placing second at competition, but following selection of his work, “Bovril” for a touring exhibition of commercial art by the Royal Drawing Society, London, he placed first more often, particularly in poster competitions.¹²⁰ Donald Hamilton Refshauge (1912-1952) competed closely with Molineaux and was the enviable winner of a free trip to Adelaide or Sydney for his pamphlet for interstate shipping companies.¹²¹

Among the many prize winners of the 1930s were Nornie Gude, who won several National Gallery of Victoria prizes, and Betty Brown, whose designs won the Victorian Council of the World Peace Congress poster prize and the Geelong Centenary Committee centenary badge competition.¹²² Staff too, exhibited and competed. John Rowell won the prestigious, Crouch Memorial Prize valued at £100, second only to the Archibald Prize at £500.¹²³ A 1930 exhibition bore witness to decades of BTAS work, just as Smith’s 1940 farewell and reunion demonstrated its human achievements.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Courier, 17 September 1931,” “Courier, 10 December 1931,” “Courier, 2 July 1932,” “Courier, 1 October 1932,” and “Courier, 7 September 1933”; SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Smith, “28 September 1932,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 45.

¹²¹ “Courier, 24 August 1932,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹²² “Courier, 4 December 1936,” “Courier, 21 November 1936,” “Courier, 19 December 1938,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); SMB, *Annual Report* (1938), 4.

¹²³ William Moore, “Art and Artists,” *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 September 1928, 23.

¹²⁴ Smith, “16 July 1930,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 20; *SMB Magazine* (1930), 35; “Courier, 2 August 1930,” “Courier, 27 August 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); “Courier, 8 April 1940”, SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

End of era

After more than 50 years' connection with the school, BTAS principal, Herbert Smith, reached compulsory retirement age on 31 March 1940, just months after the deaths of his peers, Ponsonby Carew-Smyth and Frank Tate. They would have been warmly welcomed at Smith's retirement celebrations, had they lived to attend. Due to illness, long-standing SMB council president (1912-1940), William H. Middleton, was also sadly absent. Middleton's pride in BTAS is evident in his reporting; often pronouncing its students the most successful in the State.¹²⁵ He died in June 1940, having defended SMB from absolute Education Department governance for almost thirty years.¹²⁶

For almost 35 years Smith closed his reports to council with "Your obedient servant, Herbert H. Smith." His final report acknowledged their support and the "kind and loyal cooperation" of his teaching and administrative colleagues. He signed off wishing prosperity upon all connected with the Art School, entrusting them to "continue to advance and uphold its good name, so firmly established."¹²⁷

CHAPTER THREE CONCLUSION

Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) was subject to shifting circumstances from 1926 following legislative changes, the turnover of senior Education Department personnel and a global economic depression. The SMB council had consistently resisted centralisation efforts, maintaining relative autonomy with the support of Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark. Still, the Department incrementally exerted control via funding arrangements and teacher reclassification, the effects of which became pronounced as income from local donations and student fees waned.

Following the departure of Ponsonby Carew-Smyth from the role of Art Inspector in 1926, it becomes evident that BTAS had benefited from principal Herbert Smith's long-standing relationship with his early teacher and mentor. William Dean built on Carew-Smyth's legacy, but his metropolitan focus obscured regional art schools, particularly in reports to parliament. A few years later, Donald Clark and Frank Tate also retired, leaving regional technical schools further exposed to efforts toward rationalisation and centralisation.

¹²⁵ SMB, *Annual Report* (1926).

¹²⁶ For a brief biographical account of Middleton, see Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 378.

¹²⁷ Smith, "20 March 1940," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 169.

Like Carew-Smyth, Dean boasted an RCA qualification, perpetuating South Kensington influence. However, he relaxed the primary school curricula, expanded materials, and introduced greater use of colour. Dean split the high school art curriculum into Syllabus A, dominated by theoretical studies, and the more practical Syllabus B. An unintended consequence was teacher preference for the former, the latter considered the purview of junior techs. Dean had reinforced a distinction between theory and practice, academic knowledge and manual skill, which technical art staff and students struggled against for decades.

Fear for local production and employment re-emerged during the Great Depression, yet Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Ernest Eltham still looked abroad for inspiration. Unfortunately, Eltham struggled to extract the requisite funds from government to properly accommodate and equip local schools. The Depression affected individuals and institutions alike, and SMB made efforts to alleviate student hardship, but a sombre pall impinged student frivolity. BTAS commissions disappear from reporting, likely lost due to Education Department, apprenticeship, and industry shifts. Yet students continued to exhibit and win prizes, some scoring valuable scholarships instituted by generous benefactors, with the encouragement of principal Smith.

By the end of the 1930s, the outlook for technical schools suffering from lack of funds was grim. In addition, industry seemed to be eschewing fully trained art school graduates for primary school students to train in-house. When war again erupted, it provided Eltham with the opportunity to divert some defence funds toward technical training, although only some included an art component. In 1940, Ponsonby Carew-Smyth, Frank Tate and SMB Council president William Middleton all died. When BTAS principal Smith retired the same year, amidst the uncertainty of the war, yet another era ended.

PART TWO

Chapter 4

Housed within Federation University Australia's art and historical collections lie many artworks created by young people learning their craft during the early twentieth century. Blurred and reworked pencil lines evince grey-leads and shabby erasers. Smudges echo the inky fingertips of busy students reproducing images from their hand-cut stencils. Beneath time's musty odour the strong smell of fresh gouache can be imagined. Designs intended for application to leather, wood and metal are layered between sketches drawn from plant forms, objects, and plaster replicas.

MULTIPLE OBJECTIVES

The Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS), under the direction of Herbert Smith between 1907 and 1940, aimed to develop the creative, intellectual, and manipulative skill of students that they might better contribute to cultural, industrial, economic, and social life. It delivered training for artists and designers, craftspeople, and art teachers for primary, secondary, and tertiary education sectors. There were many overlaps among these cohorts.

Technical art bridged art, science, and trade. Under Victorian Art Inspector, Ponsonby Carew-Smyth, it was underpinned by drawing and modelling, and supported by problem-solving studies including general design, modelled design, and applied design, often delivered in a scaffolded way. These were supplemented by classes that integrated design and its execution in material, or in preparation for subsequent reproduction. Subjects such as historic ornament, artistic anatomy and even botany augmented student learning. Carew-Smyth tweaked the list, stages, and scope of subjects during his tenure. Inspector William Dean also adjusted and added courses in line with industry requirements.

Students training for industry might undertake a full course, usually delivered during the day. To better perform a current work role or improve employment prospects, some people undertook just one or two subjects, often in the evening. Several apprenticeships also required trade training at technical art schools, including Lithographic Printing, Photography, Printing (Composing), Process Engraving, and Signwriting.¹ Art teachers required a full

¹ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 18.

course of classes to emerge with State certificated qualifications, while generalist teachers could supplement their existing skills with one or more art subjects.

From 1915, BTAS' three-year Industrial Design Course focussed on the application of design to industry with a range of specialisations: art metal work and repoussé; printing and lithography; leatherwork and stencilling; decorative needlework; illuminating and window ticket writing; modelling, woodcarving and marquetry; and house furnishing and decoration.² Other full courses included: fashion plate drawing and black and white illustration; lettering; lithographic drafting, which required two-years' previous work experience; and the Architectural Diploma Course.³ In the 1920s, a new commercial art course became popular.

Not all subjects required Education Department examination to test candidate competency, but full courses often included them. It is unclear the extent to which schools customised their courses, however they commonly prioritised subjects suitable to nearby industries. Beyond examination preparation, there was certainly latitude for modification.

Changing technologies required new knowledge and displaced old skills. Gradually, specialisation, the division of labour, and union movements, generated industry clusters that delineated technical art student classification into art, trade, and apprenticeship. By 1930, several Victorian art examinations were split according to the student cohort, and trade students were examined separately.⁴

To facilitate discussion, the following chapters categorise BTAS teaching into three streams: two-dimensional practice; design practice; and applied practice. Examinations refer to Victorian senior technical art papers, unless otherwise specified, and where possible, individual student experiences illustrate process and graduate outcomes.

² SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

³ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 12, 14, 15; SMB, *Short Resume* (1918), 2.

⁴ VED, Exams, "Examination for Apprentices in the Painting and Decorating, and Signwriting Trades," "Examination of Apprentices in the Plastering Trade," "Examination for Apprentices in the Signwriting Trade," 1930.

ART AS MEME

As technical art schools extended and diverged from the South Kensington tradition, the role of copy and value of originality shifted. As replication became easier, individual and corporate reproduction rights were increasingly protected in response. Positioned against the original, copies today seem inferior or fraudulent.⁵ Learning art through imitation, however, has a long history. The South Kensington model relied heavily on copying, from flat (two-dimensional) and in-the-round (three-dimensional) examples, in advancing stages. In this way selected works became memes; imitated, replicated and disseminated by cultural institutions, educators, and students.

Today, we tend to draw a line between mimetic ability and creativity, but in the historical teaching of art, the line was blurred. The practise of learning to draw, paint or model by copying existing work was distinctly different from commercial mechanical reproduction. The former is engaged, the latter detached. Learning through copy was not intended as mere replication, but as a process of re-creation by way of re-enactment.

In Japan, copying, or more accurately the subtle duplication of *utsushi*, was a way of passing on traditional techniques and styles to produce a work imbued with the aesthetic taste and values of the originating artist. Similarly, in Balinese culture copying enabled transference of images and traditions through generations of artists.⁶ While connecting to tradition, the individual artist's hand remained present. Viewed this way, the South Kensington model of copying an accepted canon of work also connected students to traditional practice. In addition, it encouraged explicit translation of 'seeing' to 'constructing' and highlighted the importance of the physical process of drawing or making. Copying trained hand-eye coordination, developed embodied learning (muscle memory), and promoted discipline in art.

Re-enacting the original process of creation enabled learners to experience art practice without the added strain of invention. Copying served as a tutorial prior to working from life, memory, or imagination, and provided a stepping-stone in the development of technique, confidence, and visual literacy. Under the South Kensington process, as introduced in Chapter I, early exercises involved copying flat examples to train coordination and establish skilled, free movement of the pencil. Subsequently, three-dimensional items were provided.

⁵ Christine M.E. Guth, "The Multiple Modalities of the Copy in Traditional Japanese Crafts," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 3, no. 1 (2010): 8, doi:10.2752/174967810x12657245205062.

⁶ Guth, "The Multiple Modalities of the Copy," 97; and Herbert Rheeden, "Art Education in the Former Dutch East Indies in the 1930s: Questions of Different Cultures," *Journal of Art & Design Education* 9, no. 2 (1990): 186.

Students mostly began drawing simple, geometric wooden objects and then progressed to more complex reproductions of friezes or sculptures. From these they ascertained the behaviours of light, material, texture, and surface, translating their impressions two-dimensionally.

At cultural institutions for whom original works were too expensive or difficult to source, replicas were perfectly acceptable. In fact, facsimiles themselves occasionally became attractions. The South Kensington Museum produced photographs and casts of its collection, as did the British Museum. Cultural gatekeepers from Paris to New York sold reproductions to museums, educational institutions and collectors around the world.⁷ The symbolic value and meaning of each object was ascribed by these agents, as well as the schools and teachers who subsequently produced “consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work.”⁸ The expert selection of works for replication perpetuated the legitimacy of the originals and supplied cultural capital to the copies, which otherwise held little inherent value. Ongoing replication of historic, classical, and Renaissance examples indoctrinated students to believe these works were superior in form and value, grooming pride in a narrow, Western cultural heritage, and reinforcing their canonical power. This was a deliberate manoeuvre that served to colonise the taste of many nations.

Some reproductions for the use of students were made brushstroke-by-brushstroke; more commonly they were photographed or transcribed as lithographic prints. Sculptures, reliefs, and architectural elements were usually cast in plaster. In all cases, a process of modification occurred, particularly in the transference from one medium to another.

Australia’s distance from canonical originals was felt to handicap local students, particularly as examples were required for some Victorian examinations. Technical art schools were largely responsible for their own libraries and cast collections, thus some were disadvantaged.⁹ In 1910, even the WMC collection was considered inadequate. This was eventually remedied.¹⁰ Where collections existed, casts were almost exclusively of Renaissance origin, with a handful of Classical and Gothic examples.¹¹ BTAS was set apart

⁷ Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 255; British Museum, “The Parthenon Sculptures,” accessed 19 September 2018, http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/statements/parthenon_sculptures.aspx

⁸ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 319.

⁹ VED, “General Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 28 (1903), 89.

¹⁰ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 208; VED, “General Report in Art in Technical Schools by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 5 (1910), 70.; VED, *Inquiry into the Working Men’s College*, PP no. 14 (1911), 128. Murray-Smith and Dare, *The Tech*, 227.

¹¹ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 1 (1905), 67; VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 1 (1904), 68.

by its well-stocked Antique Room, the dedicated floorspace alone demonstrates the collection's significance.¹²



Figure 4.1 **A student can be seen drawing from a statue of the 'Clapping Faun' in the BTAS Antique Room.** Photograph reproduced from SMB Magazine, 1920, p30. (Federation University Historical Collection. Public domain.)

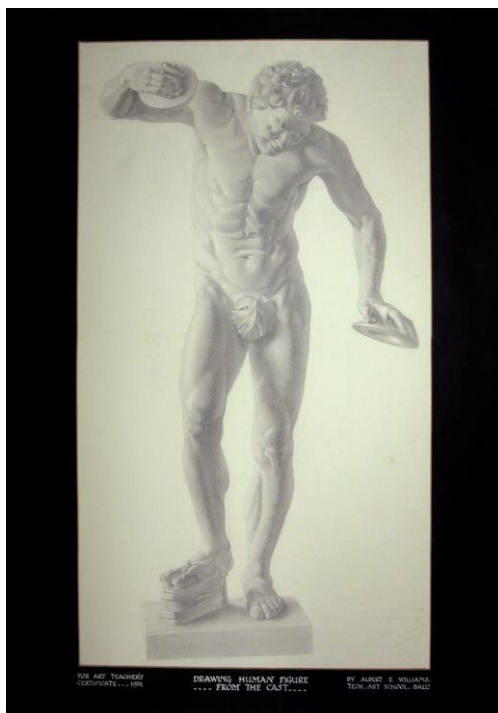


Figure 4.2 **Drawing of the 'Clapping Faun'.** Albert E. Williams. *Drawing Human Figure from the Cast.* Pencil on paper, 68.0 x 43.0 cm. 1931. (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, A00434. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

¹² Jordan, "The South Kensington Empire," 41.



Figure 4.3 **Swinburne’s cast collection also held a ‘Clapping Faun’.**
 Swinburne Technical College. *Students with drawings, early 1930s.*
 Photograph: black and white; 15 x 20 cm. c1930s.
 (Courtesy Swinburne History Collection, Swinburne Commons, Public domain.)

Some called for a Victorian central school of art to act as a repository for a circulating library of reproductions, casts and teaching accessories, similar to the operations of Britain’s National Art Training School (later RCA).¹³ The central school did not materialise, but the Education Department began supplementing school collections.

Almost all advanced casts of the human figure, architectural and historic ornament were imported from Europe, however Melbourne-based sculptor and assistant art inspector, Henry Harvey, did create some casts locally.¹⁴ Technical art students were commonly taught how to mould and cast their own work in plaster, so it was not for lack of skilled staff that local casting was restricted.

¹³ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 208; Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 6.

¹⁴ VED, PP no. 6, 1913), 132.

The practise of copy schooled students toward ‘correct taste’ and away from the cycles of fashion. Copying trained skill over creativity and suppressed ego in favour of patient repetition of predetermined forms. While this seems an anathema to contemporary artists, such practise served artisans at the time. The copy of established designs was standard industry practise in many parts of the world, including Australia.¹⁵ However, simple replication was not going to improve the competitiveness of local manufacturing industries, therefore governments sought differentiation in original, locally inspired design. Technical art schools were partially tasked with facilitating this change.



Figure 4.4 **Some of the plaster casts that remain in the Federation University collection.** “Plaster Cast Drawing Props,” from left: (child’s head) inscription, “Bucciani & Co., London. No. 2, 250,” 13246; (foot) 15.5cm H, 29.5cm L, 11cm W, 10915; (woman’s head) 31.0 x 23.0 cm, 13244; (hand) inscription “Waschatz, Modeller, Melbourne,” 13247; (foot) inscribed “Bucciani & Co., London. No. 61?” (Photographs by author of items within Federation University Historical Collection.)

Copy rites and copyright: the demise of copy

The rejection of copying was slow, given judgement of its value varied. Some educators maintained its importance as a training skill, while others openly rejected its mimicry. As early as 1857 Ruskin was challenging rote copy as art instruction.¹⁶ By the mid-twentieth century, copies were deemed inauthentic, having lost the traces of time, place, experience and process, embodied in the original.¹⁷ As Bourdieu explains, the “meaning of a work [...] changes automatically with each change in the field within which it is situated for the spectator or reader.”¹⁸ Stripped from their zeitgeist, the value of these replications was lost.

¹⁵ For example, Canada and South Africa. Chalmers, “Who is to do this Great Work for Canada?” 220; and Pretorius, “Graphic Design in South Africa,” 6.

¹⁶ Rafael Cardoso, “Chapter 1: A Preliminary Survey of Drawing Manuals in Britain C.1825–1875,” in *Histories of Art and Design Education Collected Essays* (2005), 25.

¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison, (London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982), 219.

¹⁸ Bourdieu, “The Field of Cultural Production,” 313.

By 1922, BTAS students were “taught not to be mere copyists, but artists,” incorporating Australian flora and fauna in their efforts for originality.¹⁹ However, subsequent purchases of casts and models demonstrates their ongoing importance.²⁰ Victoria’s Education Department maintained some copy-driven examinations into the 1950s.²¹

Art schools continued copying throughout the 1920s, however modernist approaches held it discouraged original observation. From Chile to Munich, the copy of historic models was banished.²² In pictorial art, realism and illusion deferred to abstract and impressionistic representations. The patient, humble practise of copying from a masterpiece, gave way to expressions of id and ego. As the individual emerged, the value of copy diminished. Australian Sam Atyeo (1910–1990) argued “imitation is the contrary of creation.” For Atyeo, even painting from life was copying, illusion and trickery; nature had done most of the problem solving, leaving the artist unchallenged.²³

As attitudes toward copying changed, the worth of once valued collections also shifted. Many were consigned to the storeroom or the sledgehammer, and the Antique Rooms that housed them were repurposed. Some schools replaced their collections with original fine and applied arts for the inspiration of students and their instructors.²⁴

Following the closure of the SMB museum in 1957, principal Harry Elphinstone Arblaster (1914-1971) sought to allay fears he might cast its exhibits into the local creek.²⁵ However, within two years they were instead dumped at a disused mining site.²⁶ Only a few examples survived this cultural vandalism, including a copy from one of the Parthenon marbles by Pheidias, a large reclining (headless) figure thought to represent the river-god Illissos.²⁷

¹⁹ “Courier, 18 August 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁰ “Courier, 30 June 1928,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²¹ “Examination Results, Technical,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 January 1953, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206119176>.

²² Basile, “Facsimile and Originality,” 22; Hopkins, Hekking and Weinberg, “What Kind of Technical Art?” (1917), 34; Ziegert, “The Debschitz School, Munich,” 34; Uncredited; “La Reforma en la Escuela de Bellas Artes” (“Reform at the School of Fine Arts”), *Revista de Arte* 1:1 (Santiago: September 1928): 5, in Espinoza, “The School of Applied Arts, University of Chile (1928-1968),” 77.

²³ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., “S.L. Atyeo (1910–1990), Talks on Modernism, 1932–1933,” in *Modernism & Australia*, 99.

²⁴ Kathryn Coger Gorchakoff, “An Analysis of Art Curricula in Colleges and Universities,” (Master’s thesis, University of Southern California, 1935), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 110.

²⁵ “Ballarat Courier 21 May 1958,” quoted in “Ballarat School of Mines Museum,” *Federation University Australia*, last modified 6 July 2019, accessed 30 October 2019. https://bih.federation.edu.au/index.php/Ballarat_School_of_Mines_Museum.

²⁶ Beggs-Sunter, *Not for Self but for All*, 63.

²⁷ British Museum, “The Parthenon Sculptures,” Museum object registration number 1816,0610.99.



Figure 4.5 **Large plaster cast of the river god Illissos used by BTAS students.**
The original is among the Parthenon Sculptures located in the British Museum.
(Photograph courtesy: Federation University Historical Collection, 11618. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

In 1988, Paul Duncam exhumed the copy debate. He argued its success or otherwise hung on whether it led “to flexible modification, synthesis, and extension of acquired schemata appropriate to the purpose at hand and continued development.”²⁸ In other words, could the student confidently and intelligently adapt the skills learned through copy, via interaction, interpretation and mutation, to generate new concepts and creative output? As recently as 2006, despite the tarnished status of the replica, eight per cent of international art schools utilised the copy of existing works as part of basic design education.²⁹

²⁸ Paul Duncum, “To Copy or Not to Copy: A Review,” *Studies in Art Education* 29, no. 4 (1988): 7, doi:10.2307/1320922.

²⁹ C. G. Boucharenc, “Research on Basic Design Education: An International Survey,” *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* 16, no. 1 (2006): 7, doi:10.1007/s10798-005-2110-8.

Two-dimensional practice: drawing

To Art Inspector Carew-Smyth, drawing was not an arcane talent gifted to the few but a teachable skill, and the cornerstone of a technical art education. The ability to conceptualise, evaluate and refine ideas, prior to investing time, money and material in their production was, and remains, crucial. Drawing was the most efficient tool for this process.

Drawing has been defined as an “*external visual representation depicting any type of content, whether structure, relationship, or process, created in static two dimensions in any medium*” (original emphasis).³⁰ Drawing’s “numerous cognitive, perceptual, and motor processes” are best developed in combination to maximise their effectiveness.³¹ Technical drawing subjects aimed to do just that. Students drew from two- and three-dimensional objects, from historical examples, nature and life, building a visual vocabulary and grammar which could be imaginatively and intellectually applied to create new and original forms.

Drawing could be simply categorised as either technical (utilising instruments) or freehand (without instruments). Within the applied arts however, there were many overlaps.

TECHNICAL DRAWING: THE MEASURE OF THINGS

Technical drawing was an umbrella term used to differentiate instrumental drawing (using apparatus such as T-square, set-square and compass) from freehand art. It covered the sub-categories of mechanical/engineering drawing, architectural/constructional/building drawing, and geometrical drawing, which included perspective, plane and solid geometry, and some geometrical design.³² ‘Technical’, ‘trades’ or ‘instrumental’ drawing formed the theoretical basis of much applied art, if not a student favourite.³³

As today, technical drawing was “a means to communicate precise design intentions.”³⁴ Carew-Smyth identified technical drawing as critical to the visual literacy of the general

³⁰ Kim Quillin and Stephen Thomas, “Drawing-to-Learn: A Framework for Using Drawings to Promote Model-Based Reasoning in Biology,” *CBE Life Sciences Education* 14, no. 1 (2015): online, doi:10.1187/cbe.14-08-0128.

³¹ Dale J. Cohen, “Look Little, Look Often: The Influence of Gaze Frequency on Drawing Accuracy,” *Perception & Psychophysics* 67, no. 6 (2005): 997, doi:10.3758/BF03193626; and Pamela Schenk, “The Role of Drawing in the Graphic Design Process,” *Design Studies* 12, no. 3 (1991), 181.

³² VED, “General Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 28 (1903), 90.

³³ Timms, “Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges,” 38; VED, “Report on Instruction in Art in Technical Schools,” PP no. 44, (1910).

³⁴ Fennessy, “All Together and at Once the Practice,” 171.

population so that they might accurately read and interpret diagrams, plans and maps.³⁵ Others argued its importance in the cultivation of taste, which should not depend on pictorial expression alone.³⁶

Mechanical drawing allowed artisans to communicate something measurable, such as a building, machine, or part. BTAS offered day and evening courses for civil and mechanical engineering, surveying, architectural and lithographic drafting to qualify students for government departments and private companies.³⁷ Mechanical drawing also supported engineering patternmaking, dress cutting and dress making, painting and decorating, and illustration. Drawing for Builders and Artisans taught students to draw plans, sections and details for structural components and furniture manufacture.³⁸ Despite its nature, technical drawing was often classified as art.

Geometric principles were fundamental to most artists' understanding of proportion, radiation, repetition, balance and symmetry, and critical to the construction of decorative pattern.³⁹ Early Practical Geometry examinations in Victoria required the illustration of mathematically described questions in plan, elevation, and isometric views, thus measurement and trigonometry were important skills.⁴⁰ Staged Practical Perspective exams began with elevations, horizons and vanishing points, advanced to incorporate shadows cast by solar positions, and ultimately required full architectural perspective drawing.⁴¹

Technical drawing also served commercial artists, particularly when drawing merchandise for mail order and other catalogues. Advancing technologies and changing product styles ensured ongoing work and by 1927 this was a significant area of employment.⁴² Commercial Art exam candidates were required to illustrate and render in perspective a simple object, such as a lamp or toy, then position it within an imagined composition. Architectural perspective rendering, both exterior and interior, was also examined. Some exams tested construction of pattern, shapes, and borders for decorative print elements. Drawing tools were

³⁵ "Technical Art School," *The Riverine Herald* (Echuca, Vic.: Moama, NSW), 20 July 1908, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article114868588>.

³⁶ Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, 197.

³⁷ SMB, *School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat: Calendar 1914* (Ballarat, VIC: Berry Anderson & Co. Printers, 1914), 107.

³⁸ VED, Exams, "Drawing for Builders and Artisans," 1915.

³⁹ VED, "Report for 1900 on the Art Classes of Technical Schools by T.S. Monkhouse," PP no. 39 (1901), 91.

⁴⁰ VED, Exams, "Practical Plane Geometry. Elementary Stage," 1915.

⁴¹ VED, Exams, "Perspective," 1924.

⁴² Leyshon White, "Part 16: Mechanical Catalogue Designs," *Commercial Art School* (Melbourne: Leyshon White Commercial Art School, Correspondence Branch, 1927), 3.

used to ensure geometrical purity.⁴³ Private and correspondence commercial art schools also taught technical drawing skills, suggesting it was an employer expectation.⁴⁴

In 1912 French and Meiklejohn argued “lettering is *not* mechanical drawing, but is design, based on accepted forms and developed freehand,” (original emphasis).⁴⁵ Yet the same authors describe type construction using instruments, somewhat defeating their own argument. Mathematical rules of stability, proportion, and stroke weight ratios, as well as optical tricks to assist balance and legibility, were outlined.⁴⁶

Despite efforts to tailor technical drawing for artistic disciplines, some students considered it both unnecessary and unenjoyable, noting “the futility of our attempts at geometry and perspective; in fact at anything mathematical!”⁴⁷ Junior students preferred to battle sword-like with their T-squares than draw with them.⁴⁸ Frustration was not limited to BTAS students. Elsewhere the subject was “*not always taught on very intelligible or practical lines,*” (original emphasis).⁴⁹ Still, many BTAS students attended technical drawing subjects within their art training. For some qualifications, it was mandatory.⁵⁰

Along different lines

Following the Arts and Crafts period, “two poles of abstraction” emerged: organic and geometric.⁵¹ The free expression of line and form may have been a reaction to the emphasis placed on technical and mechanical drawing in many art schools during the nineteenth century. Yet even the fluid forms of Art Nouveau and its peers reveal a structural underframe of geometry. Some designers openly incorporated strong geometric forms where orthographic projection and other mathematical principles were used to generate striking visual effects. For example, a system of design based on a geometrical grid was taught at the Dusseldorf School

⁴³ VED, Exams, “Geometry and Perspective (Commercial Art Course)” and “Perspective Rendering (Commercial Art Course),” 1934.

⁴⁴ Art Training Institute, *The New Era in Commercial Art* (Melbourne: Art Training Institute Pty Ltd, 1928); “Your Daughter’s Career: No. 2: Occupational Art,” *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8.

⁴⁵ Thomas E. French and Robert Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering: A Manual for Students and Designers*, 3 ed. (McGraw-Hill Book Co.: New York, London, 1912), v.

⁴⁶ French and Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering* (1912), 4-5.

⁴⁷ “Letter to ‘Dear old S.M.B. Written by PYM.” *SMB Magazine* (1928), 42.

⁴⁸ *SMB Magazine* (1930), 38.

⁴⁹ Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, vii.

⁵⁰ For example, Drawing Teachers’ certificates, Architectural and Lithographic Draughtsman courses, and the Commercial Art Course. SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 98, 104-5, 108; Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA), “Technical Schools Architectural Diploma Course,” *Journal of Proceedings* 13, no. 1 (March 1915), 33, 46, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-401016436>; VED, Exams, “Geometry and Perspective (Commercial Art Course)” 1934.

⁵¹ Drucker and McVarish, *Graphic Design History*, 157.

of Arts and Crafts, and during the Celtic revival, artists at the Glasgow School of Art combined curvilinear elements with the gridded structure of traditional illuminated manuscripts.⁵²

Competition for technological superiority led to a push for better training after World War I, elevating the importance of technical drawing and geometry.⁵³ It helps explain the longevity of geometrical drawing as an art subject in Australia. Arguably, geometric form peaked in popularity as the machine-like abstraction of Art Deco style emerged.⁵⁴ Geometric styling, simplification, and abstraction visually articulated modernism's functional and ahistorical tendencies. The simplified forms and flat colour suited to poster reproduction allowed designers to embrace instrumental and technical drawing in new and attractive ways. Sans-serif typefaces also promoted a geometric aesthetic.

The increased use and visibility of geometric forms reaffirmed the importance of geometrical drawing to the technical art school curriculum. Yet, by the 1940s, art and mathematics were considered almost mutually exclusive. Technical drawing subjects were no longer listed as Education Department art subjects.⁵⁵

Writing in 1976, BTAS alumnus, Allan T. Bernaldo, lamented the eventual loss of these subjects (among others) from Victorian technical schools. Their reinstatement, he suggested, would lend “a balance between traditional and contemporary art teaching methods.”⁵⁶

FREEHAND DRAWING

Given its necessity to the fields of engineering and building, mechanical drawing was industrial in nature. By comparison, freehand drawing was expressive, sometimes even disdained as an art of accomplishment.⁵⁷ Yet it was a complex subject, particularly at technical art schools. Freehand drawing was primarily undertaken in two ways: from observation and from memory. Drawing from imagination was tackled to a lesser extent,

⁵² Margolin, *World History of Design*, 491.

⁵³ Maaswinkel, “An Informetric Investigation,” 213.

⁵⁴ Kristy Grant, “Deco Down Under, the Influence of Art Deco in Australia,” in *Art Deco 1910-1939*, eds. Charlotte Benton, Tim Benton and Ghislaine Wood, (Melbourne, Vic.: National Gallery of Victoria, 2008).

⁵⁵ “*Courier*, 8 November 1941,” *SMB Cuttings (1936–1948)*; VED Exams, 1939, ii.

⁵⁶ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 25.

⁵⁷ Murray-Smith, “A History of Technical Education in Australia,” 748.

usually within design and illustration. At a minimum, exam candidates were expected to “agreeably fill the sheet of paper.”⁵⁸

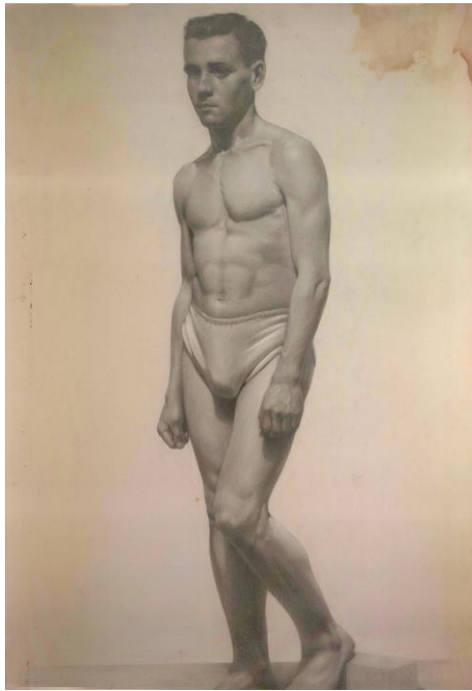


Figure 4.6
Albert E. Williams.
Drawing Figure from Life.
Pencil on paper, 66.8 x 37.5 cm. c1930.
(Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection,
A00521. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

In 1900, the Education Department listed five sources from which to draw freehand from observation: printed examples and photographs; casts of ornament, plant, and human forms; natural plant forms; natural and manufactured objects; and the living human model. Divisions of freehand practice included painting, applied design and, strangely, modelling and wood carving.⁵⁹ As we shall see, students were also required to memorise examples to recall, reference and replicate under exam conditions.

Stages of drawing difficulty were formalised within examinations. Elementary subjects required linear drawing from flat examples, objects and plants.

Intermediate students drew objects in light and shade, and plant forms from memory. At the advanced level, candidates illustrated the human figure from casts and life, and antique objects from memory.⁶⁰ Several

media were acceptable for drawing exams including pencil, chalk, charcoal, pen and ink, and sometimes monochromatic brushwork in oils or watercolour. These options allowed students to select a medium that suited their strengths.⁶¹

Freehand drawing was popular but challenging, and quality was evidently an issue. Of the 23,000 Linear and Shaded Drawing exam entries in 1900, only 15,000 passed.⁶² Successful examination across most schools and subjects was consistently low, with a State-wide pass

⁵⁸ VED, Exams, “Drawing from Models or Objects. Elementary Stage,” 1915.

⁵⁹ VED, “Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 39 (1901), 92.

⁶⁰ SMB, *Prospectus for Year 1908*, (1907).

⁶¹ For example: VED, Exams, “Drawing Ornament from the Cast” and “Drawing Plant forms from Nature,” “Human Anatomy,” 1915.

⁶² VED, “Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 39 (1901), 92.

rate of just under 50 per cent at examination in 1907.⁶³ Carew-Smyth hoped to improve the statistics through structural and curricula reforms.⁶⁴

OBSERVATIONAL FREEHAND DRAWING

Observational, freehand drawing is a visuomotor task in which visually-perceived information is replicated as marks on paper.⁶⁵ Observation was considered an acquired skill, in which a person needed to be trained “both in observation (directed perception) and in notation.”⁶⁶ Observational drawing was intended to connect eye, mind and hand.

The challenge of assessing student drawing was made easier through tightly prescribed examinations that tested observation and technical skills rather than innovation. That is not to say students were human pantographs. The student witnessed and mentally processed the observed item, then decided which elements would be included and how they would be represented. The personal ‘hand’ of the student would be in evidence through these choices, in addition to the confidence, pressure and speed of their strokes.

Under examination, Elementary Drawing from a Flat Example students were restricted to copying a line illustration, usually of a decorative element, in ‘lead pencil’. Advanced students translated a photograph of a complex item, for example a carved Italian Renaissance panel, into a two-dimensional drawing. Ancillary sketches and commentary were often required, but poor photographic reproductions in some exams created a challenge to identify details worth copying. Successful completion in pencil elicited a pass, using monochrome ink with pen or brush elevated the mark to ‘Pass with Credit’. Student copies were required at a larger scale to thwart any attempt at tracing, and ruling instruments were forbidden.⁶⁷

⁶³ VED, PP no. 2 (1908), 32.

⁶⁴ For example, Carew-Smyth introduced a new syllabus and called for more unity of instruction, while drawing became requisite for scholarship examination, PP no. 11 (1907), 57, 65; in 1909 he recommended quality over quantity, PP no. 3 (1909), 64, and in 1909 he introduced a new drawing course for teachers, *Education Gazette*, 20 February 1909, 123.

⁶⁵ Florian Perdreau and Patrick Cavanagh, “Drawing Experts Have Better Visual Memory While Drawing,” *Journal of Vision* 15, no. 5 (2015): <http://dx.doi.org/10.1167/15.5.5>.

⁶⁶ Herbert Read, *Education Through Art*, 4th ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 208.

⁶⁷ For example, VED Exams, “Drawing from a Flat Example. Advanced Stage,” 1915.

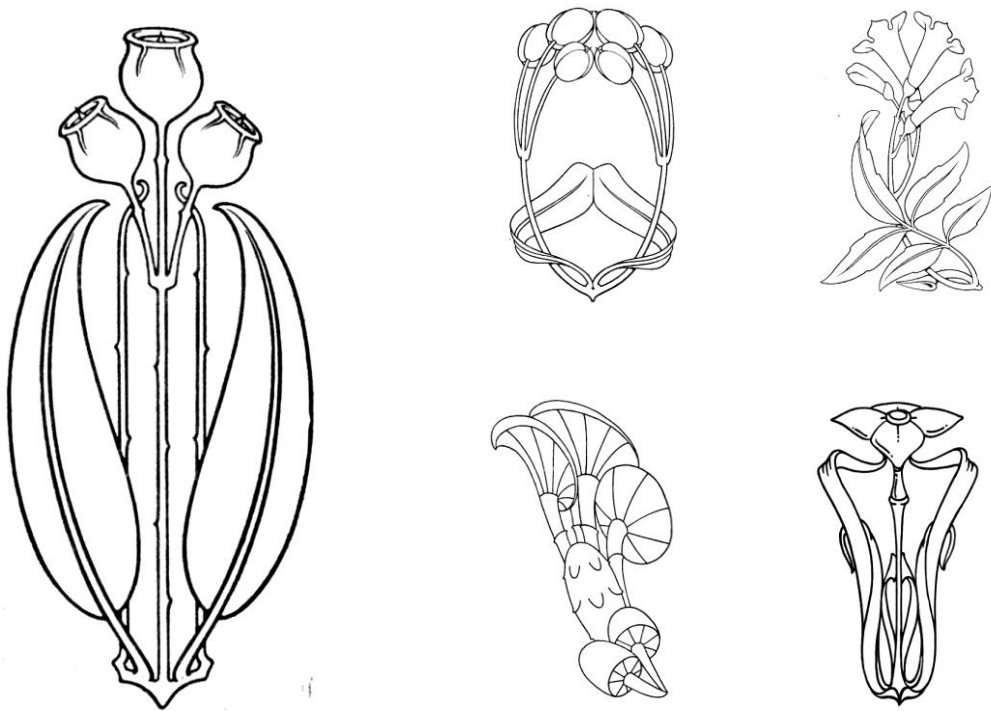


Figure 4.7 **Examples taken from Victorian Education Department examinations.**
 VED, *Drawing from a Flat Example, Elementary*.
 Clockwise from left, 1915, 1920, 1921, 1938, 1939.
 (Bound examinations, Federation University Historical Collection, 10695. Public domain).



Figure 4.8 **Examination examples.** VED, *Drawing from a Flat Example, Advanced*. 1931, 1938.
 (Bound examinations, Federation University Historical Collection, 10695. Public domain).

Following the copy of flat art, students advanced to illustrating plaster casts ‘in the round’. Initially, simpler casts of ‘lower nature’, predominantly plants, were shaded using pencil, chalk, charcoal, pen and ink, or watercolour. Difficulty increased with the complexity of the cast. Human body parts were drawn from classical or Renaissance copies of feet, hands, and torsos through to more complex pieces. In each case, a specific cast was designated by number, as was its position in relation to candidates, and location of a light source. A minimum size for the drawing was often prescribed.⁶⁸

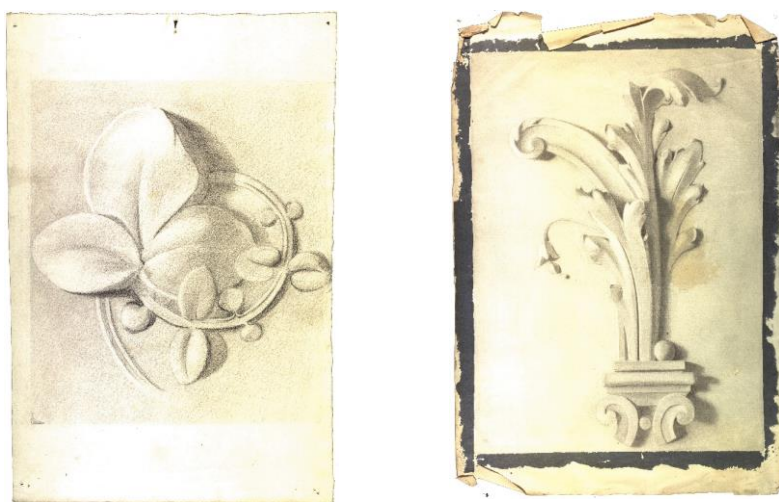


Figure 4.9 **Two of a series, drawings from a cast.** Edith Alice Watson. *Drawing from the Plaster Cast by Alice Watson*. Pencil on paper, approx. 56cm x 38cm. c1930. (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 12049. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)



Figure 4.10 Alice Watson. Various drawings for *Drawing the Human Figure from Cast*. Pencil on paper. c1932. (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 12050. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

⁶⁸ For example, VED Exams, “Drawing the Human Figure from Casts. Advanced Stage,” 1915.

DRAWING FROM MEMORY

Empirical, nineteenth century learning approaches encouraged the retention of facts, and this extended to the memorisation of imagery. Horace Leqoc de Boisbaudran (1802-1897) hoped (somewhat counter-intuitively) to encourage personal creativity and invention by encouraging the memorisation of a suite of forms.⁶⁹ Carew-Smyth echoed the concept of a handy visual archive in his approach to teacher training. Formative and summative, memory drawing exercises fostered learning by building knowledge and skill, and revealed learning through the application of stored memories in work.⁷⁰ At least three of South Kensington's 23 Stages included a form of memory drawing, where an object was drawn from recollection, having already been thoroughly and immediately studied via a drawing from observation, a pedagogical habit of direct imitation.⁷¹

The Birmingham School of Art's Robert Catterson-Smith (1853-1938) instead sought to inhibit the intellect in favour of developing the latent "creative and constructive" capabilities of the mind.⁷² His 'Shut-Eye Drawing' practice provided students as little as two minutes to observe their subject and draw an impression with their eyes closed, thus suppressing judgement. A second memory drawing was undertaken with open eyes. Students were encouraged to fill any gaps from their imagination. According to Catterson-Smith, the observed visual data was personalised through translation, resulting in a distinctly individual, creative response. The Birmingham school utilised objects, plants, people, and animals from its indoor menagerie; the smell alone would have been memorable. Memory practice intended to train students to visualise, plan and pre-assess their work prior to picking up a tool, saving time, effort, and materials.⁷³

In Victoria however, memory drawing practice at examination, at least, emulated traditional South Kensington approaches under both inspectors Carew-Smyth and Dean. For Drawing from Models or Objects, teachers assembled a group of commonplace objects (such as a coal bucket, axe, billycan) to the prescribed instructions of the examiner. Over two and a half hours the composition was drawn from observation, in outline. The objects and initial drawing were then removed, and candidates spent a further hour redrawing the composition

⁶⁹ Catterson-Smith, *Drawing from Memory* (1922), vii.

⁷⁰ Quillin and Thomas, "Drawing-to-Learn," online.

⁷¹ Stages 5c, 8e and 18d. Royal Commission, *Report on the Science and Art Department in Ireland*, Vol. II, (1868), 616-18.

⁷² Catterson-Smith, *Drawing from Memory* (1922), viii.

⁷³ Catterson-Smith, *Drawing from Memory* (1922), vii, viii, 7, 10, 13, 22. Refer also to John Swift, "Visual Memory Training: A Brief History and Postscript" *Art Education* 30, no. 8 (December 1977): 26, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3192205>.

from memory. The Drawing the Human Figure from Life exam transpired similarly in 1915. The Victorian approach differed from Catterson-Smith's in that candidates were able to examine and draw their subject in detail before re-drawing from a very fresh memory; thus, the rational, conscious mind was allowed first access to the object.⁷⁴

By one observation, American teachers overlooked colour in their memory exercises.⁷⁵ This is evident through the Victorian curricula also, where memory drawings were limited to monochrome media.

The absence of object: drawing from stored memories

In some Victorian exams there was no immediate access to the subject of the drawing, instead students drew entirely from stored memories of plants, human or antique forms.

Few students attempted the difficult Drawing the Antique from Memory examinations that specified a certain (absent) sculpture, indicating its light source and the angle from which it was to be remembered and illustrated. Limited collections likely restricted options as 'Clapping Faun' and 'Bronze Hercules' made repeat exam appearances over the years.⁷⁶

Evidence for memory drawing's efficacy was mixed, likely due to varying measures of success, and by the 1930s enthusiasm for the subject was waning.⁷⁷ A 2011 study found expert artists had little advantage remembering "the minutiae of stimulus features" over novices.⁷⁸ Inversely, other research suggests visualisation and drawing strengthen memorisation of complex problems and terms, eliciting "a deep, elaborative encoding of information", making it an excellent mnemonic tool.⁷⁹ Drawing practice has been found to improve medical students' comprehension of musculoskeletal anatomy.⁸⁰ Artistic anatomy students were honing similar skills a century ago.

⁷⁴ VED, Exams, "Drawing from Models or Objects. Advanced Stage," and "Drawing the Human Figure from Life," 1915.

⁷⁵ Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, 197.

⁷⁶ VED, Exams, "Drawing the Antique from Memory," 1915 and 1921.

⁷⁷ Swift, "Visual Memory Training," (1977), 26; Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 144.

⁷⁸ Kuba J. Glazek, "Visual Working Memory and Motor Processing Changes Associated with Expertise in Visual Art," Temple University 2011. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

⁷⁹ Jeffrey D. Wammes, Melissa E. Meade, Myra A. Fernandes, "Learning Terms and Definitions: Drawing and the Role of Elaborative Encoding," *Acta Psychologica* 179, (September 2017): 104-13, <http://dx.doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2017.07.008>, also Perdreau and Cavanagh, "Drawing Experts Have Better Visual Memory While Drawing."

⁸⁰ Muliani Joewono, et al., "Drawing Method Can Improve Musculoskeletal Anatomy Comprehension in Medical Faculty Student," *Anatomy & Cell Biology* 51, no. 1 (2018): <http://dx.doi.org/10.5115/acb.2018.51.1.14>.

ARTISTIC ANATOMY

An understanding of human anatomy, and how it affects the external human form for the purposes of drawing and modelling, was clearly valued within technical art education. The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) School only taught “people to paint and draw the figure, not to apply that figure to decorative purposes,” explained Carew-Smyth.⁸¹ Of course, successful representations of humans can be made without anatomical knowledge, but its understanding was believed to support practised observation.

Given the system of construction so often provided for drafting the human figure, we might even consider it another form of technical drawing. Students examined in Artistic Anatomy (or Human Anatomy) committed the human skeletal and muscular systems, both static and in motion, to memory. They were required to know the names of bones, muscles, and associated ligaments, understand their working relationships, and be able to draw them accurately. Textbooks were almost as explicit in their anatomical detail as medical diagrams, while forgoing non-structural systems such as circulatory, respiratory, and nervous systems. These books were critical to passing examination and a valuable reference for illustrators.⁸²

Écorché works illustrated the human figure in various poses without skin, indicating the way muscles stretch and bulge in response to movement. To date, I have found no evidence of écorché drawing being undertaken at BTAS.

Originally published in 1899, James Dunlop’s *Anatomical Diagrams for the Use of Art Students* continues in print today.⁸³ The 1948 edition featured highly detailed drawings of skeleton, musculature and corresponding outline of skin, interspersed with constructive diagrams, showing lines of direction, balance and weight, as well as notes on figurative action. While not squeamish about the representation of flesh and bone, no genitals were illustrated. Similar books featured more expressive drawings demonstrating a range of poses in addition to scientific-style diagrams.⁸⁴

Such books prioritised proportion and divided a human figure into parts to assist explanation. An average adult male height was usually divided into eight parts, the head indicating one

⁸¹ VED, PP no. 14 (1911), 128.

⁸² VED, Exams, “Art. Human Anatomy,” 1915, 1916, 1923, 1926, 1930, 1939.

⁸³ Most recently in 2013 by Courier Corporation, ISBN: 0486149471. James M. Dunlop, *Anatomical Diagrams for the Use of Art Students* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1948, dedicated in 1899).

⁸⁴ Victor Perard, *Anatomy and Drawing*. 3 ed. (Tennessee, USA: Kingsport Press, 1947, first published 1928).

part as a measure for other dimensions.⁸⁵ This formed a structure by which all people were comparatively drawn. Females were drawn with a longer torso, narrower shoulders, and wider hips. Childhood ages were listed with appropriate fractions of adult height. Elderly people were illustrated with a prominent skeleton, loose and wrinkled skin, and imperfectly positioned muscles, their “natural decay” emphasised through missing teeth, an altered jaw and sunken eyes.⁸⁶ These ‘normative’ figures could be modified by “race, sex, age and physical differences peculiar to the individual”, including a disturbing presumption of correlation between outward appearance and “mental capacity.”⁸⁷ Depictions of ethnicity were limited, stereotyped and sometimes grotesque. In 1916, Victorian students compared skulls and proportions of “Caucasian and the Mongolian types” and, in 1930, were asked to identify different facial angles for varied “races.”⁸⁸

Problematically, artistic anatomy often positioned women, children, the elderly and non-Caucasian peoples as ‘other’, embedding stereotypes and classical notions of beauty. Yet it remained important, particularly for students of modelling who were required to build the form additively, based upon bone and muscle, be it head, hand, foot, or full-length figure.⁸⁹

In 1916 a valuable *aide memoir* was delivered to BTAS as a chaotic confusion of “posteriors, exteriors, anteriors, as well as a multitudinous maximissimi” in a soap box. Affectionately titled Arriovistus, the inaccurately assembled skeleton was difficult to pose and unable to lift his head. Still, he was the object of affectionate fun among students who imagined him flirting with the female statuary in the Antique Room. He may have preferred the company of his Sydney Art School counterpart, who suffered from a similarly ignominious start when staff applied their “surgical skill in re-articulating the once dismembered Ermyntrude!”⁹⁰

The difficulty of Artistic Anatomy exams is evident in the lack of participants and low pass rate across Victoria.⁹¹ It was one of 13 examinations required for the award of Art Master’s Certificate and an optional subject within Ballarat’s Lithographic Draughtsman course.⁹² Between 1919 and 1936, BTAS averaged three or four successful candidates most years.

⁸⁵ White, “Part 9: Anatomy and Proportion,” in *Commercial Art School* (1927).

⁸⁶ White, “Part 9: Anatomy and Proportion,” in *Commercial Art School* (1927), 5.

⁸⁷ Perard, *Anatomy and Drawing* (1947), ix; “Preface by John Cleland,” Dunlop, *Anatomical Diagrams for the Use of Art Students* (1948), iii.

⁸⁸ VED, Exams, “Human Anatomy,” 1916 and 1930.

⁸⁹ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 134.

⁹⁰ Sydney Art School, *The Art Student* (1931), 33.

⁹¹ VED, “Report on Instruction in Art in Technical Schools,” PP no. 44 (1910), 94.

⁹² *SMB Calendar*. 1914, 108.

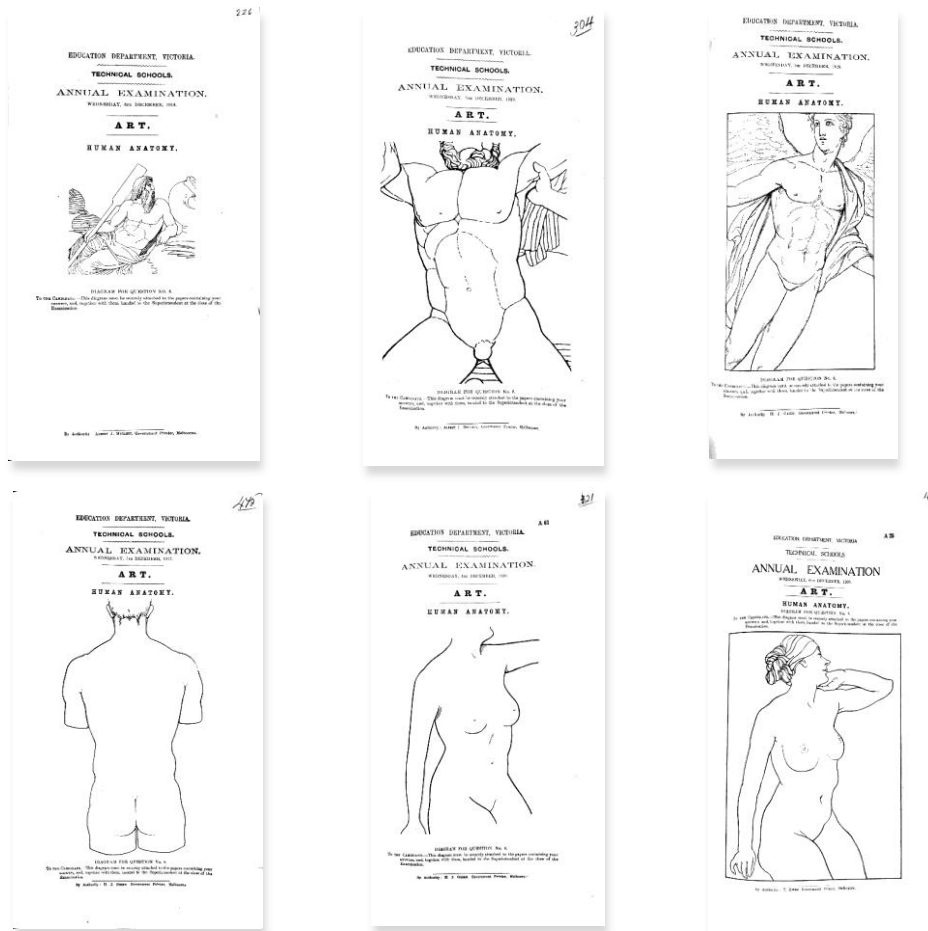


Figure 4.11 Examples of Human Anatomy examination papers. VED, *Art - Human Anatomy*, 1916, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1930, 1939. (Bound examinations, FedHC, 10695. Public domain).

During a four-hour exam, candidates faced questions regarding the origin, insertion, and action of various muscles.⁹³ Careful studies were made of joints, both flexed and extended, and examples of ‘bony prominences’ affecting the skin. A final, compulsory question usually required the candidate to illustrate muscular details within the outline of a classical figure. All answers were to be illustrated and annotated. Examinations changed very little across the decades, the same question appearing in both the 1915 and 1939 exams.⁹⁴

Despite its rigours, artistic anatomy was of value to commercial artists and fashion illustrators, with separate examination in ‘Drawing for Dressmakers and Milliners Fashions’. To this end, books offered advice on creating more pleasing proportions than the standard human figure. Heads could be made smaller “so as to attain height and dignity.” Students

⁹³ VED, Exam, “Human Anatomy,” 1915.

⁹⁴ VED, Exam, “Human Anatomy,” 1939.

were encouraged to draw the structure of an undressed figure, to ensure correct proportion, prior to adding clothes and other details.⁹⁵

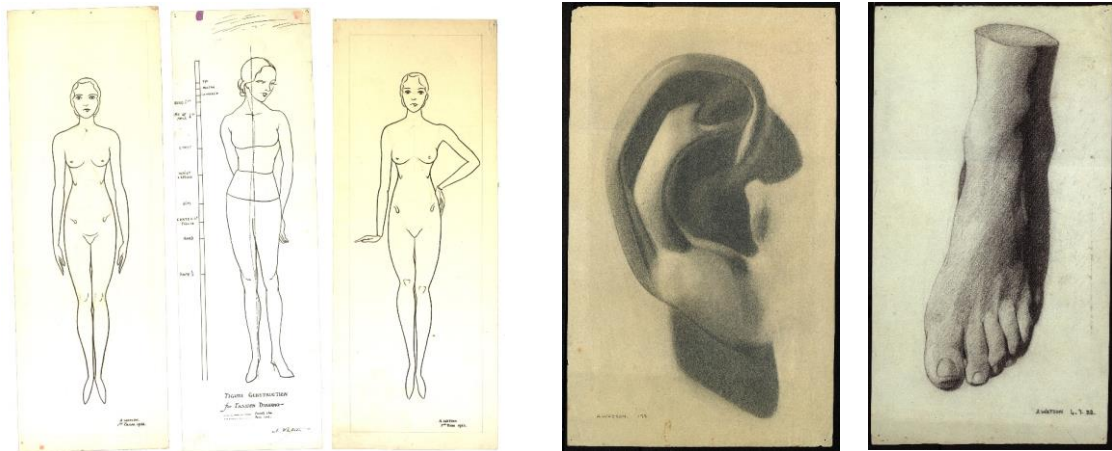


Figure 4.12 Left: Alice Watson. *Figure construction for fashion drawing*. Pen and ink on paper, c1932. Right: Alice Watson. Examples from BTAS folio. Pencil on paper, c1932. (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 12050 and 12052. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Examination of Drawing the Human Figure from Life began with an intensive study of the model, whose pose was described from head to toe by the examiner, followed by a drawing from memory. To expedite description, some exams had models match the pose of an existing cast (such as Cast No. 459, Hercules).⁹⁶ Pencil, chalk, charcoal, monochrome oil, or watercolour could all be used. Again, few sat and passed this examination. By the 1970s, Allan Bernaldo was saddened that human and animal anatomy were neglected by technical art schools.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ White, “Part 9: Anatomy and Proportion,” 3, and “Part 10: Figure Drawing for Commercial Designs”, 2, in *Commercial Art School* (1927).

⁹⁶ VED, Exams, “Drawing the Human Figure from Life,” 1939.

⁹⁷ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 25.

DRAWING PLANT FORMS

Natural plant forms were the subject of freehand observational and memory drawing, and a source of inspiration for many design exercises. In 1900, Art Inspector Monkhouse raised concerns that many such works submitted for examination were poorly observed and technically inaccurate. In some cases, heavy-handed execution failed to express the delicacy and beauty of the subject matter.⁹⁸ Others similarly warned, “a limp-looking tendril should be avoided.”⁹⁹

Perhaps Monkhouse’s criticisms informed the approach of inspector Carew-Smyth, who championed the drawing of plant forms in early primary school. By 1915, superintendents of Drawing Plant Forms from Nature exams raided local gardens to supply designated sprigs of the same genus and species throughout Victoria. For the Elementary stage, it was Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), or perhaps a piece of Eucalypt bearing six to eight leaves. Plants for the Advanced stage included Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*), *Clematis* with leaves and flowers, and a small branch of Oak (*Quercus*).¹⁰⁰

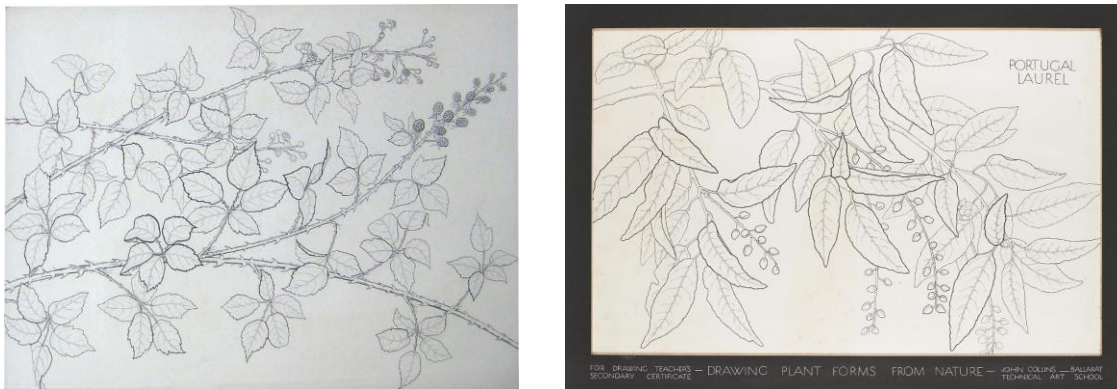


Figure 4.13 **Examples of Drawing Plant forms from Nature.**

Left: Albert E. Williams. *Blackberry*. Framed drawing: ink on paper. c1930.

(Courtesy Federation University Australia Historical Collection, A00623. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Right: John T. Collins. *Drawing Plant Forms from Nature*. Produced for the Art Teachers' Secondary Certificate at BTAS. Drawing: pen and ink on cream paper; visible image 31 x 48 cm. 1940. (Courtesy State Library of Victoria [SLV], H2000.119/120. ©SLV)

The two-hour Drawing Plant Forms from Memory exam required a mental archive of Australian indigenous and imported botanical imagery, as no reference was provided at exam. Candidates selected two from half a dozen specified plants. In 1915 these were

⁹⁸ VED, “Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 39 (1901), 92.

⁹⁹ Clark, E., *A Handbook of Plant-Form*, 1909, xi.

¹⁰⁰ VED, Exams, “Drawing Plant Forms from Nature,” 1915, 1916, 1930

Convolvulus, Bramble, Oak, Clematis, Blackwood, and Waratah. The following year, Ti-Tree, Flannel Flower, Eucalyptus-Calophylla, Buttercup, Milk-Thistle and Dog-Rose were offered. Plants in subsequent exams included the Flame Tree, Kangaroo Apple, Correa, Pittosporum, Grapevine, Periwinkle, Ivy, Maple, Laurel, and Bay. Plants with unusual details such as the tropical bean (*Dolichos*) and Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*) occasionally appeared. The availability of Australian plants, and increasing recognition of their beauty, ensured their inclusion.¹⁰¹

Students memorised several plants' structure and growth habits including leaves, buds, flowers and bracts, fruits, pods, and seeds, including interesting details or cross-sections. For example, was the leaf shape simple, orbicular, elliptical, ovate, heart-shaped, hastate, linear, or arrow-shaped? Was its edge smooth, notched, toothed, serrated, or fringed? How did the leaf meet the stem, and what was its arrangement to other leaves? Any possible memory aids were covered or removed from the examination space, including drawings and casts. Exams recommended outline or lightly shaded drawings in pencil, pen and ink, or brush and watercolour.

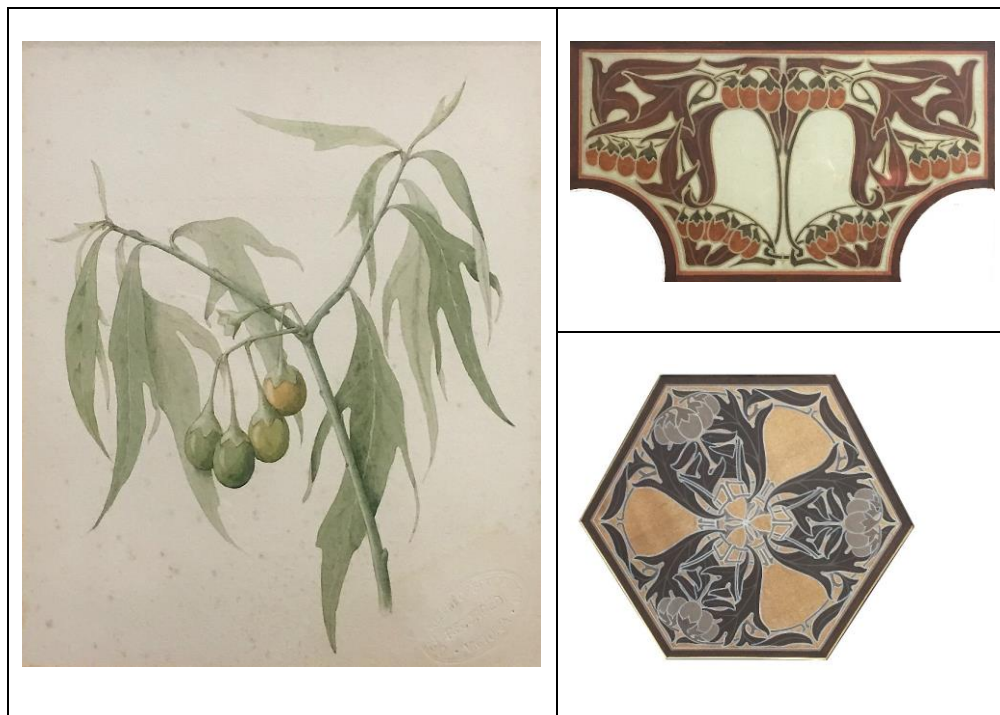


Figure 4.14 **Drawing plant forms from memory.**
 Albert E. Williams. *Study of Kangaroo Apple* (details). Undertaken for Drawing Teachers' Secondary Certificate. Watercolour, originals framed in 55.0 x 75.5cm black mount. c1940.
 (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, A00342. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

¹⁰¹ VED, Exams, "Drawing Plant Forms from Memory," 1915, 1916, etc.

Candidates were also asked to demonstrate details that might be “valuable for the purposes of decorative design.”¹⁰² True adaptation and application, however, was the domain of General Design exams, as discussed later.

By 1929, Donald Clark notes botany and biology had practically disappeared from the Victorian technical school curriculum, thus Drawing Plant Forms from Nature remained one of the few opportunities to examine botanical specimens.¹⁰³

IMAGINATIVE FREEHAND DRAWING

Where imaginative freehand drawing appears in technical art examination, it is through the illustrative components of General Design which provided opportunity for invention and whimsy, many with particularly Australian themes. This area is discussed later.

PICTORIAL PAINTING

Beyond private and gallery schools, pictorial painting formed part of an applied artist’s training. Within the 1900 exam structure, painting was simply freehand drawing with wet media such as ink, watercolour, or oils, and consisted of four divisions: monochrome; plant form; still life; and live model work. The Drawing with a Brush exam required form be built from coloured liquid. A subtle pencil structure was allowable, but outlining was forbidden.¹⁰⁴ Inspector Monkhouse’s expectation for painting students was unassailably technical and naturalistic, emphasising the interplay of light, colour, form, substance, and surface. He felt students generally failed at monochrome brushwork, producing muddy suggestions of light and shade. Smaller schools produced moderately better work in still life, but Monkhouse was scathing of all life drawing submissions as barely worth the model’s fee.¹⁰⁵

While drawing was a universally useful skill, some objected to “painting and the ornamental branches” being unnecessarily taught in technical schools.¹⁰⁶ To the annoyance of Monkhouse, some classes facilitated the gratification of non-vocational dilettantes.¹⁰⁷ For some, pictorial painting lacked the substance beyond style of applied art, inverting the traditional hierarchy.¹⁰⁸ The practical artist was also likely to receive better financial

¹⁰² VED, Exams, 1915.

¹⁰³ Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 51.

¹⁰⁴ VED, Exams, “Drawing with the Brush,” 1915.

¹⁰⁵ VED, “Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 39 (1901), 92.

¹⁰⁶ VED, PP no. 36 (1901), 272.

¹⁰⁷ VED, “General Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 28 (1903), 91.

¹⁰⁸ Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, v.

remuneration than a painter of pictures. Applied art provided creative opportunity for the person who “cannot loaf on a wealthy father while he pursues pure art, develops soul, and paints pictures which will not sell.”¹⁰⁹ Indeed, young people were cautioned not to seek a painting career “unless advised by some high authority.”¹¹⁰

BTAS kept a studio specifically for painting and life studies, yet the type of painting examinable by the Education Department was limited.¹¹¹ Some advanced drawing exams allowed the use of wet media, others made specific provision for the use of paint. Painting examinations tested the candidate’s draughtsmanship and ability to “render the form, action and character” of the subject, and were not popular among BTAS students.¹¹²



Figure 4.15 Unknown.
Cubist portrait of a lady.
Reproduced from *SMB Magazine*, 1923, p27.
(FedHC. Public domain.)

Composition of Form and Colour exams utilised oil, tempura, and watercolour to paint still life. The aim was not to produce a realistic rendering, but to develop an eye for form, composition, and colour. It is therefore surprising that the collection of objects for the 1917 exam were relatively monochromatic, comprising a wooden plane, claw hammer, nails, and wood shavings, suggesting form was perhaps the primary focus. In 1930, more exotic objects allowed greater exploration of colour and contrast; with a nod toward Orientalism they included a Chinese fan, a tall vase, one and a half oranges, a light blue book, and a teaspoon.¹¹³ Student examples of portraiture and landscape painting appear in school publications and the Federation University collection.

SMB Magazines indicate students were familiar with Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism and Dada, but perhaps the deeper philosophies behind these movements eluded them.¹¹⁴ Sydney students also grappled to define “so many different kinds of ‘Modern’ painters.”¹¹⁵ The 1929 *SMB Magazine* noted a shift in painters’ subject matter, with a tendency toward contemporary,

¹⁰⁹ “Applied Art: Its Money Value,” *Weekly Times* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 July 1910, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article221771691>.

¹¹⁰ Herbert, “Art,” *The Australasian*, 13 April 1935.

¹¹¹ *SMB, Prospectus 1908* (1907).

¹¹² *SMB, Calendar 1914* (1914), 132.

¹¹³ VED, Exams, “Composition of Form and Colour,” 1917 and 1930.

¹¹⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1923), 16.

¹¹⁵ Ashton, “George Lambert. Was he ‘Modern’?” (1930), 8.

everyday life. Traditional and formal executions gave way to less restricted approaches, personal practice, and freer experimentation with style, the application of paint and the ascension of colour (due in part to technological advances).¹¹⁶ It could be argued that technical art had long had a toe in modern practice, given its real-time role in the development, conventionalisation and beautification of elements for everyday items and architecture.

In 1930, one Ballarat student made note that given photographic improvements, the painter no longer had an excuse to practise realism, and instead needed to find a new direction, explaining “those strange things” called modern art were an attempt to do exactly that.¹¹⁷ This aligns with a growing desire for authenticity in Australian work. Perceptual realism was authentic in its own time, but photographic advances rendered it unnecessary, and therefore insincere.

Of course, adoption of new ideas could be interpreted as de-valuing old approaches, and so there was some resistance to change.¹¹⁸ Among Sydney Art School painting students, drawing was disparaged as draughtsmanship, while some teachers believed drawing practice was “as necessary in good modernism or Cubism, or Futurism” as to conventional art. Without knowing how to draw, painting students were accused of amateurish “daubing.”¹¹⁹ Upon reflection, BTAS alumnus Allan Bernaldo similarly concluded that many talented students of contemporary art ultimately failed because “they had been diverted from a thorough schooling in the basics of their trade.”¹²⁰

Paint itself straddled art and science. In 1917, SMB began investigating local ochres and pigments, including several calcimines, from which BTAS students generated oil colours for testing. Despite industry enquiries for large quantities, production was constrained by limited personnel and equipment.¹²¹ Perhaps their initial success motivated the Blackhill Color and Oxide Company which, by 1922, was devoted to the “perfection of color making”, with a plant to grind and mix pigments. The business was of enough interest to SMB to include an article in their scrapbooked cuttings.¹²²

¹¹⁶ *SMB Magazine* (1929), 16.

¹¹⁷ “Arts and crafts gossip: L’Art Moderne (By E. R)” *SMB Magazine* (1930), 14.

¹¹⁸ Neville Wilson, “Why is the Beach Pink?” *Decoration and Glass* 1, no. 2 (1 June 1935), 16, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-368066135>.

¹¹⁹ Sydney Art School, *The Art Student* (1930), 13.

¹²⁰ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 21.

¹²¹ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (October 1917), February 1918.

¹²² “Our Industrial Activity,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 2 August 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213038647>; “Star, 2 August 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

Oil and watercolour painting were attractive practices for their freedom of expression. The discipline of drawing, however, remained a critical skill within technical art schools. Liquid media was also utilised by general and applied design, illumination, and lettering students.

Painterly students

The title Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) led some to believe no fine art was taught, yet it was prominent within the curriculum, and students regularly participated in competitions and exhibitions. Painting teachers (discussed elsewhere in this thesis) included Margaret Crombie Young, John Rowell, and Harold Herbert. From late 1930, May Grigg delivered classes in portrait and landscape painting.

Student entries in Ballarat Art Gallery exhibitions included landscapes, life, and still life studies. In 1937 these were credited for their workmanship and technical qualities, indicating the ongoing importance of drawing and draughtsmanship. They were also noted for their composition and use of strong and vivid colour. The vast majority were watercolour, perhaps owing to the prohibitive cost of oils, or because the school laid claim to two of the nation's best watercolourists: Harold Herbert and Allan Bernaldo. A reunion exhibition in 1930 displayed more than 40 years of alumni oils and watercolours featuring landscape, still life and portraiture.¹²³

Some of Harold Brocklebank Herbert's (1892-1945) brief biographies do the scale of his influence little justice, not just as an artist and teacher, but notable Australian art critic.¹²⁴ From the age of 10, the prodigious Herbert attended Saturday classes at the Ballarat West Gallery School, selling his first painting to a local dentist.¹²⁵ At the amalgamated BTAS he worked to become a technical art teacher.¹²⁶ His dedication was credited with fostering his craftsmanship and "conquest over materials." Herbert was one of the school's "most brilliant students", winning dozens of awards and contributing to its commission output.¹²⁷

¹²³ "Courier, 21 October 1937," "Courier, 17 October 1939," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); *SMB Magazine* (1930), 35.

¹²⁴ Joan Kerr, "Harold Herbert," *Design and Art Australia Online*, last modified 2007, 2011, 1996, accessed 15 October 2019, <https://www.daaao.org.au/bio/harold-herbert/biography/>; Robb, Smith and Smith, *Concise Dictionary of Australian Artists*, 118-119.

¹²⁵ "'That Reminds Me...'; Says Harold Herbert," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 January 1939, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12084931>.

¹²⁶ "A Ballarat Artist," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 25 October 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213374109>.

¹²⁷ "Courier, 9 June 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

One of Herbert's early Melbourne exhibitions broke into an "epidemic of 'red spots'" as his works sold, and he had to top up the display with additional watercolours and drawings. Perhaps it was at this exhibition that Herbert debuted his innovative method of stencilling with water colour, a technique with possible Japanese origins. Critiques noted its "velvet-like charm" and resemblance to colour printmaking.¹²⁸ In fact, the work was sometimes catalogued as woodcuts and offered popularly acceptable novelty without seeming "bizarre and eccentric." His conscientious attention to form, detail and character favoured truth and beauty; characteristics he would seek in his later evaluation of other artists.¹²⁹

The financial success of Herbert's 1914 exhibition no doubt pleased the 22-year-old artist who had been assisting Art Inspector Carew-Smyth for three years and was about to travel to London to study at the RCA. Unfortunately, the outbreak of war necessitated a change of plan.¹³⁰ In May 1915, amidst a dearth of qualified technical art teachers, BTAS was thrilled to attract Herbert into the position of Senior Art Master in the lead up to opening their new building. His qualifications and experience outweighed the remuneration on offer, so Herbert was given the title of Deputy Principal.¹³¹ For the next four years he taught design, perspective, historic ornament and modelling and involved himself in school activities and fundraising. Herbert gave his weekends to sketching outdoors, often working with both hands.¹³²

Herbert would later comment that teaching stulted creativity so, in 1919 with the war over, he resigned to broaden his professional experience.¹³³ He fell in with Mathew James MacNally (1873-1943) and his associates. In 1920 the pair co-exhibited in Sydney, their work jointly

¹²⁸ "A Ballarat Artist," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 25 October 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213374109>; "Artistic Crafts Exhibition," *Leader* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 May 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89309542>

¹²⁹ Roger Butler, *Melbourne Woodcuts and Linocuts of the 1920s and 1930s* (Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, 1981), no folio; "Arts and Crafts Displayed," *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 11 May 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242144317>. For example, Josef Lebovic Gallery, "Harold B. Herbert, (Aust., 1891-1945 [Ti-Trees) (Item #C1192-58)," accessed 18 October 2019, <https://www.joseflebovicgallery.com/pages/books/CL192-58/harold-b-herbert-aust/ti-trees>.

¹³⁰ "Artists Taste Success," *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 18 May 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242138072>.

¹³¹ "Ballarat Star, 31 May 1915," SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (September 1915); SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 2.

¹³² "Harold Herbert: A Tribute," *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article145703551>; Albert Collins, "Harold Herbert," in *The Water-colours of M. J. MacNally and Harold Herbert* (Bond Street, Sydney: Art in Australia, 1920), 22; "A Ballarat Artist," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 25 October 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213374109>.

¹³³ Collins, *The Water-colours of M. J. MacNally and Harold Herbert*, 20, 22; Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 15; "Art," *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 June 1933, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article141376821>.

published in a limited edition agent's book.¹³⁴ With water colour considered more technically demanding than oil, the author suggests Herbert would come to "be known among the few water-colourists who have done anything worth while in Australian landscape."¹³⁵ A "whole tradition" of watercolour would become his legacy.¹³⁶

In 1922, Herbert finally travelled overseas, weathering the fortunes of an adventurous artist. With his post directed to the Bank of NSW in Threadneedle Street, London, Herbert spent about 15 months travelling. In France, inexpensive family-stay accommodation saw him chiefly minding a toddler. He continued through Spain and Morocco, where authorities allowed him relatively free movement. At a Moroccan feast, eating with his fingers and *sans* shoes, he was embarrassed to note his holed socks. In Monte Carlo, invited to the opera but without appropriate evening dress, he painted his lapels with black ink, only to be seated next to a Duke. Using his mother's birth date to bet his last 10 francs on a local horse race, Herbert's thirty-five-to-one win bought a ticket for Calais (and a terrible hangover).¹³⁷ On returning to Australia, he disembarked the *Orsova* with broader experience and a thick folio of work ready to exhibit.¹³⁸

Herbert's October exhibition at the Fine Art Society, Melbourne, received excellent reviews for being "healthily free of affectation", its "broad, fresh manner", "faultless drawing" and "infinite variety."¹³⁹ He sold most of his works, then contributed to two joint exhibitions just a few weeks later.¹⁴⁰ On display in Sydney, Herbert's "well planned composition" countered one author's broad criticism that Australian art failed to sufficiently acknowledge "pattern and design."¹⁴¹ In April 1924, he exhibited at the Tasmanian Art Society and was published

¹³⁴ "A Ballarat Artist," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 25 October 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213374109>; Collins, "Harold Herbert," (1920).

¹³⁵ Collins, "Harold Herbert," (1920), 20.

¹³⁶ Butler, *Melbourne Woodcuts and Linocuts*, no folio.

¹³⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1922), 22; "Courier, 29 November 1922," "Courier, 28 March 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); "'That Reminds Me...': Says Harold Herbert," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 January 1939, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12084931>.

¹³⁸ "Star, 13 October 1923," "Courier, 26 October 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹³⁹ Quote from *The Bulletin* in "Courier, 31 May 1924," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); "Art Exhibition," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 20 October 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1985782>; "Art Notes," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 27 November 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206242823>; "Courier, 28 November 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); "Harold Herbert Returns," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 26 October 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213853932>;

¹⁴⁰ A. Colquhoun, "The Three A's, an Important Exhibition," *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 13 November 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243503494>; "The Studio," *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 November 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article140829006>; "Courier, 1 December 1923," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); "Courier, 31 May 1924," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁴¹ Edith M. Fry, "Australian Art," *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW), 1 January 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16126509>.

in *Art in Australia*.¹⁴² Brandishing a pipe and cane, Herbert attended Adelaide Artists' Week in the company of Sydney Ure Smith, Hans Heysen, Charles Wheeler and Lionel Lindsay.¹⁴³ Embracing strong colour and solid draughtsmanship, Herbert made particular use of the effects of sunlight, and found the work of European watercolourists to be thin and shallow tinted drawings.¹⁴⁴

Herbert was an editorial representative for *Art in Australia* and Crouch Prize judge in 1931.¹⁴⁵ From 1932, with a taste for critique, he became a regular contributor to newspapers *The Australasian* and *Argus*' art analysis.¹⁴⁶ Even while a critic, Herbert practised art making, maintained creative friendships, and networked via formal associations. Throughout, Herbert connected with the SMB Past Students' Association, contributing work to reunion exhibitions, writing often to principal Smith, and sometimes visiting.¹⁴⁷ Even mid-career, BTAS students honoured him "as an inspiration to this generation of students and generations yet to come."¹⁴⁸

Like many artists, Herbert supplemented his income with illustration, for *Life*, the Melbourne *Herald*, *The Australasian*, and the Education Department's *Victorian Readers*.¹⁴⁹ In January 1941, Herbert was appointed Australia's first official war artist of the second World War, based in the Middle East. His work was described as ingeniously blending "restful qualities" with "the energy and drive of warfare."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² "Gallery and Studio," *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, NSW), 19 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245705447>; "Art in Australia," *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, NSW), 19 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245705258>.

¹⁴³ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 154.

¹⁴⁴ "Courier, 26 October 1923", "Courier, 31 May 1924," in SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁴⁵ *Art in Australia*, Third Series, no. 31 (March 1930), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-348498884>; "Courier, 17 April 1931," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁴⁶ "Harold Herbert: A Tribute," *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article145703551>.

¹⁴⁷ "Courier, 17 December 1921," "Courier, 29 November 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); *SMB Magazine* (1921), 27; "Courier, 2 August 1930," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁴⁸ *SMB Magazine* (1924), 13.

¹⁴⁹ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 186-187; VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Eighth Book*, Second ed., (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1940), ix.

¹⁵⁰ "Their Work Is Now Being Exhibited: These Are the Australian Official War Artists," *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 25 September 1943, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article142147499>.



Figure 4.16 Left: **Harold Herbert at work in the British Mandate of Palestine, 1941.** Damien Peter Parer. Photograph. 9 August 1941.

(Courtesy Australian War Memorial [AWM], 008639. Public domain.)

Right: Harold Herbert. *Search Light Overhaul*. Watercolour over pencil on paper, 38.2 x 49cm. Egypt, Africa. 1941. (Courtesy AWM, ART30082. Public domain.)

Herbert did not live to see the end of the war. His death following a long illness at the relatively young age of 53, was widely reported. The potential he demonstrated so early in life, was reflected upon after his death. He was recognised as prolific, among “the best of Australian painters in water colors”, and likely unmatched in gallery representations.¹⁵¹ His work was considered accurately observed, freely rendered, and demonstrated “thorough technical knowledge of his art.” Herbert was remembered as jovial and forthright, a man of “unbounded generosity and tolerance”, a valued friend, and mentor to young artists.¹⁵²

Herbert’s student, Allan Thomas Bernaldo (1898-1988), is one of the few ex-student voices available to us, having published *A Lifetime with Water Colours: Recollections* in 1976.¹⁵³ Dux of the Junior Technical School in 1915, Bernaldo received a three-year Senior Technical Scholarship in architecture to join a strong cohort of BTAS students.¹⁵⁴ It gave his parents grounds to object to his attempt to enlist in the AIF in 1918.¹⁵⁵ His military ambition

¹⁵¹ “Noted Artist’s Death,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 12 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206859826>; “Harold Herbert: A Tribute,” *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article145703551>.

¹⁵² “Harold Herbert: A Tribute,” *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article145703551>.; “Noted Artist’s Death,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 12 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206859826>.; Croll, *I Recall*, (1939), online; “Harold Herbert,” *West Australian* (Perth, WA), 12 February 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article44997218>.

¹⁵³ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976).

¹⁵⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1916), 55; “Star, 10 February 1916,” “Star, 4 April, 1916,” *SMB Cuttings* (1907–1916).

¹⁵⁵ “Bernaldo, Allan Thomas,” NAA: B2455, BERNALDO A T; and “Bernaldo, Allan Thomas - Service Number - V78116,” NAA: B73, R70386.

thwarted, Bernaldo focussed on his studies. A committed editor of the *SMB Magazine*, he “roared a treat” at substandard articles, while encouraging greater participation in student associations.¹⁵⁶ He gained two years’ professional experience with a Melbourne advertising agency and joined BTAS’ student-teacher staff before his appointments to Caulfield and then Brighton Technical School, where he remained until his retirement in 1946.¹⁵⁷ With his teacher’s salary frozen for ten years, Bernaldo found his “financial equilibrium was often tilted into the red”, so he moonlighted as a commercial artist.¹⁵⁸ He also contributed several images to the *Victorian Readers*, which he found creatively rewarding.¹⁵⁹



Figure 4.17
Allan T. Bernaldo. *Sovereign's Escort*.
90.0 x 50.0 cm (unframed). 1960.
(Courtesy Federation University Art Collection, A00290.
Gift of the Artist, 1981. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Bernaldo’s private practise favoured watercolour. He declared his first one-man-show “both a flop and a nightmare”, yet he persisted and in the following few years attracted positive attention.¹⁶⁰ By 1929 his work was being reproduced as art prints, of which he sent a sample to BTAS. Eight years later, he was attracting comparison to Harold Herbert. Bernaldo continued to support school reunions and exhibitions.¹⁶¹ He enjoyed sketching outdoors and travelling in the company of other artists. An adventurous man, he trekked Australia by horse, motorbike, car and van, including the occasional

airborne evacuation. Some of Bernaldo’s favourite subjects were equine. Unlike humans, they were not inclined to offer irritating suggestions and criticisms. As a “struggling traditional realist”, Bernaldo’s work fell afoul of critics, who favoured the contemporary school of painting over his tradecraft and dismissed his work as un-modern.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ *SMB Magazine* (1917), 3, 12.

¹⁵⁷ “Courier, 4 November 1921,” “Star, 28 November 1921,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924); *SMB Magazine* (1922), 22.

¹⁵⁸ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 16.

¹⁵⁹ VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Fourth Book*, Second ed. (Melbourne: A. C. Brooks, Government Printer, 1940), 144; VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Seventh Book*, Second ed. (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1940), 5, 6, 29; and VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Eighth Book*, Second ed. (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1940), 51; Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 16.

¹⁶⁰ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 16; “Courier, 22 November 1923,” “Star, 3 December 1923,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924).

¹⁶¹ “Courier, 13 March 1929,” “Courier, July 1930,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936); “Courier, 21 October 1937,” “Courier, 25 October 1939,” “Courier, 13 April 1940,” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948),

¹⁶² Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 21.

Another watercolourist of note was Henry (Harry) Bell Logan Fern (1892-1945). In 1914, Fern was following his father's footsteps working as a clerk, but more creative endeavours were calling.¹⁶³ In 1922, Fern moved to Melbourne and continued as a clerk before the opportunity to work with artist "McNally" (sic) was presented. This was likely Mathew MacNally, the prominent watercolourist known to encourage young artists, including Harold Herbert.¹⁶⁴ Fern subsequently became a commercial artist around 1930 and was heavily involved with the Victorian Artists' Society (VAS), where his business experience, painting practice and organisational skills saw him appointed secretary in 1933.¹⁶⁵ He was a passionate member, managing many exhibitions, raising funds, and arranging social gatherings such as the 'Obstinate Artists' Ball' and all-night 'Revel in a Persian Garden', where he twirled among the costumed guests, his fingernails painted gold.¹⁶⁶ It was a lively diversion from his daylight work.¹⁶⁷ Throughout, he shared a home with his mother and several siblings. Not widely known as an artist himself, Fern seemed on the brink of success with a sell-out exhibition just prior to his death from illness, aged 53.¹⁶⁸

Several BTAS students made pictorial art their passionate practise, sometimes supplemented by commercial or teaching work. Several undertook further training at private or gallery schools.

One of 10 children to a Murtoa blacksmith, Amalie Sarah Feild (1894-1974) discovered her muse at a young age. When family members moved to Ballarat, Feild studied applied art at BTAS, and as a teacher there was directed toward pottery and stained glass. Yet painting would become her vocation. Soon after a move to teach at the Melbourne WMC in 1927, Feild met her partner-in-art and life, Archibald Douglas (Archie) Colquhoun (1894-1983). The goateed man with trademark tartan beret might have seemed eccentric on a Ballarat street, but was not out of place amongst the bohemian Melbourne art scene. Archie was raised on the smell of linseed and oils amidst his artist parents' circle, well-travelled and comparatively worldly.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Ancestry.com. *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980*, 1914-1920; *SMB Magazine* (1928), 16.

¹⁶⁴ "Courier, 17 December 1927," *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936); Clifford-Smith, Silas. "Matthew James Macnally," *Design and Art Australia Online*, last modified 2011, 2007, accessed 15 October 2019. <https://www.daaao.org.au/bio/matthew-james-macnally/biography/>.

¹⁶⁵ "Art," *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 27 May 1933, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article141375459>.

¹⁶⁶ "In Today's Social News," *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 6 December 1933, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243210827>; "Victorian Artists' Society," *Table Talk* (Melbourne, Vic.), 5 September 1929, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146713087>.

¹⁶⁷ Ancestry.com. *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980*, 1934.

¹⁶⁸ "Personal Items," *The Bulletin*. 8 August 1945, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-547454381>.

¹⁶⁹ Peter W. Perry, "Colquhoun, Archibald Douglas (Archie) (1894-1983)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, (MUP, 2007), accessed 5 February 2019, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/colquhoun->

Following their marriage in 1931, and perhaps spurred by her husband's Crouch Prize in 1933, Feild resigned from teaching to concentrate on painting portraiture and landscapes.¹⁷⁰ The couple lived and worked in their top floor Collins Street studio for several years, next to a little lane "most bohemian in atmosphere."¹⁷¹ Feild and Colquhoun regularly travelled and exhibited together. Their careers became so intertwined as to be almost indistinguishable; a meeting of minds and merging of styles. Harold Herbert claimed their work was "so closely correlated that separate shows might be better." He even suggested one move to Hobart and the other to Darwin, to improve distinctiveness.¹⁷² The Colquhouns were unperturbed. Twelve years later, Arnold Shaw affirmed their individuality "is only expressed indirectly" but confirmed the pair "would not have it otherwise."¹⁷³ Both commanded similar prices for their work; between eight and 45 guineas for Feild, and 10 and 60 guineas for Colquhoun. The Australian national minimum wage at the time was roughly four guineas per week.¹⁷⁴ As one-time pupil and colleague of BTAS principal Herbert Smith, it was fitting Feild produced his retirement portrait in 1940. While Amalie shared life, work and honours with her artist-husband, her career (and biography) has been heavily subsumed by his historical record.¹⁷⁵

Twenty years after Feild, sisters Eleanor Constance (Nornie) Gude (1915-2002) and Gilda Gude (1918-1996) studied commercial art at BTAS. Daughters of Ballarat musical identity, Walter Gude, both received the MacRobertson Scholarship (Nornie in 1934, Gilda in 1937) and each won competitive prizes.¹⁷⁶ Through skill or circumstance, history has remembered Nornie more than Gilda. For a time, Nornie simultaneously studied at BTAS and the NGV Drawing School, winning its prestigious travelling scholarship in 1941. Her husband, fellow NGV graduate, Laurence Scott Pendlebury (1914-1986), furthered his studies at Swinburne's art school, an institute in which he would teach, and ultimately head, for almost thirty years.

archibald-douglas-archie-12339. Archie's sister, Elizabeth Colquhoun, was also a practising artist, Germaine, *A Dictionary of Women Artists of Australia*, 89.

¹⁷⁰ "Courier, 1 February 1936," SMB Cuttings (1936-1948); Joseph A. Alexander, *Who's Who in Australia 1950*, XIV ed. (Melbourne: Colorgravure Publications, 1950).

¹⁷¹ Steve Henty, "Bohemian Shades in Collins Street Melbourne," *The Advertiser*, 6 February 1937.

¹⁷² "Art Exhibition," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 17 November 1942, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12005358>.

¹⁷³ Arnold Shore, "Child portraits are attractive," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 22 June 1954.

¹⁷⁴ Sedon Galleries, *Exhibition of Paintings by A.D. Colquhoun and Amalie Colquhoun* (Melbourne: Sedon Galleries, 17 January 1942. <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/107073>; Diane Hutchinson and Florian Ploeckl, "Weekly Wages, Average Compensation and Minimum Wage for Australia from 1861-Present," *Measuring Worth*, accessed 11 April 2015, <http://www.measuringworth.com/auswages/>

¹⁷⁵ "Let's Talk of Interesting People," *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 13 February 1937; Perry, "Colquhoun, Archibald Douglas (Archie)" *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

¹⁷⁶ "Courier, 3 March 1934," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936); "Courier, 11 September 1936," "Courier, 20 November 1936," "Courier, 4 December 1936," "Courier, 27 February 1937," "Courier, 21 October 1937," "Courier, 18 March 1938," "Courier, 19 December 1938," SMB Cuttings (1936-1948).

For a time, Nornie taught alongside him. Gude worked, travelled and exhibited throughout her life, yet where electoral roles listed her husband's artist status, Gude's official occupation was home duties. Biographies of Nornie list her numerous awards and she is represented in several galleries.¹⁷⁷



Gilda Gude seemed the eternal student, describing herself as such into her 60s. It was not unusual among female Australian modernists to prolong their status as students.¹⁷⁸ While studying, Gilda designed several decorative elements for Ballarat's famous Floral Festival, including a key attraction, the floral carpet.¹⁷⁹ Gilda worked in oil and water colour, studying with George Bell for a time before turning to teaching herself, at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT, formerly WMC and MTC), in 1961.¹⁸⁰

Figure 4.18
Nornie Gude.
Five People in an Art Class / Nornie Gude.
Watercolour on paper; 39.0 x 29.0 cm. 1935.
(Courtesy State Library of Victoria [SLV] Gude & Pendlebury collection. H2013.24/110. ©SLV).

¹⁷⁷ Ancestry.com.au, *Australia, Electoral Roles, 1903-1980*, for example 1949, 1954, 1963, 1977; Germaine, *Artists and Galleries of Australia and New Zealand*, 235; Max Germaine, *A Dictionary of Women Artists of Australia* (Roseville East, NSW, Australia; New York, NY: Craftsman House; STBS Ltd. [distributor], 1991), 184; Clare Gervasoni, "Eleanor Gude," *Design and Art Australia Online*, last modified 2008, accessed 31 July 2014, <http://www.daa.org.au/bio/eleanor-gude/biography/>; Robb, Smith and Smith, *Concise Dictionary of Australian Artists*, 109; Allan Jordan, *The Swinburne Technical College Staff Newsletter* (Swinburne Technical College, 1959), online.

¹⁷⁸ Ancestry.com.au, *Australia, Electoral Roles, 1903-1980*, 1977; Duggan, *Ghost Nation*, 193; Burke, *Australian Women Artists*, 56.

¹⁷⁹ "Courier, 30 June 1938," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁸⁰ Germaine, *Artists and Galleries of Australia and New Zealand*, 235; Germaine, *A Dictionary of Women Artists of Australia*, 184; Clare Gervasoni, "Gilda Gude," *Design and Art Australia Online*, last modified 2011, accessed 31 July 2014. <http://www.daa.org.au/bio/gilda-gude/biography/>

CHAPTER FOUR CONCLUSION

Drawing was core to two-dimensional art training at Victorian technical art schools. Technical (instrumental) drawing enabled accurate communication between designers, engineers and manufacturers; but was an unloved subject among most Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) students. Instead, artists and designers preferred freehand drawing which, given its prescriptive and often mimetic nature, also tended toward a common visual language.

The discipline of staged, South Kensington-style copying ‘from the antique’ was intended to develop technical skill without pressure of invention, and to train ‘correct taste’. However, its reliance on a Western classical and Renaissance canon facilitated the indoctrination of a restricted British palate, while disadvantaging Victorian technical art schools with limited collections of reproductions. BTAS, however, was advantaged by the quality and range of its casts and books.

Drawing or modelling from the antique was supplementary to the representation of plant forms and human and still life, both via observation and memory, in similarly staged practises. Some examinations required candidates to memorise lots of information, including diverse plant forms, human anatomy, and antique statuary. At examination, painting described drawing with wet media as distinct from expressive pictorial art, which was perhaps better studied through *Composition of Form and Colour*. Yet, several well-known painters taught and were trained at BTAS, often recognised for their observational skill and draughtsmanship.

As pedagogical approaches shifted, and photographic technology fast-tracked replication, the value of teaching by copy was challenged in favour of originality, authenticity and expression. This shift led some private art school painters to disavow drawing practice during the 1930s, which resulted in a loss of technical skill according to some traditionalists.

Diverse drawing skills and experience, both technical and freehand, enabled planning and problem solving that articulated into design practice. It was in design subjects that imaginative drawing could be practised, thus, technical art school drawing was primarily a tool of communication and design.

Chapter 5

Design and allied subjects

“Design is the end to which the whole of the study in Technical Art Schools should be directed—consequently it should command the undeviating attention of instructors.”¹

Historical and contemporary definitions of design vary. Richard Buchanan broadly divides design into four areas: symbolic and visual communications; material objects; activities and organised services; and “complex systems or environments for living, working, playing, and learning.”² Overlooking their interconnectedness, Victorian technical art schools favoured the first two categories: visual communications and material objects. Most technical art subjects aimed to inform and develop design thinking, even if that was not a term expressed at the time, and all required the acquisition and demonstration of knowledge and skill.

The design process stems from designers’ ability to foresee multiple outcomes which allow them, via a series of conscious decisions and intuitive leaps, to disregard inappropriate solutions and arrive at one that is fit for purpose. Intuition itself might be described as an incredibly rapid thought process informed by the designer’s habitus, accumulated knowledge and previous experience. Creative designers pull together seemingly isolated threads of thought, making unusual connections in order to innovate. Thus, the most active part of the design process is a ‘black box’ of unobservable logic, creating the impression of an arcane process.

Design is invariably experienced in a final, resolved form. Select examples are removed from their context and curated within books and galleries for their visual impact, often without insight into designers’ developmental process, disguising creativity as a genetic gift. However, as with most natural predispositions, creative design thinking can be honed through instruction and practise, both of which require cognitive effort and flexibility.

¹ VED, “Report ... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 39 (1901), 93.

² Richard Buchanan, “Wicked Problems in Design Thinking,” *Design Issues* 8, no. 2 (1992): 9–10.

THE DESIGN TRILOGY

Definitions and demarcation of design practice varied during the early twentieth century. Via Victorian technical art examination however, design was loosely streamed into three areas: general, modelled and applied. General Design exams required two-dimensional conceptualisation while Modelled Design concepts were expressed in three dimensions. Subjects where design was applied to a requisite material (such as leather, metal, wood or textile) involved both conception and execution. Where these artefacts survive, they embody not just evidence of their material and manufacture, but the intuitive and conscious decisions of their designer/s, situated within a complex milieu of cognitive, cultural and physical systems. They offer evidence of human knowledge, creativity and making practices. Student examinations also provide insight into the evolution of design teaching. Variation in methods, materials and subject matter reflect changing social concerns, new technologies and the developing role of designers.

Consecutive Art Inspectors Carew-Smyth and Dean sought to keep Victorian Education Department examinations relevant. While most questions pursued decorative or commercial responses, some indicate pertinent socio-political issues. In 1915, students created a poster in aid of the Purple Cross, a recently established charity aimed at alleviating the suffering of war horses. During the next few years, war-related briefs peppered exams, requesting designs for printed materials, fundraisers, memorial objects, and even a stencilled cushion for a Soldiers' Convalescent Home. The value of post-war diplomacy is expressed through conceptualised gifts for "General Pau" (presumably the French officer) and the Japanese Consul. The Women's Christian Temperance Union, Trades' Halls and a Children's Hospital were other imagined clients. Ecclesiastical and memorial items were described for varying churches.³

As the war receded, social-welfare briefs yielded to business enterprises, fictitious and real. Shipping office 'clients' required friezes, painted walls, murals and signs, and a fire insurer sought stained glass panels and the occasional pin tray. Typographic briefs for retail and industry ranged from Paris milliners to the Castlemaine Dredging Company, while lithographic printed packaging and posters were imagined for the Harcourt Fruit Preserving Co. and other fruit growers. The pursuit of leisure and entertainment is reflected in 1920s design questions for cinemas, cafés, sporting clubs and tourist bureaus. Associations such as

³ VED, Exams, "General Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, and "General Design. Honours," 1918, 1920, 1922; "Modelled Design, Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1915.

the ANA, Scottish Club, Savage Club, and the Society of St George also served as example clients.⁴

Exam candidates could demonstrate skills acquired in other subjects, allowing cross-pollination of ideas; for example student knowledge of indigenous plant forms might be employed to illustrate an anthology of Australian verse or the journey of explorers ‘Hume and Hovell.’⁵ Knowledge of Historic Ornament and Human Anatomy would be useful to designing theatre posters for *Andromeda* or *Dido and Aeneas*, an illustration for John Milton’s morality tale, *Comus*, or a page of verse from the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Some exams allowed imaginative allegory, usually for children’s tales or, more sadly, a headstone for a ‘Child’s Grave’.⁶

Design exams demonstrate progression of subject and substance. In 1915, stained glass candidates were expressly told *not* to be ‘modern’.⁷ Later exams instructed students to demonstrate originality, simplicity and “modern character” in their work.⁸ This is particularly evident toward the end of Carew-Smyth’s tenure as Art Inspector and the installation of Dean. Dean’s exams regularly reference ‘modern’: a modern novel, a modern theatre, a modern-style bookcase. He required “abstract” renderings of floral, animal and bird forms. He sought discussion of “modern industrial design” developments.⁹ However, Dean maintained some of Carew-Smyth’s example clients including churches, clubs, and the ubiquitous shipping companies. Fountains, fireplaces and fruit dishes continued, as did frontispieces, furniture and friezes. These were interspersed with contemporary briefs, for example the Northern Polar Aerial Survey Expedition or a cabinet for a wireless radio.¹⁰

The 1930s subject of Commercial Art, to be discussed later, perhaps offered the most scope for demonstrating ‘modern’ design.

⁴ VED, Exams, “General Design,” Advanced and Honours Stages, 1918-1940.

⁵ VED, Exams, “General Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1920; 1927; and “General Design. Honours,” 1924.

⁶ VED, Exams, “General Design. Honours Stage,” 1918; 1924; 1925; “General Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1923; and “Modelled Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1924.

⁷ VED, Exams, “Modelled Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1916; and “Stained Glass,” 1915.

⁸ For example, VED, Exams, 1923, “Stained Glass”; 1925, “Modelled Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade I; 1930, “General Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade II; 1934, “General Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade II.

⁹ VED, Exams, “Principles of Decorative Design,” 1934 and 1939.

¹⁰ VED, Exams, “General Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1934; “Modelled Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1939.

GENERAL DESIGN

In the early twentieth-century, design was a generalist skill that could be applied to numerous methods, materials and manufactures.¹¹ Students were expected to be equally capable of designing an Australian blackwood sideboard as a silk fan; of conceptualising a concert program as proficiently as a stencilled frieze, stained glass panel, or belt buckle.¹²

In his 1908 report, Carew-Smyth found Decorative Design was not being systematically taught at most technical art schools, leading some to stand out as “schools of design.” Where students were partially to blame, he felt the subject was often too abstract, little connected to specific material and industrial processes.¹³ By 1915, Carew-Smyth’s design exams had been fleshed out. Artists, designers and trade apprentices undertook General Design exams which were offered at Elementary, Advanced Grades I and II, and Honours stages, assessed as illustrative, two-dimensional concepts only (separate exams were held for applied design disciplines).

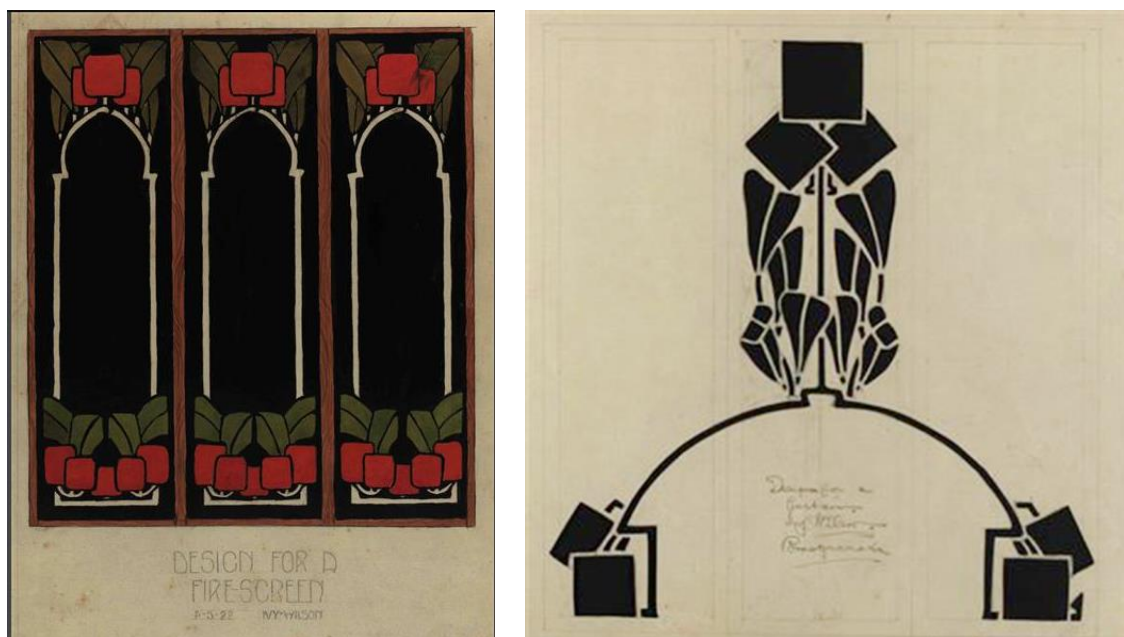


Figure 5.1 **Working to a grid of three.**
Ivy Wilson. Examples from *Ballarat Technical Art School Folio*. Gouache, 1922.
(Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 13241. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

¹¹ “The Proposed School of Art in Prahran,” *Prahran Chronicle* (Vic.), 3 November 1894, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165213905>.

¹² VED, Exams, “General Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1915.

¹³ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 2 (1908), 65.

General Design examinations embedded compositional design principles, particularly arrangement, balance, mass/weight and proportion, and employed both instrumental and freehand drawing skills. Contrast and colour were of greater consideration in advanced stages. Each exam, regardless of difficulty, was four hours long, suggesting advanced students were expected to improve their speed as well as content.



Figure 5.2 Alice Watson. Examples from *Folio of artwork undertaken at the Ballarat School of Mines Technical Art School*. c1932.

(Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 12051. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Elementary briefs were surface-based and mostly ornamental. Students utilised plant forms, historic ornament, geometric and organic shapes to fill a closed space (such as a triangle, rectangle, lunette, lozenge, hexagon or octagon) or to generate horizontal, vertical and circular borders, diaper, ‘sprig’ and radial patterns.

General Design Advanced Grade I, or its equivalent in Modelled Design, was compulsory for the Drawing Teacher’s Secondary Certificate. Candidates answered one of several design-only exam questions; usually intended for needlework, leatherwork, wood, leather, stained glass, a stencil, or printed matter. Grade II questions more closely represent commercial briefs and demonstrate the breadth of manufacturing catered for, requiring greater consideration of the intended material, while allowing greater freedom of expression. Designs were to be tinted or colourised. Any plant or historical inspiration utilised was to be cited, and some questions offered extra credit for additional detailed sketches. Briefs were for two- or

three-dimensional bespoke or small-run items, catering for jewellery, ceramics, needlework, furniture, stone, wrought iron, light metal work, murals, friezes, and stained glass. Press-ready, commercial art was included at this level, such as programs, menu cards, playing cards and illustrations designed for a specified reproduction type, be it block print, lithographic or photographic. In 1925 a ‘Drawing for Reproduction’ category was added.¹⁴

Honours level exams elevated the role of symbolic ornament and enabled the introduction of narrative, symbol and even whimsy. Reproduction type and colour use were specified, and initially only a single question was offered. The 1915 exam required a mural representing ‘speed’ or ‘commerce’ for a shipping office, the next year it was ‘comedy’ or ‘tragedy’ for a cinema, and in 1917 a three by six-foot, two colour lithographic poster was set.¹⁵

From 1918, candidates chose from one of four options, usually a poster with type, an illustrated book page, a mural or panel, and a three-dimensional object. By 1922, questions were categorised into stamped and embossed leather; book decoration; book illustration; and interior decoration (primarily murals). Two years later, lithography, jewellery, ceramics, and stained glass were added. Specialisations came and went over the next 16 years.

Analysis of Education Department examinations suggests General Design was popular at BTAS, particularly among women.¹⁶

Further specialisation

After the Apprenticeship Commission was established in 1928, General Design exams were split, and apprentices in painting, decorating and signwriting trades undertook more restricted versions. A shortened Elementary exam tested second-year apprentices much as previously. Third- and fourth-year apprentices were offered a single question at Grades I and II, usually a wall feature. By comparison, general art students continued to be given diverse options to design for wood, metal, needlework, stencilling, leather, glass, or ceramics, with the exclusion of the mural.¹⁷

¹⁴ For example, VED, Exams, “General Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade I & II, 1921-1925.

¹⁵ VED, Exams, “General Design,” 1915, 1916, 1917.

¹⁶ Refer to Appendix, Table A-3, VED Art Examination results, DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee

¹⁷ VED, Exams, “Examination for Apprentices in the Painting and Decorating and Signwriting Trades. General Design. Second Year. Elementary Stage,” 1930-1933; “Third Year. Advanced Stage. Grade I,” 1931, 1934; and “Fourth Year. Advanced Stage. Grade II,” 1934; compared to “General Design. Advanced Stage,” Grades I & II, 1930-1934.

MODELLED DESIGN

Similarly structured to General Design exams, Modelled Design required conceptualisation in clay, which served as a proxy for silver, brass, bronze, repoussé, wood, stone and plaster. Ceramic outcomes were also represented, *sans* glazing or firing. The subject prioritised decorative interior and architectural features, and most work was cast in plaster for assessment.

At examination, students were positioned ‘six feet’ apart and all levels given eight hours across two days for completion.¹⁸ Elementary candidates usually selected one question from three that required a pattern or fill of plant forms, historic style, or geometric pattern from memory. These were single-sided friezes and full completion was not always necessary. Advanced Stage Grade I provided more options, each demonstrating commercial value. In 1915, students could model and decorate prototypes for a stoneware inkpot, a metal alms dish or door knocker, a wooden Elizabethan chimney piece, or a low relief plaster decoration for a fishmonger’s shop. The scale of some Grade II items, such as a mural or ceiling, required the student to sketch the overall concept at a given scale, and model only part at full size. Other items, such as a fountain, could be built at scale. Some questions incorporated typographic elements, such as a freestone for ‘Harvey House’ or outdoor tablet for ‘Melbourne High School’.¹⁹

Opportunity to utilise contemporary styling varied according to object function and examination grade. For example, the 1925 Grade I exam requested a circular metal panel for a hall stand of “modern character”, while three Grade II questions required Renaissance or late Gothic style.²⁰

Grade I prioritised interior and domestic items, often without defining an art period, which allowed broader stylistic interpretation. Briefs include clay mock-ups for an electric bell or radiator decoration; pewter and ceramic inkpots, brass plates or trays, silver hand mirrors, ceramic book ends, and a request for geometric-styled, pierced plaster ventilator grills.²¹

Grade II exams featured architectural elements, with a bias toward Renaissance and Gothic styles. Questions intended for stone, cast metal and wood often designated architectural

¹⁸ VED, Exams, “General Design and Modelled Design. All Stages.,” “Modelled Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade I, 1915.

¹⁹ VED, Exams, “Modelled Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade I, 1915.

²⁰ VED, Exams, “Modelled Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade I and Grade II, 1925.

²¹ VED, Exams, “Modelled Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade I, 1916, 1917, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924.

periods. Renaissance styling was specified for a bronze, church memorial tablet; a railway station's keystone; a cast metal fireplace hood; and stone pilasters.²² Grade II domestic metal objects perhaps offered broader scope, including lamps, candlesticks, and dishes, as did some commercial briefs including a regatta trophy for the St Kilda Yacht Club; the door knocker for an Angler's club; and a door scraper for a native fauna sanctuary.²³

Clay surrogates for carved wood fluctuated between ecclesiastical and commercial subjects; a carved pew-end in "a modern adaptation of Gothic architecture" was sought in 1916 and again in 1921, this time featuring Australian flora. A 1923 pulpit panel of no "particular period" still required a design harmonious with its Gothic church surroundings. On at least two occasions, a symbol of 'commerce' was requested for a bank.²⁴

Plaster offered relatively open briefs stylistically. Following the Apprenticeship Commission, a tangential Modelled Design exam was offered to apprentices in the Plastering Trade, yet questions for the medium continued in general Advanced Grade II exams which, in 1934, requested 'modern' style for decorative theatre panels.²⁵ Ceramic questions also tended to eschew specifying periods. Examples include a postal telegraph office panel; a garden vase and pedestal in "any style"; a glazed earthenware wall fountain; a Holy water stoop; or Field Naturalists Club memorial tablet. In 1939, students could design the "ornament for a wireless cabinet in a modern home", which by this time was more likely intended for a plastic material such as Bakelite rather than clay.²⁶

By 1934, an Honours Stage was added to Modelled Design, featuring a single question. A savvy Education Department sought a vertical copper door panel including the words 'Applied Art Centre', for their own building. In 1939, the shape, size and style of a plaque for a moving picture theatrette were at the discretion of the candidate, who was still limited to just eight hours.²⁷

Modelled Design examination among BTAS students waxed and waned, peaking with ten Elementary and four Grade I students in 1912, after which few undertook it. Arthur M.

²² VED, Exams, "Modelled Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1916, 1922, 1930, 1934.

²³ VED, Exams, "Modelled Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1917, 1924, 1933, and 1921, 1934, 1939.

²⁴ VED, Exams, "Modelled Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1916, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924.

²⁵ VED, Exams, "Examination of Apprentices in the Plastering Trade. Second year," And "Modelled Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1930.

²⁶ VED, Exams, "Modelled Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1916, 1917, 1922, 1923, 1934, 1939.

²⁷ VED, Exams, "Modelled Design. Honours Stage," 1934, 1939.

Lilburne is the only published pass at Honours level. Some years no passes were published at any level.²⁸

Modelling practice and other examination is further discussed in Chapter Six.

APPLIED DESIGN

The BTAS Industrial Design Course catered for the application of design to several trades, crafts and industries. The school encouraged women to enrol, with many streams providing avenues for employment “either by taking a position or working for firms in their own time and place.”²⁹ Specialisations in 1915, later expanded, included the graphic-based Printing and Lithographic Course and the Illuminating and Window Ticket Writing Course. Alternatively, designers could specialise in House Furnishing and Decoration; Art Metal Work and Repoussé; Decorative Needlework; Leatherwork and Stencilling; or the Modelling, Woodcarving and Marquetry Course.³⁰ Regardless of stream, participants applied their efforts to executable outcomes, be it drawn, built, modelled, stitched or carved. Subjects could also be undertaken individually.

Applied design subjects are individually discussed in this and the following chapter.

ALLIED DESIGN SUBJECTS

Several subjects informed General, Modelled and Applied Design, including the study of historic ornament, lettering, illustration and commercial art. Some drawing subjects explicitly required identification and conventionalisation of suitable design elements, particularly of plant forms.

NATURAL FORMS

Conventionalisation: Adopting and adapting forms for design purposes

Under Carew-Smyth, most Victorian children regularly drew plants in primary school. At technical art schools however, a key goal of drawing subjects was the stylization of objects into new and unique forms to be utilised in decorative design work. Drawing Plant Forms examination required both a naturalistic representation, and the generation of

²⁸ For example, 1916, 1917, 1921, 1922, 1932, 1935. However, some passes may not have been published. Refer to Appendix, Table A-3, VED Art Examination results, DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee.

²⁹ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

³⁰ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

conventionalised representations to suit various design briefs. Elements were considered in relation to their intended use and space, a process that involved creative modification or invention.

Conventionalised plant elements were employed to fill specified shapes and create pattern. Plants featured heavily in European Art Nouveau works and some Australian designers similarly utilised local flora. Mimetic Drawing from the Flat Example exams often featured such styling, sub-consciously reinforcing its acceptability to students. This perhaps helps explain the extended life of Art Nouveau forms in Victorian student art and, as others explain, its lingering presence in graphic design and some architectural hardware.³¹

As early as 1909 it was observed that British students tended to “err on the side of naturalness” and therefore struggled with the required level of abstraction.³² Carew-Smyth similarly assessed some Geelong Arts and Crafts exhibits as lacking a “feeling for design.”³³ For him, naturalistic copy was not appropriate for design applications, and best left for pictorial works on paper or canvas. The move away from naturalism is a modern approach for which Carew-Smyth is rarely credited. Art Inspector Dean also recognised the value of plant form to decorative design and incorporated it into his lesser-used secondary Syllabus B. The subject was practised at junior technical schools where it superseded “the hard and mechanical ornamental design” previously drawn by these students.³⁴

The standard of plant drawing and its application to design remained high in Victoria. Work displayed at the 1932 Exhibition of Technical Art Schools was praised for its originality and ingenuity, some deemed equal gold medal standard of the National Competition in London.³⁵ South Kensington was still the measure by which others were judged.

The nationalist rhetoric of Australian flora

The early twentieth century saw a rise in nationalist movements in many locations, embodied in identifiable art styles often borne of cultural upheaval. While some locals rejected indigenous flora and fauna as cringingly parochial, the country’s émigrés recognised the

³¹ Refer to figure 4.7 for examination examples. See figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 for BTAS student examples. Bogle, *Design in Australia, 1880-1970*, 56; Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 11; Williams, *In Our Own Image*, 65.

³² Clark, *A Handbook of Plant-Form*, 1909, xiv.

³³ “Arts and Crafts. Second Annual Exhibition,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.) 27 March 1912, 3.

³⁴ VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 1 (1936), 21.

³⁵ Harold Herbert, “Art,” *The Australasian*, 17 September 1932, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article141364346>

chance to differentiate applied art from that of England and Europe. When the National Parks Association of Victoria was established to preserve Australian landscapes, plants and animals in 1908, it highlighted the importance of local environments and legitimised their value. Economic motivations to design with native flora and fauna were amplified, and museums and galleries sought identifiably Australian work.

The Australian Natives' Association (ANA) did much to encourage the use of Australian forms, materials and motifs, promoting its philosophy to the public, industry, educators and school children. Regional branches hosted lectures, demonstrations and exhibited examples of applied art and design.³⁶ Their competitive exhibitions served as capability statements for Australia, attracting 400,000 people to the Melbourne event in 1906. The ANA helped establish the Wattle as Australia's national flower, designating 1 September as Wattle Day. Extensive plantings of the black wattle were made, including 1,000 acres at Lal Lal and Moreep near Ballarat.³⁷ Familiarity may have bred contempt as *Acacia* are absent from drawing exams. Victoria's Arts and Crafts Society similarly championed Australian materials and motifs. Their use was requisite in BTAS submissions sent to the 1923 Empire Exhibition.³⁸

Not all commentators believed Australian motifs were the answer to a national style. Robin Dods, a New Zealand-born architect and promoter of arts and crafts believed that the artist "should make his work Australian in spirit if not in detail, and realise the waratah and the boomerang are not necessary to give local colour to a pattern."³⁹

A native speciality?

BTAS students were acknowledged for the original ways in which they utilised Australian motifs. In connection with a Melbourne exhibition, the *Argus* reported striking originality, remarking "bush flora is reproduced on totally new lines." Harold Herbert was the exhibition's most successful competitor, working eucalypts, pittosporum, native fuchsia, and orchids "into graceful patterns for pendants, bracelets, and hair combs."⁴⁰ Elsewhere, BTAS student work was noted for its originality and the special attention "given to the use of

³⁶ For example, Blamire Young and Carew-Smyth gave a lecture on graphic art to a crowd at the Horsham Fire Brigade Hall, hosted by the ANA. "Lecture on Graphic Art," *Horsham Times* (Vic.), 21 August 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article72841310>.

³⁷ Menadue, *A Centenary History of the Australian Natives' Association*, 309, 401.

³⁸ ANA Metropolitan Committee, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, Promoted by the Metropolitan Committee of the Australian Natives' Association, Exhibition Building, Melbourne, February 14th to March 7th, 1914*, (Melbourne: Paragon Printers, 1914), 82; "Courier, 7 September 1923", SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³⁹ Dods, "Industrial Art in Australia," (1917), 54.

⁴⁰ "Argus, 2 August 1910" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

Australian flora and fauna as motives for designs.”⁴¹ *The Herald* highlighted the pottery produced at Ballarat, Geelong and Swinburne where students were “aiming at more distinctive designs in native flowers, plants, animals and birds.”⁴²

If BTAS students demonstrated creative interpretations of Australian plant life, they perhaps had some advantages. As a regional school they had ready access to local bushland, and their campus featured its own botanic gardens, terraced from the heights of Lydiard Street down to the less salubrious Albert Street. In 1915 the Ballarat Science Club utilised the newly opened art building to display (for a single day) a collection of wildflowers that were then classified and labelled. Large bunches of blooms were gathered from across Victoria and New South Wales, including bush orchids, heaths, acacias, flannel flowers and examples of waratah, “each providing their special beauties.”⁴³ The SMB museum housed many botanic samples, including a range of dried and mounted West Australian wild flowers.⁴⁴

Having shown early signs of drawing talent at the Murtoa Show (in addition to ‘Best darned old socks or stockings’), sixteen-year-old Edith (Alice) Watson (1914-2010) studied at BTAS from 1930. Her folio applies many Australian native floral elements to design. Alice sat several departmental exams, including drawing and painting plant forms from nature, lettering, Composition of Form and Colour and advanced General Design, as well as dressmaking and embossed leatherwork.⁴⁵ Watson was warmly regarded in her home town, easily winning local fundraiser, ‘Most Popular Girl’ in 1936.⁴⁶ She reportedly taught at the Murtoa High School.⁴⁷ In 1940 Watson attended Herbert Smith’s retirement celebrations, yet apart from her brief independence as a BTAS student, Watson lived with her parents in Murtoa until their deaths in 1972 and 1988 respectively, all the while conserving her beautiful student folio.⁴⁸ Alice Watson died in Ballarat, aged 95.

⁴¹ “Courier, 18 August 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁴² “The Potter’s Art,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 9 October 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243782884>.

⁴³ “Star, 16 October 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

⁴⁴ “Courier, 15 May 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁴⁵ “Murtoa Show,” *Horsham Times* (Vic.), 30 October 1928, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article72679781>; “Courier, 30 January 1931,” “Courier, 26 January 1932,” “Courier, 17 December 1932,” “Courier, 1 February 1933,” “Courier, 2 February 1934,” “Courier, 9 February 1934” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁴⁶ “Riverina News,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 21 November 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205951615>.

⁴⁷ Clare Gervasoni, “Alice Watson,” *Federation University Australia*, last modified 5 February 2019, 2015, accessed 27 November 2019. https://bih.federation.edu.au/index.php/Alice_Watson.

⁴⁸ “Courier, 13 April 1940,” SMB Cuttings (1936–48).



Figure 5.3 **'Development' using the Correa, or Native Fuchsia.** Alice Watson. Folio of artwork undertaken at the Ballarat School of Mines Technical Art School. c1932. (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 12051. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)



Figure 5.4 Ivy Wilson. Examples from *Ballarat Technical Art School Folio*, c1920-1922. (Courtesy Federation Historical Collection, 13241. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

HISTORIC ORNAMENT

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, ornament was defined as “the proper enrichment of an object or surface [...to...] give the thing decorated a new beauty, while strictly preserving its shape and character.”⁴⁹ Ornamentation necessitated some form of design, conventionalisation or abstraction. At the time, ornamental designers were architects, carvers, masons and carpenters. Indoors, ornament was the realm of painters and decorators, plasterers, and weavers. Furniture, fittings, windows, walls, ceilings, textiles, mosaics,

⁴⁹ James Ward, *The Principles of Ornament*, ed. George Aitchison, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896), 19.

ceramics and other objects were subject to ornamentation. These designers thought in terms of surface and contrast, the effects of light and shadow, colour and texture.

The historical study of ornamental design was embedded into South Kensington-style curricula from the late 1800s, a common term for these subjects is Historic Ornament. It was an anthropological subject, spanning time and space, contrived not just for appreciation, but to inform and inspire designers. Victorian students were expected to recognise historic styles, reproduce them from memory and cite their sources. They needed to be versed in the influences of history, geography, culture and climate on diverse aesthetics, as well as requisite tools, materials and methods, demonstrated through explanatory sketches. Quizzes on familiar names such as Thomas Chippendale, sat alongside curly questions like “Who was Grinling Gibbons?” (He was a seventeenth century Dutch-British wood carver and sculptor.)⁵⁰

Historic Ornament formed part of the curricula of several BTAS disciplines, including trade-based programs like lithographic draughting, signwriting, and house painting and decorating. The 1923 examination included advanced questions on historical costume, jewellery, and stained glass.⁵¹ During the 1930s, the subject incorporated manuscripts, book decoration, lithography and engraving. Examination was split into two sections. Satisfactorily answering six of ten questions from Part I achieved a pass. A credit required two responses from Part I and four from Part II.

A parallel subject, Principles of Decorative Design, explored the grammar of ornament without reference to specific time periods or geographic locations. Instead, students were questioned about conventionalization, design construction and materials. During the mid-1930s, some interesting shifts were noticeable. Developments in the field of modern industrial design are queried, and students were required to design both conventionalised (stylised) and abstracted floral, bird and animal forms. Few BTAS students sat examination throughout the years, yet there is a sudden interest in 1925 and 1926.⁵²

A knowledge of ornamentation was the locus of the Historic Ornament course but, as we shall see, it was also important in other subjects.

⁵⁰ VED, *General Syllabus of Examinations, Art Subjects, Technical Schools* (Melbourne: Robt S Brain, Government Printer, 1905), 27; VED, Exams, “Historic Ornament. Part I,” 1915.

⁵¹ VED, Exams, “Historic Ornament,” 1923.

⁵² VED, Exams, “Principles of Decorative Design,” 1922; 1925; 1934. Refer to Appendix, Table A-3, VED Art Examination results, DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee.

Reference material

The historic world catalogue of design was considered “of no small value to the historian” as it demonstrated human commonalities, differences and possible migratory trajectories.⁵³ For designers, it allowed exploration of geographically and temporally wide-ranging material culture, as well as reference and inspiration for their own work.

Early compendiums housed a body of motifs from which artisans could copy directly. In Britain, Owen Jones and James Ward sought to replace the practise of imitation with a grammar to guide new creations.⁵⁴ Ward’s editor, George Aitchison, recognised taste was subject to generational change, and thus urged that historical work should inspire evolution rather than merely paraphrasing “deceased art.”⁵⁵ Of course, such books reflect the selections of their authors and editors.

While Londoners could attend galleries and museums and observe looted historic materials first-hand, most Australian students accessed cast or printed replicas. In 1905, only six Victorian technical art schools had a standard reference book of historic ornamental styles. Limited reference material partly explains Carew-Smyth’s view that the study of historic ornament was lacking overall, and that students often produced sketches in which the reference was unrecognisable.⁵⁶ It may partly explain his enthusiasm for the drawing of plant forms.

The Fink Commission recommended a specialised industrial art museum that could curate and chronologically arrange examples of historic ornament and design in wood, iron, pottery and the like, for the benefit of artisans and tradespeople, but it did not eventuate.⁵⁷ However, for some years the State Library, National Museum, National Gallery of Victoria and the Industrial and Technological Museum shared the same accommodation in Swanston Street, Melbourne, making it an excellent attraction for visiting art students. In 1925, Historic Ornament instructor, Harold Brown, accompanied eight senior students on a four-day

⁵³ Christie, *Traditional Methods of Pattern Designing*, 81.

⁵⁴ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1868); and Ward, *The Principles of Ornament* (1896). Ward’s book was edited by the Science and Art Department’s examiner for the subject ‘Principles of Ornament’, George Aitchison, who referenced the French publications of Henri Mayeux (1845–1929) and César Daly (1811–1894). Other examples include Franz Sales Meyer, *Handbook of Ornament: A Grammar of Art Industrial and Architectural Designing*. Fifth ed. (New York: Bruno Hessling, 1900); and *Historic Ornament, Elements of Ornament, Practical Design, Applied Design* (London: Scranton International Textbook Company, 1901).

⁵⁵ George Aitchison, “Introductory Chapter” in Ward, *The Principles of Ornament* (1896), 3.

⁵⁶ VED, “General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth,” PP no. 1 (1905). 67.

⁵⁷ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 206.

excursion to the site, and to study the ornamentation of city buildings.⁵⁸ Gallery director, Bernard Hall, collegially arranged for them to observe gallery classes in action, and to study and sketch at various sites during their visit. The following year, twelve students undertook the field trip. BTAS continued to collect books for the study of Historic Ornament.⁵⁹



Figure 5.5 **Timber Displays on Balcony over Queen’s Hall, Industrial & Technological Museum** (Science Museum), Swanson Street, Melbourne. Negative (copy). 1925.
(Courtesy Museums Victoria Collections, The Biggest Family Album in Australia, 729552. Item MM63060. CC BY 4.0.)

Historic Ornament offered “experiences denied to the naturalist” and provided global references to design invention.⁶⁰ However, some commentators felt too much emphasis was placed on the subject. As early as 1897, Britain’s Walter Crane felt he could bear the catastrophic loss of all pre-existing art “since no aspiring designer could then crib Persian or Chinese, mediaeval or Greek patterns, spoil them in translation, and serve them up as original designs.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ “*Courier*, 22 August 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936), no folio.

⁵⁹ Smith, “26 June 1929,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 5.

⁶⁰ Christie, *Traditional Methods of Pattern Designing*, 85.

⁶¹ *Report of H.M. Inspector on Manchester Municipal School of Art*. Department of Science and Art, 18 November, 1896, quoted in the Report of the Technical Instruction Committee of Manchester City Council for 1896–7 (p.17), quoted in Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 79.

A cultural transaction

Ward's *Principles of Ornament* privileged Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Renaissance work, but referenced (in the terms of its time) Assyrian, Saracenic, Moresque, Persian, Egyptian and Celtic ornamentation as well as the 'Oriental' work of Chinese, Japanese, Siamese, and Indian artists. Ward categorises the work of non-specified nations as 'savage' art.⁶²

Departmental examinations bare out similar listings and demonstrate the breadth of knowledge the subject required. In 1915, Historic Ornament questions featured Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, Renaissance and Gothic ornament, as well as eighteenth and nineteenth century English designers.⁶³ No reference was made to Asia, Oceania, the bulk of Africa or the Americas.

Despite claiming to reject the past, modern artists also harvested anthropological sources. Richly furnished Art Deco constructions featured Renaissance and Egyptian revivalist imagery carved in wood, formed in metal and applied to frieze and mural work to imbue a sense of luxury. Geometric patterns incorporating zigzags, chevrons and sunbursts were regularly employed.⁶⁴ In addition, nationalist movements of the modern period exhumed the historical, ethnological and mythological motifs of their perceived ancestry for inspiration.

As modernist ideas gained traction in Australia, Historic Ornament exams broadened their scope. New Guinean pattern was discussed in 1920. Later exams covered Byzantine, Celtic and Scandinavian ornament, Pompeian and Moorish styles, and Japanese decoration. By 1930, examples of "aboriginal ornament" from Australia and New Zealand were requested amid others.⁶⁵ Not necessarily considered 'ornamental' by their cultural originators, their inclusion demonstrates an awakening of educationalists to design elements created among Indigenous cultures. Designers began to mine styles outside Western historical tradition, from the prehistoric to the contemporary. Art Inspectors Dean and Jolly promoted the value of previously hidden sources for their "adaptation of natural, abstract and symbolical forms to [...] all forms of applied design."⁶⁶

In 1928, a BTAS correspondent reported on a visit to Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, that local designs featured "unusual and quite delightful color schemes and shapes" utilising a range of

⁶² Ward, *The Principles of Ornament* (1896), 74.

⁶³ VED, Exams, "Historic Ornament," 1915.

⁶⁴ Margolin, *World History of Design*, 511; Grant, "Deco Down Under", 242.

⁶⁵ VED, Exams, "Historic Ornament," 1920; 1922; 1925; 1930.

⁶⁶ Dean and Jolly, *Drawing with Pastels* (1933), 39.

motifs (including plants, animals, birds, insects, shells and fish) and “a variety of geometric forms [...] suggesting shell forms, and the human figure.”⁶⁷ The visual elements are discussed without mention of cultural context.

From a Western perspective accustomed to narrative and naturalistic pictorial works, Indigenous, exotic and ‘primitive’ representations appeared unencumbered by meaning. Stripped of their code, they were abstracted.⁶⁸ Counter-intuitively, it was perhaps this loss of meaning that made such forms accessible, and palatable, to modern Western tastes. They seemed enigmatic, “springing straight from and expressing the soul,” and demonstrated an underlying “vital force” presumed lost to stale, Western art.⁶⁹ As such, they were sampled and emulated by artists barely cognisant of ethics, appropriation and copyright, let alone ancient symbology.⁷⁰ In fact, Margaret Preston urged designers to ignore what Aboriginal artists “meant in the way of myths, rites etc.; that is not the decorator’s affair.”⁷¹ In the work of BTAS students between 1907 and 1939, available at time of writing, there seems little appropriation of Indigenous cultural forms, although some illustrations of First Peoples appear evident.⁷²

The work of isolated cultures (unhampered by Western traditions) was considered by some modernists to be more authentic and truthful; a view which suggests that value is diluted through cultural interaction. Yet for Australia, with waves of global immigration on the horizon, a unilateral, ‘pure’ art would be less desirable than a culturally rich conglomerate of shared experiences and divergent histories.

Throughout the world, there are numerous examples of Western colonisers incorporating external styles. Some Non-European cultures also de-contextualised ornament to support their own creations, utilising frameworks and styles originating in Europe and elsewhere to showcase local motifs. For example, Hong Kong had been an interchange for objects and ideas for centuries prior to colonisation, exporting ceramics that adapted decorations “from

⁶⁷ “Colorful Territory (By C.S.H.),” in *SMB Magazine* (1928), 15.

⁶⁸ Bourdieu, “The Market of Symbolic Goods,” 23, 32.

⁶⁹ Duncan, “Technical Art,” (1900), 261; and Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., “George Bell (1878–1966), Untitled, *Manuscripts: The Book Nook Miscellany*, 1932,” in *Modernism & Australia*, 104.

⁷⁰ Bogle, *Design in Australia*, 82.

⁷¹ Margaret Preston, “The Application of Aboriginal Designs,” *Art in Australia* Third Series, no. 31 (March 1930), accessed 25 January 2019: 50. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-348498884>.

⁷² For example, see Figure 5.14; also Donald Refshauge, “Black and White,” Ballarat, linocut print, ink on paper, 1932. Federation University Art Collection, A00499. View at <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/534748169821f420f8c0386a>

Arabic to Latin and English, interlaced with Chinese motifs and symbols.”⁷³ The extent to which adaptations were voluntary or the result of cultural colonisation varies.

Changing approaches to ornament

When defined as “something that decorates, adorns, or embellishes,” ornament feels ancillary to an object’s form.⁷⁴ This separation was historically reinforced by formal Western art teaching which maintained a distinction between fine and applied art. In many nineteenth-century schools, students learned about the principles of design and ornament but little about the materials they were applied to, and the disassociation was exacerbated by manufacturing processes which increasingly isolated designers from makers, causing problems in both sectors. It became evident design education was flawed if its application (to surface, material or form) was not integrated. Designers began to abandon piece-meal approaches for more holistic design practices and philosophies.

As new materials were added to the designer’s kit, traditional methods of decorative design were challenged: how could historic styles translate across new and innovative materials? The answer for key Bauhaus figures was to avoid ornament altogether.⁷⁵ Yet the decorative characteristics of marble, glass, metal or woodgrain might be considered equally ornamental as any application to surface. So, while modern approaches denounced decorative historicism and unnecessary embellishment, texture claimed new status.⁷⁶ The integration of ornament and form rendered it almost unrecognisable within a traditional, visual vocabulary, thus ornament was re-coded to suit the modernist narrative, with an emphasis on “materiality, surface luminosity, and refined technology.”⁷⁷ Carew-Smyth conveyed a similar view in 1926, announcing historic furniture styles had become vulgar owing to misapplied and excessive ornamentation. Beauty, he explained, required “decoration [to] be part of the construction.”⁷⁸ Tastes were shifting and the urge to simplify grew.

⁷³ Matthew Turner, “Early Modern Design in Hong Kong,” *Design Issues* 6, no. 1 (1989): 83.

⁷⁴ Art History Archive, “Art Glossary of Terms - Art Lexicon AA to AZ,” *The Art History Archive*, accessed 12 July 2015, <http://www.arthistoryarchive.com/arthistory/glossary/Art-Glossary-Terms-AA-AZ.html>.

⁷⁵ Julier, *Dictionary of Design Since 1900*, 30.

⁷⁶ Nanyoung Kim, “A History of Design Theory in Art Education,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40, no. 2 (2006): 17, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140227>.

⁷⁷ Robin Schuldenfrei, “Sober Ornament: Materiality and Luxury in German Modern Architecture and Design,” in *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, eds. Gülru Necipoglu and Alina Payne, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 347.

⁷⁸ “Art in Furniture,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 19 August 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article202542482>.

Despite modernisation, an understanding of historic styles continued to be important to designers throughout the twentieth century in order to expand their visual vocabulary.⁷⁹ Studying anthropological content (materials, processes and products) could liberate art students from the constraints of society and self.⁸⁰

Published Historic Ornament exam successes range from one to ten (averaging 5 or 6 per year) between 1919 and 1935. At the very least, students applied their studies to decorating social gatherings. The 1925 SMB Ball featured Japanese imagery and text. The 1926 venue was styled like an Egyptian temple complete with two model sphinxes guarding a great entrance. Palm trees and pyramids featured in a large painting at one end of the hall, and softly glowing lanterns bore Egyptian motifs. The news reported there “was not one Western element about the embellishments” although they were unlikely qualified to make such a statement.⁸¹ Such efforts demonstrate the extent to which students engaged with the subject.

⁷⁹ Schenk, “The Role of Drawing in the Graphic Design Process,” 170.

⁸⁰ Edmund Burke Feldman, “Varieties of Art Curriculum,” *JADE Journal of Art & Design Education* 1, no. 1 (1982): 40

⁸¹ “Courier, 27 June 1925,” “Courier, 18 July 1925,” “Courier, 22 July 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936), no folio.

GRAPHIC ARTS, DESIGN AND TRADE

LETTERED ARTS

Today, the term ‘typography’ is a hold-all for any readable art that exists between “manuscript writing [and] the electronic device.”⁸² In the early twentieth century, the term applied to page layout for print. Hand-drawn or painted letterforms are better described as ‘lettering’.⁸³ Letterers fell into two main cohorts. The first consisted of occupations requiring information-based text supplementary to technical drawings and diagrams, that needed to be scribed accurately and legibly, but also quickly and efficiently. The second group consisted of artists, designers and craftspeople who sought to convey more information than the meaning of the words themselves. Both groups learned lettering as an art.

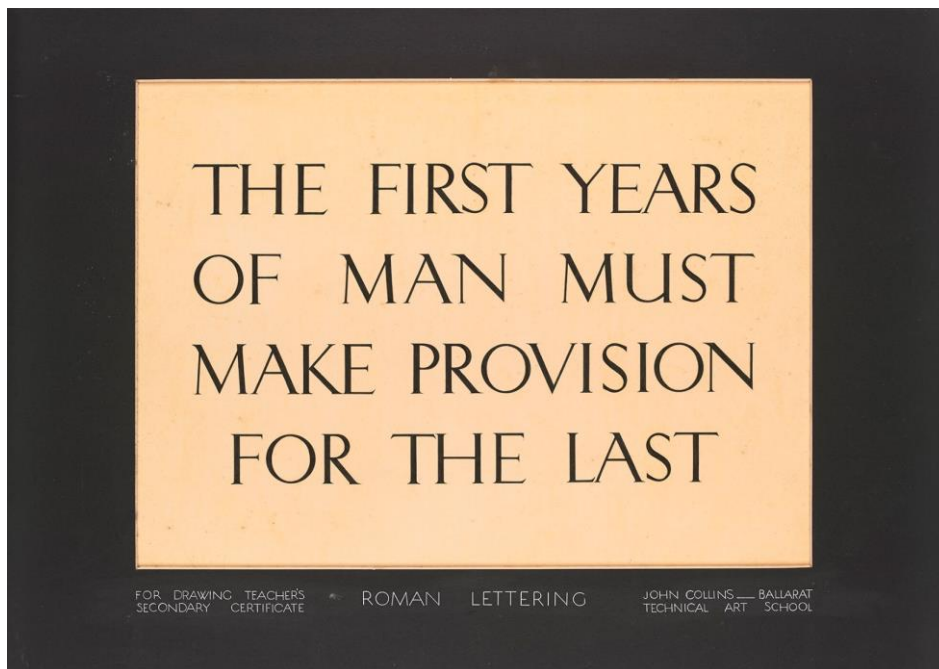


Figure 5.6 John T. Collins. *Roman Lettering*. Drawing produced for the Art Teachers' Secondary Certificate at BTAS. Drawing: pen and ink on buff paper; visible image 28 x 38 cm, in frame 38 x 56 cm. 1940. (Courtesy State Library of Victoria [SLV] H2000.119/121. ©SLV)

The written word expresses more than the sum of its letters. Variations in type style, weight, colour, and arrangement can affect the way words are interpreted by the reader. This concept was not lost on letter artists in the early twentieth century, despite the limited range of established typefaces at their disposal. Prior to putting pen to paper, the authors of *The*

⁸² Warren E. Preece and James M. Wells, “Typography,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, last modified 6 June 2019, accessed 21 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/typography>.

⁸³ Withers, *The History of Ballarat*, 281.

Essentials of Lettering urged students to consider the period, purpose and material of their work.⁸⁴ What typeface would suit the period of the art, object or structure? Was its purpose ornamental or did it require clear legibility and easy readability? Finally, which letterforms best suited the intended material? Poor selection could impact the delicacy, detail and legibility of the words' appearance. This approach was reflected in Victorian Education Department examinations.

Lettering

Lettering was highly popular at BTAS, with many sitting the annual exams. Candidates in 1915 selected one of three questions, each defined by a purpose, lettering style (suggestive of the period), and an indication of the materials to be used. Question one specified Roman characters for the words 'Victorian Tourists' Bureau' within a circular boundary and single colour on a 35cm square board. Question two requested a contemporary furniture store panel using any typeface but discouraged scrolls and flourishes. The third provided a relatively lengthy Walter Scott quotation; "One crowded hour of glorious life. Is worth an age without a name." This offered scope for expression and interpretation provided it suited black and white photographic reproduction. The one and half hour timeframe was clearly challenging, as an additional hour was provided the following year.⁸⁵

Through the years, questions continued in this vein: Roman lettering for a business; a vertical panel (avoiding flourishes) for a store or boutique; free lettering of a prescribed quotation; and technical lettering in black or for blueprint. Materials were occasionally implied, for example, titling for a "Castlemaine Dredging company engine" would likely be in metal.⁸⁶

Responding to the divergent aims of art and trade students, in 1920 the Lettering exam was divided into an Elementary Stage (which catered for architects, engineers and draftsmen) and a four-hour Advanced exam for the creation of decorative stanzas. By the time students were lettering Adam Lindsay Gordon's "A Song of Autumn" in 1926, the exam lasted six hours.

Exams were further split in 1930. Signwriting apprentices were examined on strictly utilitarian subject matter. Despite restructuring, 1939 Elementary questions were much like those offered twenty years earlier.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, general students were given options with

⁸⁴ French and Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering* (1912), 65–66.

⁸⁵ VED, Exams, "Lettering," 1915, 1916.

⁸⁶ VED, Exams, "Lettering," 1917.

⁸⁷ VED, Exams, "Lettering," 1920, 1926, 1939.

creative scope and varying criteria but directed to consider the requirements of a stated material, such as commercial art, repoussé, carved stone, leather, or needlework.⁸⁸

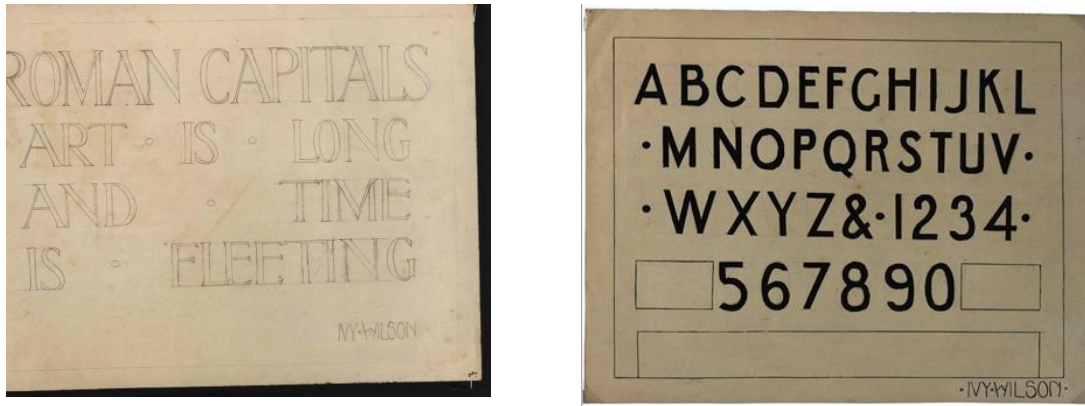


Figure 5.7 Ivy Wilson. Examples from *Ballarat Technical Art School Folio*, c1920-1922.
(Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 13241. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Some advanced General Design questions employed letterforms, be it an initial letter, a monogram, single word or quotation. Again, students needed to be mindful of the intended medium. Historic Ornament and Principles of Design exams interrogated student understanding of historic letterforms, requiring discussion and illustration.⁸⁹ Occasional advanced Modelled Design exams required sculpted wording for a restaurant, music room, or commercial building plaque.⁹⁰ Following World War I, students working on BTAS commissions familiarised themselves with the words ‘In Memoriam’.⁹¹

By the mid-1910s letterers had begun to specialise, and various distinctions for people working with type appeared. Relabelling continued throughout the twentieth century. Commercial art practices were carved up and classified through a process of arbitrary legitimisation, usually by people with cultural clout.⁹² Art practices with strong trade links, such as sign writing and ticket writing, fell further beyond the boundaries of art and design.

⁸⁸ VED, Exams, “Lettering, Elementary,”; “Lettering, Advanced,”; “Lettering, for Apprentices in Signwriting Trade, First Year,” and “Lettering, for Apprentices in Signwriting Trade, Second Year,” 1930, 1933.

⁸⁹ VED, Exams, “Historic Ornament,” 1926, 1930.

⁹⁰ VED, Exams, “Modelled Design, Advanced Stage,” 1916, 1922, and 1928.

⁹¹ For example, VED, Exams, “Wood Carving, Advanced,” 1916; and “Light Metal Work, Advanced,” 1931.

⁹² Young, “Commercial Art to Graphic Design,” 11.

Signwriting

Carew-Smyth considered signwriting an applied art, although it was often classified as a trade.⁹³ Yet arts and craft competitions did provide signwriting and ticket writing categories, and examples were occasionally showcased or exhibited in store windows.⁹⁴

From 1907, BTAS offered sign writing within a four-year, evening course in house decorating, lettering, signwriting, and ticket writing.⁹⁵ When trade associations began regular interstate conferences in 1913, sign writing decamped ‘house painting and decorating’ to become a distinct three-year course grounded in applied art.⁹⁶ Initially taught by William John Hall (c1882-1957), students studied “Old English, Script, Angle and Flat Sunk Writing, Blocking, Shading, Flourishing, Scroll and Ribbon Painting” as well as various styles of embellishment and the qualities of various materials and pigments. Students also studied drawing, design, form and colour, historic ornament, and stencilling, enabling them to create complex signs, monograms, heraldic graphics, and to decorate both coach and carriage.⁹⁷ Students provided their own tools and materials.

Local firm, Stansfield & Smith, sponsored two scholarships for boys in sign writing or house decorating trades. Conveniently located near the school, the company stocked a large range of artists materials and decorator supplies, demonstrating the overlap between art and trade.⁹⁸

From 1915, part-time instructor in sign writing, ticket writing, and house decoration was Thomas Edwin Raisbeck (1884-1970). BTAS was fortunate to have an industry trained practitioner. At smaller schools the subject fell to one or two generalist art teachers.⁹⁹ Student

⁹³ “Arts and Crafts. Second Annual Exhibition,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 27 March 1912; Victoria, Board of Inquiry into the Working Men’s College, *Final Report*, PP no. 14 (1911), 129.

⁹⁴ “Arts and Crafts. Second Annual Exhibition,” *Geelong Advertiser*, (Vic.), 27 March 1912; “Courier, 23 March 1933,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹⁵ Early instructors were J. Barber and T. R. Pridgeon. SMB, *Prospectus for Year 1908*, (1907).

⁹⁶ Low numbers of concern to the principals, Smith and Fenner; SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (September 1914).

⁹⁷ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 110.

⁹⁸ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 10; and “Stanfield and Smith’s Ware-House,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 1 August 1902, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article211463261>.

⁹⁹ At the Ararat Technical Art School, 30 students were enrolled across the whole school, and sign-writing was on offer to them. Director Trengrove’s speciality, as we shall see, was in pottery. “Ararat Art and Technical Classes,” *Ararat Chronicle and Willaura and Lake Bolac Districts Recorder* (Vic.), Friday 11 January 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154293708>.

numbers picked up under Raisbeck, and representatives of the local Master Painters and Decorators were pleasantly surprised by the quality of their work.¹⁰⁰



Figure 5.8 **A repatriation ticket writing class.** Department of Repatriation, Australia. *Vocational Training - Ticket Writing Class*. Photograph, 15.3 x 20cm. Unidentified location. 1919.
(Courtesy State Library Victoria [SLV], from “After” -- The Digger Carries On. H2014.1077/14. Public Domain.)

Sign writing and ticket writing were offered among the World War I repatriation programs, including at BTAS.¹⁰¹ Where one arm remained uninjured, the course was suitable. This was the case for labourer Ernest Bertie Smith (1891-1967) who returned to Australia with a severe gunshot wound to his left arm but was able to undertake two terms of the BTAS sign writing course. The requirement of a steady hand, however, meant it was not a soldier-craft suited to shell-shocked or “nervous men.”¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ SMB, *Short Resume* (1918), 2; SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (September 1915); “Unknown, n.d. May 1916” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

¹⁰¹ Smith, “25 October 1918,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 16.

¹⁰² Department of Repatriation, *Repatriation* 1, no. 7 (25 September 1919): 20, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-7251480>; NAA: B2455, Smith E. B.; “Sign-Writing as a Soldier-Craft,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 19 March 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165256943>.

William Kenneth (Ken) Moss (1889-1921) was a sign writer and decorator who, seeking a career change, taught at BTAS while undertaking his Art Teachers' Secondary Certificate. He was a member of the Victorian Artists' Association and found success at exhibitions.¹⁰³ The 26-year-old's studies were interrupted when he enlisted in the Australian Infantry Forces in 1915. Moss was appointed Assistant Art Master and married in 1920, taking over Raisbeck's teaching responsibilities. Sadly, his return to civilian life was brief. In October 1921, aged just 32, the popular teacher died of influenza.¹⁰⁴ Moss was remembered as a cheerful, loyal and "singularly lovable young man" who "passed through the crucible of the war and came out pure gold." A posthumous exhibition was held of his watercolours. All sold.¹⁰⁵

Just weeks after the loss of their teacher, students faced the challenge of examination. No BTAS passes were published for that year. Classified as an art exam it was one of the few not authored by Carew-Smyth. Consisting of three grades on one paper, each candidate worked over two nights, for three hours per night. The degrees of difficulty were embedded in the type style and the letterforms themselves, the complexity increasing with each grade. Grade I and II students rendered block letters and numerals, the latter incorporating colour and a drop shadow. Grade III students constructed the word "successful" (while hoping they would prove so) in gold outline, filled with a red gradient.¹⁰⁶ Examiners selected words, such as 'EXAMINATION', with challenging kerning between several letters.

These exams indicate the typographic language assigned by the Education Department. 'Egyptian' was the term for block lettering, a simple, sans-serif with strokes of equal weighting described elsewhere as 'Commercial Gothic'. 'Latin' pertained to Old Roman, the term favoured just two years later. 'Serif block letters' were perhaps slab-serif or, more likely, a sans-serif face with spurs.¹⁰⁷

Not all students completed the full course of study. William (Clyde) Lukeis (1903-1922) was one of a very few to pass Grade III signwriting. The two-time scholarship winner studied

¹⁰³ "Arts and Crafts. Second Annual Exhibition," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 27 March 1912, 3 & 4; *SMB Magazine* (1920), 2 and 7.

¹⁰⁴ NAA: B2455, Moss William Kenneth, #4259; "Personal," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 25 October 1921, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219320299>. One article suggests he died of a "burst blood vessel in the brain," "Courier, 25 October 1921," *SMB Cuttings* (1921-1924).

¹⁰⁵ "Courier & Star, 14 November 1921," *SMB Cuttings* (1921-1924); and "Courier, 4 November 1921," *SMB Cuttings* (1921-1924).

¹⁰⁶ VED, Exams, "Sign Writing," 1921, 1923.

¹⁰⁷ VED, Exams, "Sign Writing," 1921, 1923; and French and Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering* (1912), 19.

under Moss and met a similarly tragic fate, dying from illness less than a year after his teacher.¹⁰⁸ Among those attending Lukeis' funeral was Albert E. Williams (1899-1986), who took responsibility for sign writing, ticket writing and house decoration classes in 1922, on top of his junior tech teaching load.¹⁰⁹ Williams was not an industry practitioner, so former teacher Raisbeck was sometimes employed to complete commissioned work.¹¹⁰

Sign writing courses suffered high attrition rates across Victoria. In 1927, 15 Grade I students were examined, 10 passed. All four Grade II candidates passed, but only two completed Grade III in the State.¹¹¹ In 1928, Smith received many applications for instruction in advanced signwriting and gilding.¹¹² That year, sign writing became a formal five-year apprenticeship trade and newly legitimised apprentices boosted State student numbers; part time attendance for trade theory, practice, mathematics and allied art subjects was compulsory.¹¹³ Specialist apprentice examination was introduced.¹¹⁴ While art students could spend six hours illuminating a page of verse, apprentices had two hours to render utilitarian phrases like 'SAVE OUR HOSPITALS' or 'CAR DEPOT 458'.¹¹⁵

BTAS perhaps pre-empted the changes, identifying the need for an industry-based teacher in the lead-up to the 1928 examinations. A position for one-night-per-week was advertised at 15 shillings for two hours.¹¹⁶ Angus Henderson, an experienced, practising sign writer who studied under Raisbeck, took the role teaching sign writing, ticket writing and lettering as attendance grew steadily. However, few appear to have undertaken the examination/s.¹¹⁷

There is some evidence that sign writing was considered suitable employment for Australian women. For example, Emma M. A'Beckett, who held a 'First-class certificate' was

¹⁰⁸ "Courier, 14 July 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924), 67.

¹⁰⁹ *SMB Magazine* (1922), 2.

¹¹⁰ "Courier, 5 June 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924), 61.

¹¹¹ VED, "Report on Technical Education," PP no. 14, 1928), 30.

¹¹² Smith, "18 July 1928," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 179.

¹¹³ "Industrial News," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 8 January 1929, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204236468>; "Apprenticeship," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 14 March 1929, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204212532>.

¹¹⁴ For example, VED, Exams, "General Design" and "Lettering" sub-headed "Examination for Apprentices in the Painting and Decorating, and Signwriting Trades"; "Modelled Design" sub-headed "Examination of apprentices in the Plating Trade," 1930.

¹¹⁵ VED Exams, "Lettering, Examination for apprentices in the Signwriting Trade," First Year and Second Year, 1930.

¹¹⁶ "Courier, 29 August 1928," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936). Approximately \$30 per hour today. "Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator," *Reserve Bank of Australia*, accessed 17 April 2019, <https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html>.

¹¹⁷ Smith, "17 April 1929," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 4; Refer to Appendix, Table A-3, VED Art Examination results, DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee.

advertising her signwriting services in 1880.¹¹⁸ However, its designation as an apprenticeship would have largely excluded females. Instead, women could undertake the subject within other courses, for example, Hilda Wardle took Signwriting as part of her teacher training.

In 1934 signwriting apprentice exams were further demarcated into separate theory and practise papers. Trade theory candidates demonstrated knowledge of tools, materials and practices, answering questions on the content and correct selection of paints, varnishes, thinners and driers, and appropriate methods of preparation and finishing. Advanced questions addressed trade process and design theory, including the effects of some techniques on legibility, and the best weather conditions in which to undertake certain jobs. In practise, candidates drew a range of typefaces at various sizes, demonstrated colour mixing, painting, frosting and gilding, and the application of effects such as shading and shadowing.¹¹⁹

In 1934, following a series of structural and perceptual changes, signwriting finally slipped from its Departmental categorisation as art.¹²⁰

Ticket writing

An ephemeral cousin of signwriting was ticket writing (or show-card writing). Ticket writers created simple, typographic layouts for short-term, small-run promotional cards aimed at attracting consumer attention and encouraging a purchase. Ticket writers charged per hour or quoted according to artwork size, which allowed efficient workers greater opportunity for profit.¹²¹ A successful ticket writer selected and prioritised key information within a promotional message, determined a suitable layout, selected colours and style for mood or effect, and hand-drew letterforms, all at speed. They were not paid to illustrate, so where an image was required, it was perfectly acceptable to cut one from a magazine or catalogue and paste it to the show card.¹²²

¹¹⁸ “Painting, Embossing on Glass, Sign Writing &c.,” *Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahran and South Yarra Guardian* (Vic.), 13 March 1880, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article114581947>.

¹¹⁹ VED, Exams, “Signwriting, Trade Theory,” Grades I, II, III, and Grade IV, 1934.

¹²⁰ Signwriting’s last appearance in BTAS examination books is 1934, where it is listed as “Trade Theory” and “Trade Practice”. VED, Exams, “Signwriting, Trade Theory,” Grades I, II, III, and Grade IV, 1934.

¹²¹ C. Leyshon White, *Showcard and Ticket Writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne Technical Correspondence School, Melbourne Technical College, c1935), 3, suggests a rate of 5 shillings per hour. This translates to approximately \$24 in 2018 at an average annual inflation rate of 4.8 per cent over 83 years. “Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator,” *Reserve Bank of Australia*, accessed 15 April 2019, <https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html>.

¹²² White, *Showcard and Ticket Writing* (c1935), 13.

At BTAS, classes were initially part of a four-year art-trade program alongside house decorating, lettering, sign writing, marbling, graining, glass embossing and stencilling.¹²³ Following a lapse, a new, two-year Show Card and Ticket Writing course was offered in 1915, as was a three-year Industrial Design specialisation; Illuminating and Window Ticket Writing Course: Designing, Lettering, Colour and Executing.¹²⁴

BTAS signwriting teachers were usually responsible for ticket writing classes. Using a range of coloured boards, paints, brushes and pens, students learned how to create communicative and promotional cards and signs. Layouts were structured using mechanical drawing tools, then letters were drawn freehand. Colour theory and the principles of design were taught, as were techniques for creating typographic effects, including embossing and shading.¹²⁵

Ticket writing also attracted Ballarat retail personnel who wanted to gain foundation skills in just a term or two; particularly grocers and drapers who hoped to create attractive displays, show cards and labelling for their workplace.¹²⁶ Allen Jones, a 17-year-old window dresser, undertook a full year to support his job at J. Snow & Co.¹²⁷ Following World War I, it was claimed a gifted returned soldier could develop a reasonable level of ticket writing skill with a single month's training.¹²⁸

While signwriting was primarily a male trade, ticket writing's art and retail associations rendered it acceptable for women and girls. It was offered as part of a third-year stream at girls' junior technical schools alongside lettering, illuminating and drawing for reproduction.¹²⁹

The economical nature of ticket writing meant considered design was sometimes abandoned for expediency.¹³⁰ The few examples within the Federation University collection demonstrate the unsophisticated nature of such ephemeral work relative to signwriting.

¹²³ SMB, *Prospectus for Year 1908*, (1907).

¹²⁴ "Courier, 15 October 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); and SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

¹²⁵ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 111.

¹²⁶ Student Enrolment Cards, Federation University Historical Collection, M10822.

¹²⁷ Student Enrolment Cards, FedAHC, M10822, Student No. 6383.

¹²⁸ "Sign-Writing as a Soldier-Craft," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 19 March 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165256943>.

¹²⁹ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 258; and "Your Daughter's Career: No. 2: Occupational Art," *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938.

¹³⁰ Veritas, "Commercial Art," *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 17 March 1936.



Figure 5.9 Left: Keith Rash's Signwriting Brushes.

(Image courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 10910. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Right: Keith Rash. *Price Ticket*. White celluloid ticket, 7 x 12.6cm. Date unknown.

(Image courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 15677. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Ticket writing does not seem to have been examined by the Education Department, but BTAS classes were consistently well attended. In 1930, a new compressed air plant and air brush was installed, and 1933 class work warranted a shopfront display. Two years later, combined sign, ticket writing and lettering classes overflowed allocated space. By 1938, instructor Henderson was teaching three nights per week.¹³¹ Evening classes remained popular into the 1940s.

Illumination

The late nineteenth century medieval revival renewed interest in decorating typographic content with designs, images, borders and drawn letters. Into the 1900s, illumination was categorised alongside craft subjects such as bookbinding and stained glass.¹³²

Illumination was intended to last the ages, or at least suggest tradition and longevity, and required fine motor skill, care and patience. Artists illuminated titles, deeds, manuscripts and addresses for business, government and other organisations. Many works were unique. Some were reproduced in printed quantities, allowing for variable information, such as recipient or date, to be calligraphed later. During the 1880s, Australian stationer, John Sands, even

¹³¹ Smith, "18 June 1930," "15 March 1933," "15 May 1935," "16 March 1938," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 17, 51, 83, 135.

¹³² For example; Swift, "Birmingham and Its Art School: Changing Views 1800–1921," (2005), 81.

operated an illumination department.¹³³ Purists utilised expensive parchment and vellum, incorporating burnished gold, silver or even bronze metal leaf. Shallow pocketed students, however, practised on board or paper.¹³⁴ Illuminations were sometimes commissioned from BTAS students and staff.



Figure 5.10
Tambo Crossing members of the Young Workers' Patriotic Guild holding certificates designed by Harold Herbert. Photographic 35mm negative (copy), 1917. (Courtesy Museums Victoria Collections, The Biggest Family Album in Australia, 772790. Item MM 4414. Public Domain.)

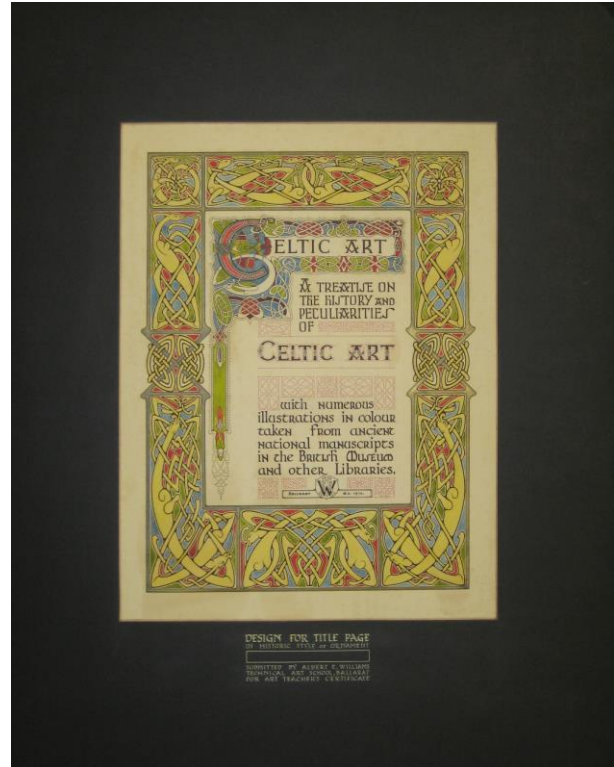


Figure 5.11
 Albert E. Williams. *Design for title page in historic style or ornament, submitted by Albert E. Williams ... for Art Teacher's Certificate.* 1936. (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 507a. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Illumination was offered at technical art schools well after the medieval revival had passed. In 1932, Harold Herbert noted exhibited Australian examples were of a high standard but required modernisation to suit “the purposes of this age.” He suggested an exhibition of imported work might inform and inspire local students.¹³⁵ Students may have clung to

¹³³ Geoffrey Caban, *A Fine Line: A History of Australian Commercial Art* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1983), 22.

¹³⁴ French and Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering* (1912), 73.

¹³⁵ Herbert, “Art” *The Australasian*, 17 September 1932. 16.

conventional styles given illumination was often employed to signify tradition. Perhaps they were biased by studies of Historic Ornament.¹³⁶

Illumination was offered to SMB's third year junior techs and within a specialisation of the senior Industrial Design course.¹³⁷ Inspector Dean added a Manuscript Lettering and Illumination exam in 1930 which provided six hours to illuminate a supplied quotation with pen, brush or both. A verse beginning "God of the Open Air" reflects the medium's ecclesiastical background, however secular texts also feature, including nine lines of a Shakespearian "Sea Dirge."¹³⁸ Almost ten years later, Dean still felt the subject was unpopular and underutilised.¹³⁹ Ballarat published a single pass, in 1934. Perhaps illumination techniques and modern aesthetics just seemed irreconcilable.¹⁴⁰

Monograms

In collective terms, a monogram is any combination of lettered characters interwoven with each other, often utilised as personal identifiers and organisational trademarks. Their design called for "a certain ingenuity and inventive ability—a power to devise combinations where none are evident."¹⁴¹ Monograms challenged designers to explore the interplay of letter forms, which were to reveal themselves in correct reading order. If they did not appear from left to right, the first letter was made most prominent, larger, or front-most of the grouping. The unit might be presented freeform or encapsulated in a geometric shape.

Monogramming enabled instruction in key design elements such as unity, balance, symmetry, line and weight, on a limited scale and within defined boundaries. *The Essentials of Lettering* recommended formulating initial concepts with an Old Roman typeface, but if unsuccessful to try Uncial, then Gothic (Old English). The clever monogram designer would find Art Nouveau faces "the most interesting of all to play with."¹⁴² The concept of 'play' is unusual in technical art at this time.

At BTAS, 1914 signwriting students created monograms alongside heraldic painting and coach decorating.¹⁴³ Design students considered more diverse applications. At examination,

¹³⁶ VED, Exams, "Historic Ornament. Part II," 1930.

¹³⁷ Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 258; SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

¹³⁸ VED, Exams, "Manuscript Lettering and Illumination," 1933, 1934, 1939.

¹³⁹ VED, PP no. 20. (1939), 35.

¹⁴⁰ Refer to Appendix, Table A-3, VED Art Examination results, DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee.

¹⁴¹ French and Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering* (1912), 75.

¹⁴² French and Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering* (1912), 80.

¹⁴³ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 110.

monograms were occasionally requested as part of a broader design brief such as a handbag, part of a frieze for a florist shop window, or as ornamentation for a ceramic plate.¹⁴⁴ Sometimes monogram and initial use was prevented at exams, perhaps they distracted from more important design considerations.



Figure 5.12 **Monogram design for stencilling** (image flipped).
Ivy Wilson. Ballarat Technical Art School Folio. Gouache, 1922.
(Courtesy FedHC, 13241. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

ILLUSTRATION

Illustration was positioned on the spectrum between elite and democratic art; echoing the largely representational, symbolic and narrative fine art of the time (elite production) but intended for wide, accessible distribution (popular production).¹⁴⁵

Drawing was an illustrator's preeminent skill, employed in a multitude of ways, from scientific diagrams to comic relief. Most illustration aimed to describe, explain, demonstrate, or support a message or idea, and its purpose as a communicative device limited its content to visually legible or decipherable forms. In the 1920s, editors expected "realistic pictures to help and interest readers" to accompany narrative.¹⁴⁶ Illustrators closely followed author descriptions, yet there was some imaginative scope; the text indicating mood, content and, to

¹⁴⁴ VED, Exams, "Embossed Leather Work. Advanced Stage," 1915; "General Design, Advanced Stage," Grade I, 1931; "General Design, Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1939.

¹⁴⁵ For a relatively extensive review of the history of illustration see Heller and Chwast, *Illustration*.

¹⁴⁶ White, "Part 13: Illustrating and Advertising," in *Commercial Art School* (1927), 2.

a certain extent, style. In comparison, catalogue illustrations were stand-ins for photography and items were usually drawn in exacting detail, although other visual content could be manipulated (through scale, weight and colour) to promote the saleable object or idea. Some illustrators were generalists, others specialised by media or style.



Figure 5.13 John T. Collins. *Art School Magazine*. Drawing: pen, ink and watercolour on Bristol board; 13 x 13 cm, on sheet 18 x 18 cm. 1932. (Courtesy State Library of Victoria, H2000.119/61 ©SLV)

Black and white illustration

Australian black and white artists working between 1880 and World War II have been credited with “the development of illustration in this country.”¹⁴⁷ A strong Sydney cohort established the Australian Society of Black and White Artists in 1924.¹⁴⁸

Harold Herbert found black and white illustrators to be Europe’s most financially successful during the 1920s.¹⁴⁹ It was considered a particularly suitable avenue for women designers who could “earn a good living.”¹⁵⁰ As early as 1915, BTAS assured graduates they would find ample illustration work.¹⁵¹ Ongoing employment was desirable but freelance would have provided flexibility.

¹⁴⁷ Caban, *A Fine Line*, 3, 27.

¹⁴⁸ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 175.

¹⁴⁹ “Courier, 26 October 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

¹⁵⁰ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 12.

¹⁵¹ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 12.



Figure 5.14 Colin S. Hunt. "1834, Here is the spot for a village; 1934, Here is the village for a spot." Details, black and white images (possibly linocut). Reproduced from SMB Magazine, 1934. (Federation University Historical Collection, Public domain.)

In 1925, Amalie Feild designed a suite of nursery-rhyme illustrations as teaching aids for kindergarten and primary students, considered an innovation at the time. The coloured works “of excellent design” were lithographed and printed on canvas paper by printer, and fellow BTAS graduate, Dave Cochrane. On presentation to the Victorian Education Department and Melbourne Teachers’ Training College for feedback, Feild was encouraged to continue.¹⁵² Her initiative was timely and perhaps informed the Department’s range of *Victorian Readers* published between 1927 and 1934.

The *Readers* were standardised textbooks ranging from grades one to eight. Distributed across Victorian State schools, they were widely used by private and Catholic schools and, to a lesser extent, exported interstate and overseas.¹⁵³ Several BTAS graduates produced illustrations, and the 1940 second editions had few changes.¹⁵⁴ Containing collections of extracts, essays, short stories and poems, the readers were intended to raise students’ interest in Australia first, Empire second, and subsequently other parts of the world. Australian culture is presented through the pioneering and nation-building narrative of the time, when the country’s history was perceived as beginning in 1788.

Elsie Jean McKissock (1903-1978) produced many illustrations for the *Readers*, including the bizarre hooded Hobyahs that terrified a generation of children. McKissock’s drawings are likely “the most familiar images of the creatures”, which she humanised through costume and

¹⁵² “Courier, 11 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Smith, “15 July 1925,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 135.

¹⁵³ Peter W. Musgrave, “Distributor and Publisher: Victorian Education Departments and the Supply of Textbooks, 1851-1945,” *Education Research and Perspectives* 24, no. 1 (1997): 48-62, 58.

¹⁵⁴ Desmond Robert Gibbs, “Victorian School Books: A Study of the Changing Social Content and Use of School Books in Victoria, 1848-1948, with Particular Reference to School Readers,” (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1987), 223, <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/38985>

facial features.¹⁵⁵ In the *Third Book* of the series, McKissock produced the bulk of the images (19 compared to W. S. Wemyss' 12). Her line-art works are bold and often fantastical. Many works feature spiralling trees, winding branches and curls of flowers.¹⁵⁶



Figure 5.15 Elsie J. McKissock (Mrs Timmings). Clockwise from left, “The Fairies” and “The Land of Story-Books,” from *Third Book*, p88 and p109; “Granny’s ‘yon wee place’” and a terminal image accompanying “Over the Range” by A. B. Paterson, from *Fourth Book*, p125. Reproduced from VED ed., *Third Book* and *Fourth Book*, 2nd eds. The Victorian Readers, 1940. (Public domain.)

McKissock shared several BTAS classes with Mervyn ‘Timmo’ Timmings (1904-1936) between 1920 and 1925. Both prize winning design students, Timmings subsequently taught at the school and later worked as Assistant Art Inspector to Dean.¹⁵⁷ When the pair married in 1932, McKissock assumed her husband’s family name when signing work. Just four years later, Timmings drowned in the sea at Brighton, aged 32.¹⁵⁸

Raymond Cristoph Fricke (1907-1986) was also a contemporary of McKissock who produced drawings for several *Readers*. In the *Seventh Book*, some of Fricke’s illustrations

¹⁵⁵ Michelle De Stefani, “Taming the Hobyahs: Adapting and Re-Visioning a British Tale in Australian Literature and Film,” *Text*, Special Issue 43, Into the bush: Australasian fairy tales (October 2017), 7. <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue43/De%20Stefani.pdf>.

¹⁵⁶ *SMB Magazine* (1920), 10; *SMB Magazine* (1921), 9.

¹⁵⁷ “Courier, 26 September 1925,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

¹⁵⁸ “Drowned Man Identified,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 20 October 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11927270>.

include the “The Australian War Memorial, Chanuk Bair, Gallipoli” and the “Lincoln Memorial in Washington, USA.”¹⁵⁹



Figure 5.16 Raymond C. Fricke. Clockwise from left, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" and "The Lincoln Memorial at Washington, USA," illustrating O Captain! My Captain! by Walt Whitman, *Seventh Book*, p65 and p89; and an illustration accompanying an extract from "Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes" by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Eighth Book*, p95.

Reproduced from VED ed., *Seventh Book* and *Eighth Book*, 2nd ed. The Victorian Readers, 1940. (Public domain.)

Fricke undertook a five-year teachers' course in Industrial Art with practical studies at Melbourne lithographic art firm, R. F. Steele, from 1927.¹⁶⁰ Fricke's sister, Amy (Pearl) Fricke (1908-c1978), studied alongside him, then worked as a commercial artist for several years prior to marriage in 1935. Raymond Fricke went on to teach, and an example of his linocut work appears in a 1932 edition of the Working Men's College (WMC) magazine, *The Art Student*.¹⁶¹ In the early 1940s, Fricke held a joint exhibition with Charles C. McNamara.

¹⁵⁹ VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Seventh Book* (1940), 83, 89.

¹⁶⁰ "Courier, 9 February 1924," *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924); "Courier, 3 February 1927," *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

¹⁶¹ Butler, *Melbourne Woodcuts and Linocuts*, no folio.

Agnes Ryan was among McKissock and Fricke’s cohort. She contributed at least one illustration, of two people hiding from mounted pursuers, to the *Readers*. Ryan had an elegant style that employed varying line weights and spacing to achieve tonal range, so it is surprising the *Readers* do not include more of her work.¹⁶² Amalie Feild, too, produced work for the *First Book*.¹⁶³ Star all-rounder, Harold B. Herbert, contributed several line-art images to *Eighth Book*, including decorative capital letters incorporating Australian birds and the bush.¹⁶⁴ Herbert’s black and white work was rare compared to his watercolours, but displayed “the fine qualities that bespeak ample training in design.”¹⁶⁵

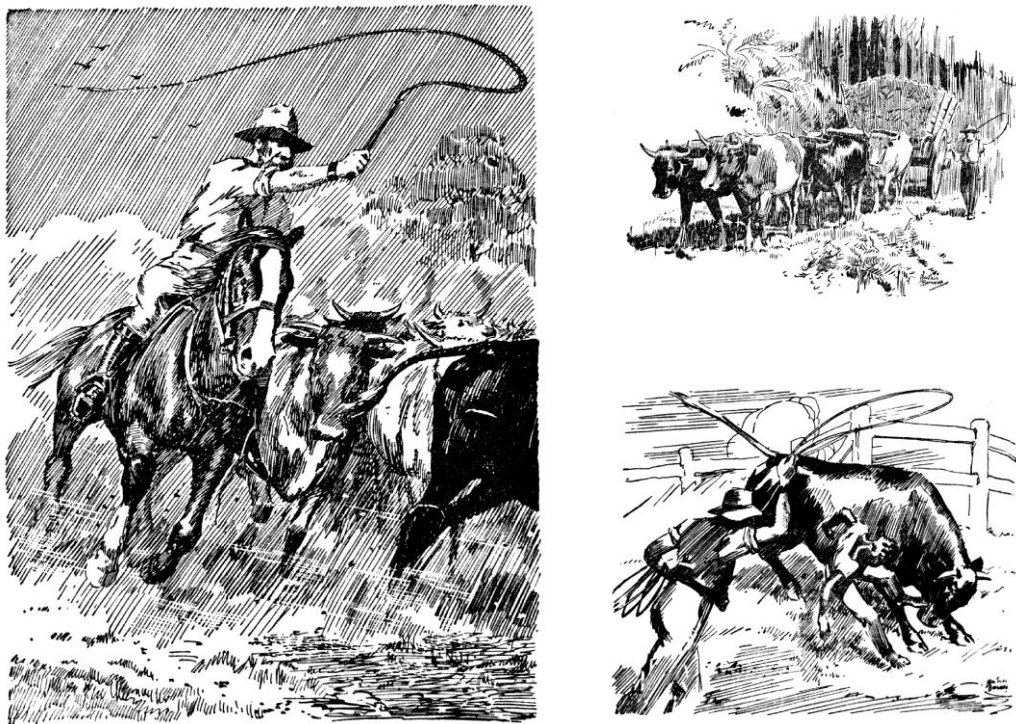


Figure 5.17 Allan T. Bernaldo. Clockwise from left, “Wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,” *Eighth Book*, p51; “Through the scented bush they swing” and “O’Keefe unwound the lasso round his head,” *Seventh Book*, pp144 and 29.

Reproduced from VED ed., *Seventh Book* and *Eighth Book*, 2nd ed. The Victorian Readers, 1940. (Public domain.)

It is unclear how *Reader* artists were assigned content, but perhaps gender bias comes into play. While McKissock’s work accompanied lullabies, folk-tales and domestic fantasies, Fricke illustrated adventures and acts of daring, such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *The*

¹⁶² VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Eighth Book* (1940), 44.

¹⁶³ Kovacic, *Archie & Amalie Colquhoun*, 14.

¹⁶⁴ VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Eighth Book* (1940), 33, 37, 38, 147, 4, 17.

¹⁶⁵ “A Ballarat Artist,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 25 October 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213374109>.

Highwayman.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, Allan Bernaldo's images evoked romantic tales of loggers at their campfire, the free-roaming swagman, and roustabouts wheeling on horseback.¹⁶⁷



Figure 5.18
John Rowell. Illustrating an extract of *Morte D'Arthur* by Tennyson. Reproduced from VED ed., *Seventh Book*, 2nd ed. The Victorian Readers, 1940, p206. (Public domain.)

One prolific contributor was not a student, but teacher John Rowell. Rowell's work spanned several themes. In the *Fourth Book*, through choice or happenstance, they solely accompanied Australian tales where his skill as a landscape artist could be employed. Many feature native animals, particularly birds, in elegant works of naturalism.¹⁶⁸ His work for the *Seventh Book* allowed greater imagination and whimsy, accompanying tales of Robin Hood and King Arthur.¹⁶⁹

The types of illustration featured in the *Readers* would not have been out of place in student examinations. Advanced and Honour stage General Design exams often incorporated a black and white illustration option, ranging from a simple decorative initial or masthead to a more complex title page for fairy stories, 'Bush Ballads' or 'Australian Bush Songs'. Some included typographic elements.¹⁷⁰ By the 1920s, commercial art reproduction requirements were specified. In 1931, BTAS offered black and white illustration as a separate subject, but it remained examined via General Design for several years.¹⁷¹ Subsequent exams sought a frontispiece for 'Poems of the South Seas', and title page for 'An Alphabet with Rhymes.'¹⁷²

With Dean at the helm during the 1930s, exams were interspersed with more sophisticated briefs for *Art in Australia* magazine, bacchanalian and Shakespearean poetry, and modern book jackets.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Third Book*, Second ed. (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1940), 42, 108, 131; VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Fourth Book* (1940), 15, 139; VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Sixth Book*, Second ed. (Melbourne: W. M. Houston, Government Printer, 1940), 105; VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Seventh Book* (1940), 139.

¹⁶⁷ VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Seventh Book* (1940), 5, 29; VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Eighth Book* (1940), 51.

¹⁶⁸ VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Fourth Book* (1940), 124, 61, 120 and 80, 87, 97, 80, respectively.

¹⁶⁹ VED ed., *The Victorian Readers Seventh Book* (1940), 157, 184, 206, 209.

¹⁷⁰ For example, VED, Exams, "General Design. Advanced Stage II," 1917, 1926; "General Design. Honours Stage," 1918, 1922.

¹⁷¹ "Courier, 21 January 1931," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁷² VED, Exams, "General Design. Advanced Stage II," 1931, 1932.

¹⁷³ VED, Exams, "General Design. Advanced Stage II," 1927, 1933, 1934; "General Design. Honours Stage," 1939.

Cartoons and caricature

Cartoonists, caricaturists and satirists were specialist illustrators who injected humour onto the pages of newspapers and magazines. The overarching visual style that Heller and Chwast term *cartoon expressionism* referred less to a specific period or style than to a “persistent attitude” of visual wit, which eventually gained the generic moniker, cartoon.¹⁷⁴ No longer bound by engraved printing processes, these works could be highly expressive.

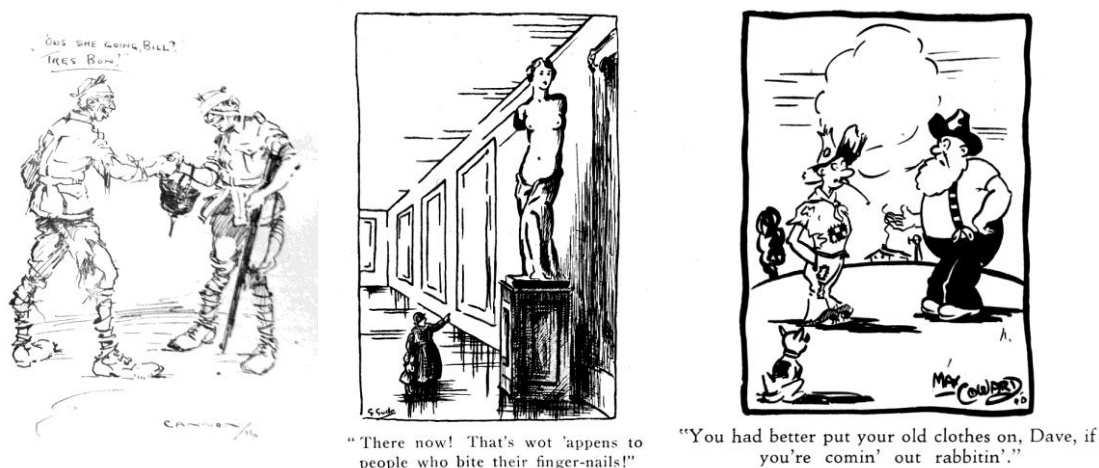


Figure 5.19 **Comic-style examples reproduced from SMB Magazines.** From left, Edwin (Ted) Cannon, “Ow’s she going Bill?” 1916, p19; Gilda Gude, “There now! That’s wot ‘appens to people who bite their finger-nails!” 1935, p25; Max Coward, “You had better put your old clothes on, Dave, if you’re comin’ out rabbitin’,” 1940. (Federation University Historical Collection, Public domain.)

Many Australian cartoonists became well known through wide distribution of publications like *Bulletin*, *Punch* and *Aussie*. BTAS students also produced gazette-style illustrations and cartoons. Edwin Joseph (Ted) Cannon (1895-1916) was a lively, clever and popular student who demonstrated “exceptional ability” in caricature and cartoon work. He found competition success and was granted a valuable five-year senior scholarship. Cannon also assisted teaching staff and contributed many drawings to the *Ballarat Star*, bringing “his abilities as a cartoonist prominently under public notice.”¹⁷⁵ His work “showed a faculty for

¹⁷⁴ Heller and Chwast, *Illustration*, 95.

¹⁷⁵ “Star, 9 August 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

gripping expressions and attitudes, and a delightful vein of humor.”¹⁷⁶ On occasion, he lent his caricaturing skills to fundraising efforts.¹⁷⁷

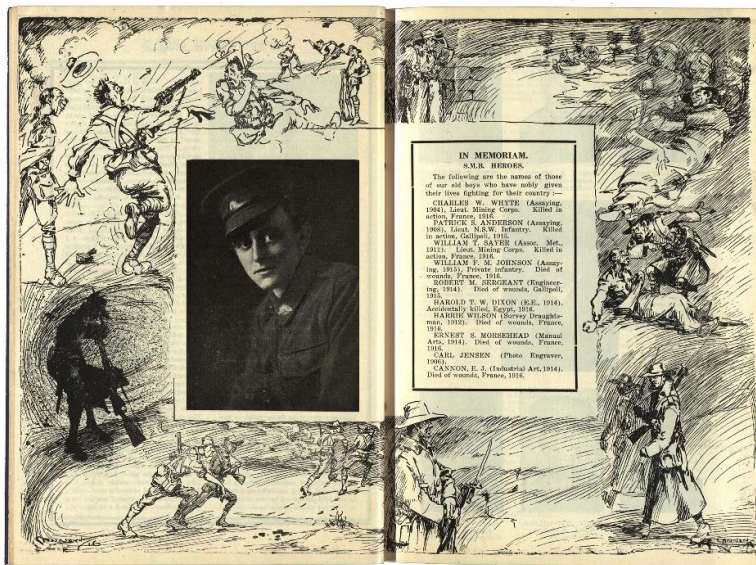


Figure 5.20 Edwin (Ted) Cannon (illustrated component) “In memoriam.”
Reproduced from SMB Magazine, 1916. (Federation University Historical Collection, Public domain.)

Following his AIF enlistment in 1915, Cannon sketched glimpses of military life on whatever war-torn scrap of paper was available to him. These demonstrated “a marvellously matured power of drawing and freedom of execution.”¹⁷⁸ His work drew the attention of superiors who soon put his skill to use observing the enemy and illustrating sections of the battlefield. This “roving commission”, as Cannon described it, found him “dangling by [his] eyebrows” from the top of a tree or propped behind a battered building, dodging sniper fire.¹⁷⁹ In 1916, Lance-Corporal Cannon was sketching a German position in France when he was shot in the abdomen and died.¹⁸⁰ The *SMB Magazine* posthumously published a collection of letters and illustrations he had posted home. In a double page memorial spread, he was remembered as

¹⁷⁶ “Lance-Corporal Edwin Joseph Cannon,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 7 October 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154703652>.

¹⁷⁷ “Y.M.C.A. Winter Effort,” *Ballarat Courier* (Vic.), 21 June 1915, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article73967697>.

¹⁷⁸ “Lance-Corporal Edwin Joseph Cannon,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 7 October 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154703652>.

¹⁷⁹ Letter from Cannon to his parents, headed ‘Scouting and Sketching’ published in “The Late Lance-Corporal Ted Cannon. Further Examples of His Skill,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 31 December 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154764006>.

¹⁸⁰ “Courier, 7 August 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); *SMB Magazine* (1916), 23; “Battlefield Sketches Made by Young Ballarat Artist,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 22 November 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242455976>; Bate, *Life After Gold*, 52, 54, 97; McCallum, *Ballarat and District*, (1916), 19; Joan Kerr, “Edward [sic] Cannon,” *Design and Art Australia Online*, last modified 1996, accessed 31 July 2014, <http://www.daaio.org.au/bio/edward-cannon/biography/>?

brilliant, witty, cheerful and optimistic.¹⁸¹ The *Ballarat Star* also published several of Cannon's pieces from the war which demonstrate his stylistic range. Some called for a permanent record of Cannon's work, though no book appears to have eventuated.¹⁸²

Another student with a talent for cartoons, Maxwell (Max) Maurice Coward (1922-1991), joined the Naval Intelligence Division during the Second World War, where he produced stories and drawings for naval publications. Coward attended SMB's junior tech before receiving a government scholarship for a five-year teacher training course in 1938.¹⁸³



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P02529.001

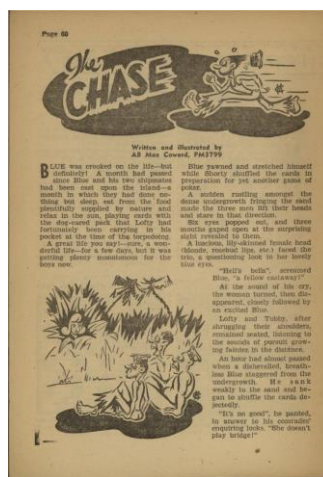


Figure 5.21 (Left) Two Ballarat Technical Art School graduates, cartoonist Max Coward and well-known sculptor, Jeffery Wilkinson, join the Australian Navy. Rialtor. Studio portrait of, from left, Able Seaman Maxwell (Max) Maurice Coward, HMAS Stuart, and Able Seaman Allan Jeffery (Jeffery) Beeson Wilkinson, HMAS Cerberus, both of Ballarat. Photograph; b&w, Ballarat, 1942. (Courtesy Australian War Memorial, P02529.001. Public domain.)

(Right) Australia, Army Education Service, "The Chase, written and illustrated by AB Max Coward, PM3799," In *Salt: authorized education journal of Australian Army and Air Force*, 11, no. 12 (11 February 1946): 66. (Reproduced from TROVE. Public domain.)

A popular BTAS pastime was caricaturing staff and fellow students, with examples appearing annually in the *SMB Magazine*.¹⁸⁴ In a common student style, heads were enlarged, features exaggerated, and bodies were posed or held props that in some way represented the

¹⁸¹ *SMB Magazine* (1916), 28.

¹⁸² H. H. Smith reported in "Lance-Corporal Edwin Joseph Cannon," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 7 October 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154703652>; and Frank Tate reported in "The Late Lance-Corporal Ted Cannon. Further Examples of His Skill," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 31 December 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154764006>.

¹⁸³ "Courier, 2 March 1938", in SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); NAA: A6770, Coward M M; AWM, "Ballarat, Vic. 1942." Accessed 29 October 2020. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C332196?image=1>; Gervasoni, "Max Coward". Federation University Australia, last modified 9 April 2015, accessed 29 October 2020. https://bih.federation.edu.au/index.php/Max_Coward

¹⁸⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1929), 24, 40.

individual in focus. Quite often, the face was in profile.¹⁸⁵ While students used caricature playfully, the technique had long served as a tool of propaganda, particularly when employed as stereotype to demonise and dehumanise, to construct ‘us and them’ binaries, or fabricate mythologies.¹⁸⁶



Figure 5.22 Various artists. A range of caricatures reproduced from SMB Magazine 1924, pp17 & 18. (Federation University Historical Collection, Public domain.)

Education Department examinations did not provide specific opportunities for caricature or cartooning. Perhaps it was considered not worthy of serious examination or was too difficult to assess objectively. Still, cartooning was promoted to students as “profitable and fascinating” work with a pathway to fame.¹⁸⁷ Evidence of this was brought to student attention in 1927 when they were given special access to a collection of work from the *Bulletin*.¹⁸⁸ By 1939, students at the Melbourne Technical College were adding a temporal element to their cartoons, producing animations.¹⁸⁹

The greatest demand for BTAS illustration graduates was in commercial art, advertising and product illustration.

¹⁸⁵ For example: Sydney Art School, *The Art Student* (1931), 27-29; and Art Training Institute, *The New Era in Commercial Art* (1928), 42.

¹⁸⁶ Heller and Chwast, *Illustration*, 210.

¹⁸⁷ Art Training Institute, *Art Ability Tests* (Melbourne: Art Training Institute, 1919), 9, 21.

¹⁸⁸ “Courier, 7 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹⁸⁹ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35.

COMMERCIAL ART

Awake to a new, globalised world following World War I, Australian business was ready to harness the local, creative workforce with renewed commercial vigour. The term *commercial art* came to differentiate paper-based graphics, advertising and illustration from industrial art, and the graphic arts of drawing, painting and lithography.¹⁹⁰ The new descriptor extracted some subjects from applied art.

In the 1910s, the Art Training Institute claimed commercial art was “unquestionably the newest art”, but one ready to dominate visual culture.¹⁹¹ It was roughly sectioned into: advertising art (for newspapers, magazines and posters); illustration to accompany a narrative; catalogue illustration; ticket, showcard and display work; and design for labels, packaging and “the manifold branches of craft work.”¹⁹² Incorporating photography and photographic retouching, commercial art is roughly analogous with characterizations of graphic design, yet for some years the definition continued to include industrial arts.

According to Alan Young, prior to 1900 “illustrating an advertisement was regarded as no less noble than painting a landscape on commission.”¹⁹³ While many Australian pictorial artists worked commercially to fund their private art practice, gradual professionalisation and industrial innovations during the 1920s would have challenged the knowledge of many fine artists who were not equipped with the specialist skills required of commercial artists.¹⁹⁴ In this way, technical art schools offered an advantage over traditional fine art training.

Commercial artists required a working knowledge of printing processes such as letterpress, gravure, lithography or stencilling, including the advantages, drawbacks, and artwork preparation requirements for each. They needed to factor into their artwork the limitations of film and plates (or blocks), the absorbency of inks, porousness and texture of stock, and the type and speed of the press.

Commercial art was promoted as a lucrative career, with work to be found in advertising agencies, publishers, engravers, printeries, “and nearly all large business firms.”¹⁹⁵ Women were encouraged to train as commercial artists, particularly illustrators, even if a successful

¹⁹⁰ Broughton, “Essay: A Place for Art,” 58.

¹⁹¹ Art Training Institute, *Art Ability Tests* (1919), 7.

¹⁹² Art Training Institute, *Art Ability Tests* (1919), 11.

¹⁹³ Young, “Commercial Art to Graphic Design,” 7.

¹⁹⁴ Geoffrey Caban, “Australia’s Early Agencies and Art Studios,” in *Designing Australia: Readings in the History of Design*, 129.

¹⁹⁵ Art Training Institute, *The New Era in Commercial Art* (1928), 5.

career could be hard won.¹⁹⁶ Early studios were often operated by one- or two-people who required a broad skill set owing to the “comparative lack of opportunities” for specialisation.¹⁹⁷ Larger agencies might divide a project among specialists. In the USA, an art director generally synthesised their work but a good outcome, one author suggests, was as much the result of good luck as good management. By comparison, European designers tended to produce the whole project.¹⁹⁸ Either way, technological advances, particularly photo-mechanical reproduction, offered commercial artists new techniques and increased flexibility.

BTAS was using the term ‘commercial art’ as early as 1914, with many graduates working in the field.¹⁹⁹ A three-year Commercial Art course was introduced in 1926 (Technical Senior Studentships were available) with 25 students attending the retroactively described ‘Commercial Art School’ in 1930.²⁰⁰



Figure 5.23 From left; Gilda Gude, “It pays to read,” c1935; Albino Paganetti, “The Farmers’ Hope,” Gouache, 99 x 67 cm. c1935; Eleanor (Nornie) Gude, “Ballarat - The Garden City,” Gouache, c1934. (Courtesy FedAC, A00385, A00378 and A00296. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

¹⁹⁶ Art Training Institute, *The New Era in Commercial Art* (1928), 5; “Your Daughter’s Career: No. 2: Occupational Art,” *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8; Drucker and McVarish, *Graphic Design History*, 144.

¹⁹⁷ Caban, *A Fine Line*, 2, 23.

¹⁹⁸ Leon Friend and Joseph Heftner, “Graphic Arts Education,” in *Graphic Design* (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1936), 360, 362.

¹⁹⁹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1914), 3.

²⁰⁰ “Courier, 6 February 1930,” “Courier, 11 February 1930,” “Courier, 20 February 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); *SMB Magazine* (1930), 36.

Art Inspector Dean adjusted the syllabus to reflect changing practises and align with industry requirements. Additional examinations were introduced from 1933, including Commercial Illustration and Perspective Rendering, and larger schools began installing graphic reproduction tools.²⁰¹ Commercial art was incorporated into the four-hour General Design exams, usually headed as book decoration, lithography or poster design. Tasks included publication covers and mastheads, event programmes, certificates, decorative wrappers, and a calendar. Colourful, lithographic posters were usually restricted to Advanced Grade II and Honours stages, and often incorporated hand lettered type.²⁰² Courses were further adapted in 1939. The BTAS Commercial Art course was extended to four years, bringing it in line with science and engineering diplomas.²⁰³

Through commissions for local businesses, students gained valuable experience of commercial art practice, often producing large numbers of catalogue illustrations. In this way, BTAS was more in step with industry than London's RCA, which resisted commercial art within its walls and excluded poster work from annual exhibitions. RCA students later reported their studies were irrelevant to their eventual careers.²⁰⁴

The work of commercial artists was often unsigned or collaborative, and therefore anonymous. However, we can track some graduates through their career placements. BTAS produced a great many commercial artists, particularly from the 1920s.²⁰⁵ Jack Chard set up a "natty little studio in Ballarat" in 1924.²⁰⁶ He later expressed his gratitude to principal Smith and staff for his training which helped him obtain work in New York state, USA.²⁰⁷ Smith, alert to any promotional opportunity, passed the letter to the *Courier* for publication. Interestingly, Chard found American conditions "far behind" those of Australia, so worked in Canada before returning to his own business in Ballarat.²⁰⁸

Many female BTAS students were employed as commercial artists, particularly as social conditions changed following World War I and into the 1930s. Constance Weeks and Doreen

²⁰¹ "Courier, 11 December 1926," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936 VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 2 (1934), 22; "VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 5 (1935), 21.

²⁰² For example: VED, Exams, "General Design – Honours Stage," 1927; VED, Exams, "General Design – Advanced Stage," Grades I and II, 1928, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934.

²⁰³ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 22; and "Courier, 28 January 1939," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²⁰⁴ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, "The Royal College of Art," 94, 100.

²⁰⁵ SMB, *Annual Report* (1923), 8; "Courier, 20 June 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁰⁶ *SMB Magazine* (1924), 25

²⁰⁷ "Courier, 18 February 1928," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁰⁸ "Courier, 19 November 1928," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

McLean found local positions as costume designers and fashion artists at James Tyler & Co. and W. Morshead's respectively, while Dorothy Whitehead and Essie Gale became head designers within the art furnishing department of Tunbridge & Sons.²⁰⁹ Jean Hill worked in fashion, packaging and 'transfer design', later operating a Horsham printery with her husband.²¹⁰

MacRobertson prize-winner, Albino (Albert) Paganetti, completed his commercial art course in 1936 and took a position at Morshead and Co., Ballarat.²¹¹ Cyril Gordon Gibbs was a partner in Sydney firm Gibbs-Smith Studio, prior to becoming a dedicated educationalist and head of the Brisbane Technical College art school for 34 years.²¹²

Moving to Melbourne, several students joined Paton's Advertising Company, including Cora Sandberg, Allan Nye and Reginald Warnock, while Vera Lindsay became a commercial artist with Arthur Wilde. Allan Bernaldo's first job was with Successful Advertising Agency, at "the hub of things" in Melbourne.²¹³ The city attracted other commercial art graduates, including Horace Balfour Dowsing who worked with Griffin and Russell Advertising, Pearl Fricke, Sylvia Copperwaite and Maude Paterson with Myer Emporium, Gwendoline Lemin at Welch and Ball, and Nellie Mau with G. G. Manning and Co., Melbourne.²¹⁴

The Great Depression stunted opportunities for commercial art employment as promotional expenditure dried up. By 1931 commercial artists, no matter how well trained, found themselves out of work.²¹⁵ Large agencies dominated the work, making it difficult for smaller studios and independent artists to gain a foothold. Those who found and maintained success were either highly skilled, or lucky. In addition, business' reluctance to seek ideas beyond a favoured advertising firm, created a recipe for creative stagnation.²¹⁶ Perhaps changing conditions favoured generalist designers. In 1936, BTAS' course was renamed Commercial Art and Design.²¹⁷

²⁰⁹ "Courier, 9 September 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 7.

²¹⁰ Germaine, *A Dictionary of Women Artists of Australia*, 207.

²¹¹ "Courier, 25 June 1937," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²¹² Germaine, *Artists and Galleries of Australia and New Zealand*, 214.

²¹³ Bernaldo, *A Lifetime with Water Colours* (1976), 14.

²¹⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1929), 15; "Courier, 23 February 1925," "Courier, 3 October 1928" SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); "Courier, 17 March 1936," "Courier 27 November 1936" SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²¹⁵ Harold Herbert, "Art," *The Australasian*, 24 December 1932, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article141368590>.

²¹⁶ Herbert, "Art," *The Australasian*, 13 April 1935.

²¹⁷ "Courier, 20 January 1936," "Mail, 28 January 1937," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

Correspondence schools delivered similar subjects to Victorian bricks and mortar schools, but promoted flexible course delivery, staged qualifications, and the ability to work while training. However, Harold Herbert cautioned against them, instead recommending Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong technical schools to prospective students while claiming, in 1935 at least, “the metropolitan area is the most satisfactory.”²¹⁸ The same year, not a single regional school was mentioned by name in Art Inspector Dean’s report.²¹⁹ BTAS was losing ground, or at least visibility. One West Australian, however, maintained BTAS was still “one of the finest in Australia.”²²⁰

From the beginning of World War II, SMB received multiple requests for suitable students to fill skills shortages in many fields.²²¹ Yet paper rationing meant demand for commercial artists became “practically non-existent”, which was then reflected in enrolments. Still, the school urged students to train in readiness for war’s end.²²² In 1948, BTAS was recognised as a training school for commercial art apprentices. This alternative path to employment likely encouraged a distinction between apprenticed and school-trained artists, resulting in further semiotic changes.²²³

No matter how designers chose to tag themselves, their work was driven by client predilections and economic aims. As the decades progressed, this became distasteful to some who sought to distinguish themselves from labels like ‘commercial art’ and ‘advertising’.²²⁴

Graphic advertising and graphic design

The intention of advertising artists and their commercial art counterparts varied but overlapped, and artwork preparation was very similar. Artwork conceptualisation was driven by different factors, including clients. For publication work, authors and editors provided the brief for mastheads and illustrations. For materials such as labelling and packaging, direction would have been supplied by the product manufacturer. Advertising artists were often directed by an “Ad. Man”, an intermediary between client and artist who provided concepts and copywriting.²²⁵ Designer input, creativity and control varied.

²¹⁸ Herbert, “Art,” *The Australasian*, 13 April 1935.

²¹⁹ VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 5 (1935), 21.

²²⁰ “Your Daughter’s Career: No. 2: Occupational Art,” *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8.

²²¹ “Stock & Station Journal, 14 February 1940,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²²² “Courier, 12 February 1944,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²²³ “Courier, 26 February 1948,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²²⁴ Heller, “Advertising: Mother of Graphic Design [extract],” online.

²²⁵ White, “Part 7: Advertisement Designing,” in *Commercial Art School* (1927), 2.

BTAS alumnus, Percival Albert (Percy) Trompf (1902-1964), outlined the diversity of his commercial art projects in 1928. Having cleared his desk for a 7-metre poster, he would direct his work to a small medicinal label, or complete a chart of insect pests.²²⁶ Trompf recommended students undertake extensive research and drawing studies to prepare themselves for “a variety of work as is never imagined when at school.” He encouraged explicit sketching of everyday objects to train familiarity, from cups of tea to railway signals. Students were often encouraged to develop scrapbook collections of design and typographic examples (a *morgue*) to promote critical analysis of contemporary commercial and fine art. Trompf himself insisted on observational drawing from life or, if necessary, photographs. With quality drawing, lettering and layout assumed, Trompf recommended simplified forms and exaggerated contrast for impactful poster work.²²⁷



Figure 5.24 Percy Trompf. *Australia in the sun*. Poster: colour lithograph on white paper; 101.5 x 63.5 cm. [1930-1939]; and *Seventh city of the Empire - Melbourne, Victoria*. Poster: colour lithograph; 101.5 x 64 cm. [ca. 1930-ca. 1960]. (Source SLV, H2008.73/23 and H2000.197/2. Reproduced with permission ©Percy Trompf Artistic Trust and Josef Lebovic Gallery, Sydney).

²²⁶ *SMB Magazine* (1928), 39.

²²⁷ “Hints to future commercial artists,” *SMB Magazine* (1928), 41; White, “Part 13: Illustrating and Advertising,” in *Commercial Art School* (1927), 3.

Trompf’s grasp of graphic production methods is evident in his work. Indeed, he felt a designer’s commercial reputation rested on an understanding of “sister crafts” including lithography and engraving, and ongoing liaison with printers and other trade professionals.²²⁸ Trompf’s first employment on leaving BTAS was with Giles and Richards, who had a lithography department. This likely informed his approach.²²⁹ He later established his own studio, employing several artists.²³⁰ Trompf is best known for his posters, often discussed in the company of Gert Sellheim (1901-1970) and the older James Northfield (1887-1973). Interestingly, Victor Margolin identifies Trompf as an illustrator rather than a designer.²³¹ Trompf’s work included advertising for Bryant and May, primary food producers, and a range of travel posters initiated by the Victorian Railways Commission and Australian National Travel Association to promote tourism.²³²



Figure 5.25 **A group of Swinburne students attending an exhibition of poster designs.** Swinburne Technical College. *Painting class (sic) exhibition, 1930s*. Photograph: black and white; 15 x 20 cm. c1930s. (Courtesy Swinburne History Collection, Swinburne Commons, Public domain.)

²²⁸ “Hints to future commercial artists,” *SMB Magazine* (1928), 41.

²²⁹ *SMB, Annual Report* (1924), 13.

²³⁰ “Courier, 9 September 1947,” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948).

²³¹ Margolin, *World History of Design*, 589, 590.

²³² “Courier, 9 September 1947,” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948); Donald Richardson, *Art & Design in Australia: A Handbook* (Melbourne, Australia: Longman, 1995), 208; Caban, *A Fine Line*, 98-99.

By the 1930s, advertising posters were being exhibited and collected.²³³ Although displayed in halls and department stores rather than art galleries, popular culture was none-the-less encroaching on traditional exhibition territory. The growth of cinema also provided opportunities for designers. BTAS' Muriel Malachy Mather (1890-1984) initially worked as a commercial artist with documentary film makers and Melbourne's representative of global film empire Pathé Cinema, Herschell's Pty. Ltd., inventors of the newsreel and creators of theatrical gazettes. The company was later joined by Effie Holmes (1902-1984) in 1921 and Hiryll Margaret Bollom (1904-1953), recipient of a senior technical scholarship in Industrial Art, in 1924.²³⁴ Like many women, Bollom's career ended when she married in 1932.²³⁵



Effie Holmes was one of several siblings who studied at BTAS, including sisters Annie, Agnes, Ida and Frances. Annie became an art teacher and, eventually, so did Effie.²³⁶ The three unmarried sisters, Annie, Effie and Frances, toured art institutions in Britain, Europe and America, returning to say “they did not see any school exhibition equal” to their alma mater’s 1930 reunion exhibition. Ten years later, they attended Smith’s farewell.²³⁷

Figure 5.26 Levi Molineaux. “Advert”.
Reproduced from SMB Magazine, 1933.
(FedHC. Public domain.)

²³³ “The Letters of Letty,” *Table Talk*, 4 October 1934.

²³⁴ “Appointment for Art School Student,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 10 March 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article212059245>; “Courier, 29 January 1921,” “Star, 19 October 1921,” “Courier, 19 October 1921,” “Courier, 1 March 1922,” “Courier, 27 August 1924” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 21 September 1937,” “Courier, 25 June 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); *SMB Magazine* (1921), 27; *SMB, Annual Report* (1922), 7; *SMB, Annual Report* (1924); Julio Lucchesi Moraes, “Cinema in the Borders of the World: Economic Reflections on Pathé and Gaumont Film Distribution in Latin America (1906-1915),” *Cahiers des Ameriques Latines*, no. 79 (2015): para. 16, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/cal.3680>.

²³⁵ Electoral records show Bollom working as artist in 1931, but home duties after marriage. Ancestry.com. *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

²³⁶ *SMB, Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (February 1917), 2.

²³⁷ “Courier, 24 September 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); *SMB Magazine* (1930), 45-47.

Catalogue, advertising and fashion illustration

Nineteenth century printers had relied heavily on imported generic image blocks to illustrate advertisements. Gradually, competing but similar products generated the need for brand differentiation, customised design approaches, and local imagery.²³⁸ Illustration offered flexibility that photography did not; the artist could isolate a product, highlight features or add an illustrated background without setting up complex or glamorous photographic situations.

The BTAS three-year Fashion Plate Drawing and Black and White Illustration Course responded to an “incessant and increasing demand for competent and specially trained artists alive to trade requirements and methods of production”; in particular, the kind of easily reproducible illustrations sought by newspaper, magazine and catalogue publishers.²³⁹ The 1915 course built on life and cast drawing, artistic anatomy, decorative design, drapery, and historical costume. Students illustrated a range of materials and textures in line, wash and gouache, and studied “approved examples of well-known artists’ work.”²⁴⁰ An understanding of industry requirements and production methods was crucial, as indicated in exams.²⁴¹

Hundreds of illustrations were commissioned from BTAS by local firms. Students annually produced more than 300 drawings for the William Paterson Pty. Ltd. catalogue and mail-order guide. Harris, Powell and Sandford provided students with many saleable objects to illustrate from observation, as did Harry Davies and Company. Smaller commissions were undertaken for newspaper and other advertisements. Such work provided excellent practical experience in designing for reproduction, as student work was plated, printed and distributed locally.²⁴² Crucially, BTAS did not undercut the pricing of professional designers, attesting to the quality of the student work.²⁴³

Innovation and fashion in consumables provided a constant flow of work for catalogue artists. In the 1920s, illustrations of wireless radio “and its numerous accessories”, new

²³⁸ Craig, “Through Printers’ Eyes,” 33.

²³⁹ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 12.

²⁴⁰ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 7.

²⁴¹ French and Meiklejohn, *The Essentials of Lettering* (1912), 82; VED, Exams, “Commercial Illustration,” Grade II, 1939.

²⁴² SMB, *Annual Report* (1919), 3; SMB, *Annual Report* (1920), 4; SMB, *Annual Report* (1923), 7; SMB, *Annual Report* (1925), 10; “Courier, 29 July 1922,” “Courier, 18 August 1922,” “Courier, 1 March 1924,” “Star, 30 August 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Our Industrial Activity,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 19 July 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213036984>; “Courier, 18 February 1926,” “Courier, 26 August 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936),

²⁴³ “Courier, 26 August 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

model cars, and house and land packages were in high demand.²⁴⁴ Illustrated examples promoting aspirational home ownership can be found among BTAS student work.²⁴⁵

Fashion-plate illustration was a subset of advertising and catalogue illustration that served clothing makers and retailers. Initially, the job was to present articles of clothing accurately, in almost technical detail, so “that anybody of average intelligence could produce a garment from it.”²⁴⁶ Gradually, its focus gravitated from draughtsmanship to style, from dressmaking to advertising, and artists were expected to know what was in vogue. Many fashion designers began as fashion illustrators, but *haute couture* was the destination of a very few.²⁴⁷

The evolving role of fashion illustration is reflected in changing categorisations at BTAS, where it was initially part of the three-year Dressmaking, Design and Fashion Drawing course, then the Fashion Plate and Black and White Illustration course, and subsequently fell within Advertisement and Fashion Plate Drawing.²⁴⁸ From 1926, the subject was examined as Drawing for Dressmakers’ and Milliners’ Fashions.²⁴⁹ In addition to full course day students, many women undertook Fashion Drawing as an evening class while they worked during the day.²⁵⁰

When it came to fashion illustration, truth was considered “much less attractive” than fiction.²⁵¹ The body was subordinate to garments, fabrics and accessories, thus proportional structures critical to figure drawing and artistic anatomy were disregarded to accentuate certain features and ensure clothes appeared chic. Extended height and elongated limbs produced an elegant line. Male musculature was exaggerated. Attractive anatomical anomalies were visually acceptable, but a disregard for anatomy irritated at least one reader who felt press artists’ “need for speed” left them prone to putting facial features in the wrong place.²⁵²

As fashion plate illustration veered into advertising, pose, posture and setting were manipulated to appeal to prospective buyers, such as demonstrating wearability or exclusivity. The illustration style, too, could target an elite audience by employing the visual

²⁴⁴ White, “Part 16: Mechanical Catalogue Designs,” in *Commercial Art School* (1927), 9-11.

²⁴⁵ See Figure 3.1.

²⁴⁶ Charles Hope Provost, *A Treatise on How to Illustrate for Newspapers, Books, Magazines, Etc.* (Online, 2006, originally published by Harvard Text Book Corporation, New York, 1903).

²⁴⁷ Gorchakoff, “An Analysis of Art Curricula in Colleges and Universities,” (1935), 67.

²⁴⁸ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 108; SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 7, 12; SMB, *Short Resume* (1918), 2.

²⁴⁹ VED Exams, “Drawing for Dressmakers’ and Milliners’ Fashions,” Elementary and Advanced, 1926, 1927, 1930.

²⁵⁰ Refer Appendix, Table A-2, Excel database of students and staff identified through historical record between 1907 and 1940, DOI: 10.25955/604d8c6d9c78a.

²⁵¹ Ashley Havinden, *Line Drawing for Reproduction*, “How to do it” 4. (London: The Studio Limited, 1945), 40.

²⁵² Veritas. “Commercial Art,” *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, March 17, 1936, 9.

language of non-commercial art preferences.²⁵³ For example, the use of a modernist aesthetic might attract a consumer of elite goods, while alienating the average purchaser. Such approaches would have reinforced individual predispositions and pre-existing distinctions of consumption.²⁵⁴



Figure 5.27 Alice Watson. Fashion drawing (examples). Pen and ink on paper, Various sizes. 1931, 1932, 1933. (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 12052. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

²⁵³ Havinden, *Line Drawing for Reproduction* (1945), 88.

²⁵⁴ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 131.

Constant practise was deemed necessary to train the eye, mind and hand of a successful figure artist. In the absence of formal life-drawing classes, correspondence courses encouraged drawing “interesting types” around town.²⁵⁵ Multiple quick, rough sketches informed later drawing from imagination, as did a reference collection of magazine and newspaper cuttings. Commonly, a stick figure was sketched to indicate scale and movement, after which a skeleton was built using ellipses for head, torso and pelvis, and smaller nubs for knees, elbow, hands and heels. This was then fleshed out with solid forms, greater detail, and gradually corrected. The pencil drawing would then be inked in to complete the figure.

Victorian examination required illustrations for line-art reproduction. During a two-day, eight-hour Elementary exam, candidates drew a young woman’s tennis costume from life, or an equivalent photograph if necessary. The next year, direct observation was requisite, so instructors sourced a woman’s summer hat, open parasol and handbag. In 1930, a line or wash composition of evening shoes, scarf, gloves and opera glasses was sought. No props were provided for the twelve-hour Advanced exam which, in 1926, was a full-page advertisement for “School Girls’ Winter Wear.” Later exams included three-colour process journal covers incorporating the text and theme of “summer holiday frocks for beach and country” and “frocks and suits for spring wear.”²⁵⁶

Several BTAS graduates worked as fashion plate artists, an occupation considered particularly suitable for women if they stuck to their lane and illustrated female fashion. Even as photography was usurping other types of illustration, in 1935 most fashion catalogues were still illustrated.²⁵⁷ Jean Hill worked as a commercial artist, including fashion illustration.²⁵⁸ For those working at Myer’s Emporium department store in Melbourne, including Pearl Fricke, Sylvia Copperwaite and Maude Paterson, fashion drawing and advertising overlapped.²⁵⁹

In 1922 Constance (Connie) Ida Weeks (1903-1983) and Doreen Lorne McLean (c1900-1975) gained positions with Ballarat stores James Tyler & Co. and Morshead’s respectively, working as costume designers and fashion plate artists.²⁶⁰ Both women worked and studied

²⁵⁵ White, “Part 10: Figure Drawing for Commercial Designs,” in *Commercial Art School* (1927), 7.

²⁵⁶ VED Exams, “Drawing for Dressmakers’ and Milliners’ Fashions,” Elementary and Advanced, 1926, 1927, 1930.

²⁵⁷ Herbert, “Art,” *The Australasian*, 13 April 1935; VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 5 (1935), 21; “Your Daughter’s Career: No. 2: Occupational Art,” *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8.

²⁵⁸ Germaine, *A Dictionary of Women Artists of Australia*, 207.

²⁵⁹ “Courier, 17 March 1936,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²⁶⁰ SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 7; “Courier, 9 September 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

concurrently. McLean described herself as a student until her marriage to funeral director, Douglas Barnes in 1937.²⁶¹ Weeks was “quite an identity of the school”, but in 1926 she married salesman Harrie (Tiger) Osborne, and her career appears to have ended.²⁶²

In 1923, Joyce Maund and her parents left their Lydiard Street vicarage and a busy social life to travel to England for a lengthy visit. In 1925, she launched her own studio and was commissioned to create fashion plates for Selfridges of London.²⁶³ Two years later she married.²⁶⁴ It is unclear if she continued to work.

Valma Ingeborg Jensen (1916-1964), began her career as a designer and illustrator with Ballarat’s Clarke Advertising before taking a fashion artist position with Smart Displays in Collins Street, Melbourne in 1936.²⁶⁵ It is unclear how long Jensen worked in design.

Eventually, photography would extinguish much demand for illustrators.

²⁶¹ Ancestry.com. *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

²⁶² “Courier, 16 February 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); *SMB Magazine* (1924), 8.

²⁶³ “Sweet for Sunday Supper,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 November 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243491531>; “Social Events,” *Prahran Telegraph* (Vic.), 25 September 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165140417>; “Woman’s World,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 14 September 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243630853>; “Australians Abroad,” *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 13 June 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article140714219>.

²⁶⁴ “Social Notes,” *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 September 1927, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article140801962>; “Family Notices,” *Table Talk* (Melbourne, Vic.), 23 April 1931, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146646872>.

²⁶⁵ “Courier, 20 February 1936,” “Courier, 17 March 1936,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION

According to historian William Withers, photography “was a very early form of localised pictorial art in Ballarat”, with studios established in 1855. Thirty years later, an amateur photographic society was established at the School of Mines and Industries (SMB).²⁶⁶ Where photography was exhibited however, it was sometimes considered the work “of the artisan and not the artist.”²⁶⁷ Frederick McCubbin claimed training at an art school such as the NGV (where he was acting director) distinguished photography with “an artistic value which the mere operator never imparts.”²⁶⁸

Early SMB photography classes were delivered to its science-based cohort, but increasingly bridged art, science and trade. From 1898 the classes were taught part-time by Mr Charles Ellis Campbell (1877-1949), a partner in a local photo engravers and commercial artists, Campbell Wilson.²⁶⁹ Among his long-term students was 16-year-old employee, photo engraver Reginald Crick. However, without suitable accommodation the classes were poorly attended and suspended for a time. Industrial developments precipitated extension of the Victorian Education Department’s photography curriculum in 1904.²⁷⁰ The same year, the Debschitz School is credited as being among Germany’s first to offer photography.²⁷¹

In 1915, a specialist dark room was incorporated into the new BTAS building, reinstating tuition in the ever-expanding application of photography “partly as an independent art, partly as a useful adjunct to certain branches of Science, Art and Industry.” Chemicals and precious metals such as gold, silver, iron, platinum, chromium and bromide, were used for photographic development and toning. Campbell returned to teach. Portable cameras were popularising amateur photography, so some attendees were non-professional enthusiasts. Others were apprenticed, undertaking classes from one term to a year or more.²⁷²

BTAS delivered special instruction for certain occupations, including press photography for journalists and reproduction methods for engineers and architects. A different branch was offered in each quarter of 1914. First term suited the novice, incorporating camera use, focus

²⁶⁶ Withers, *The History of Ballarat*, 283-284.

²⁶⁷ “A.N.A. Competitions,” *Mount Alexander Mail* (Vic.), 10 March 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199570723>

²⁶⁸ “Applied Art: Its Money Value,” *Weekly Times* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 July 1910, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article221771691>.

²⁶⁹ “Charles E. Campbell,” *Federation University*, last modified 20 November 2018, accessed 26 June 2019. https://bih.federation.edu.au/index.php/Charles_E._Campbell.

²⁷⁰ VED, “Report of John Dennant,” PP no. 1 (1904), 67.

²⁷¹ Ziegert, “The Debschitz School, Munich,” 34

²⁷² SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 109; SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (July 1915).

and exposure, and development, printing, and toning on pre-prepared ‘printing out paper’ (POP). Second term adapted ‘Iron Printing Processes’ to the types of reproduction used by engineers, architects and draughters, including gaslight contact printing for one-to-one scale reproductions, plus enlarging, toning and fixing of albumen and bromide paper prints. Students developed their own emulsion from silver salts. Third-term classes incorporated ferro-prussiate (or ferrocyanide, to create negative blueprint cyanotypes) and ferro-gallic processes (for short-lived, positive, black prints). Orthochromatic emulsions allowed red-light image development to create lantern slides and transparencies. Students ventured outdoors, to explore a range of lenses, photographic optics and ‘Instantaneous Photography’. Fourth term reinforced the work of previous terms and introduced creative gum-bichromate and carbon printing. Students also learned to finish and mount their work.²⁷³

Despite the depth of its content, photography was an ancillary subject. Classes were delivered over a couple of hours, once per week, but enthusiastic students could access the dark room during school hours and were encouraged to join the Ballarat Camera Club for meetings and competitions.²⁷⁴ Student photography was displayed with lantern slides at open evenings.²⁷⁵ In 1912, Harry V. Leckie won three categories: landscape, seascape and best enlargement.²⁷⁶

In 1915, a Photographic Retouching, Photo-colouring and Making up Enlargements course was offered on a fee-for-service arrangement, and the Education Department was approached for a £50 grant to equip the classes with a studio camera. Miss Bowman was approached to teach, but in 1916 the subject was delivered by 22-year-old Ida Chapman.²⁷⁷ Photography, retouching and finishing were considered highly suitable occupations for women.²⁷⁸ Thelma G. Rae received an evening Senior Technical Scholarship in “retouching and photo art work” at BTAS in 1919.²⁷⁹

Three years earlier, 44-year-old artist Oswald H. (Ossie) Coulson, a former student according to Smith, joined the Australian Flying Corps No. 1 Squadron as mechanic and photographer.

²⁷³ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 109-10.

²⁷⁴ Refer SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 7; and SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 98, 110.

²⁷⁵ “Ballarat Star, 24 June 1909” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²⁷⁶ “Arts and Crafts. Second Annual Exhibition,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 27 March 1912, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article149244183>

²⁷⁷ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (August 1915), (September 1915); *SMB Magazine* (1916), 22.

²⁷⁸ “Your Daughter’s Career: No. 2: Occupational Art,” *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article42088109>

²⁷⁹ “Senior Technical Scholarships,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 24 January 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213867605>.

He was appointed official photographer in 1919.²⁸⁰ Photography’s popularity waned with World War I and a corresponding plateau in photographic advances.²⁸¹ The *Courier* promoted BTAS classes and the excellent equipment which was “said to not be surpassed in the State.”²⁸² Amateur photographers were attracted with outdoor classes in addition to studio experience.²⁸³



Figure 5.28
Oswald Hillam (Ossie) Coulson. *Two Bristol Fighters of the Australian Flying Corps, flying at top speed to reach their aerodrome.* Photograph: Black & white, glass copy negative. Middle East: Ottoman Empire, Palestine. C1918. (Courtesy Australian War Memorial, B02209. Public domain.)

From 1918, Norman Wood, of Richards & Co. Photographers, assumed responsibility for Campbell’s classes, but was unable to teach during the day so, in 1921, Annie Bowker Whitla (1898-1977) was appointed the new photography instructor, indoors and out. She was also a BTAS student between 1915 and 1924, whose ‘Very Good’ work seemed to have paid off. Yet the start of 1922 saw a late enrolment of just five students, and Whitla was paid fees rather than a salary. She later took a teaching post in Warrnambool where she remained until her retirement.²⁸⁴

During the 1930s photographic innovations came thick and fast. Equipment was more accessible while improved processes rendered better reproductions. Dangerous flash powder was replaced by handy bulbs, and light and exposure meters were developed.²⁸⁵ New scope

²⁸⁰ NAA: B2455, Coulson O. H.; Smith, “30 August 1918,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 13; “Lieutenant Oswald Hillam (Ossie) Coulson,” *Australian War Memorial*, accessed 14 September 2020, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P11031130>.

²⁸¹ Frank J. Romano and Richard M. Romano, *The Graphic Arts Technical Foundation Encyclopedia of Graphic Communications*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall TR, 1998), 891.

²⁸² “*Courier*, 29 April 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁸³ “*Courier*, 15 July 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁸⁴ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 11; Smith, “30 August 1918,” “29 July 1921,” “24 February 1922,” “31 March 1922,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 12, 58, 70, 72; *SMB Magazine* (1920), 2; “*Courier*, 15 July 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁸⁵ Romano and Romano, *Encyclopedia of Graphic Communications*, 891.

for experimentation reinvigorated the medium and both creative and reproduction photography became increasingly important to commercial art and printing.

Even though photography began to displace representational illustration, its nature suggested rational objectivity, so it was not best placed for romantic or whimsical marketing strategies. Fashion firms preferred the illustrator's art to product photography.²⁸⁶ Photojournalism further removed photography from fine art. However, cunning designers could exploit the camera's perceived neutrality as a tool for persuasion.²⁸⁷ Dissatisfaction with the widespread influence of photography, and the apparent removal of the creative hand, is sometimes credited with rejection of representational imagery that motivated modern artists. One student reflected on this in the *SMB Magazine*.²⁸⁸

Of course, photographers also adopted expressive, surrealistic, impressionistic and whimsical approaches in their work, but for many years these tended toward fine art, slowly appearing in commercial art as its visual language was accepted by consumers. Photographic techniques allowed new forms of image manipulation, among them scaling, mirroring, reversal, shaping and layering. Airbrushing expanded on traditional retouching methods, facilitating smooth gradients and other effects.²⁸⁹ As late as 1945 the combination of photography and illustration was considered experimental, foreshadowing "the possible development of an entirely new kind of graphic expression."²⁹⁰ Meanwhile, advances in print reproduction created new roles in commercial printing, artwork preparation and compositing.²⁹¹ Some photographic operators trained via apprenticeship.²⁹²

²⁸⁶ Herbert, "Art," *The Australasian*, 24 December 1932; Herbert, "Art," *The Australasian*, 13 April 1935.

²⁸⁷ Drucker and McVarish, *Graphic Design History*, 231.

²⁸⁸ "Arts and crafts gossip: L'Art Moderne (By E. R)" in *SMB Magazine* (1930). Further examples, see: Judith Dinham, "Drawing: What Is It and Why Has It Traditionally Held a Special Place in the Art Programme?" *Journal of Art and Design Education* 8, no. 3 (1989): 325; Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 217; and Childs, *Modernism. The New Critical Idiom*, 108.

²⁸⁹ Drucker and McVarish, *Graphic Design History*, 217-218.

²⁹⁰ Havinden, *Line Drawing for Reproduction* (1945), 28.

²⁹¹ Jim Hagan, *Printers and Politics: A History of the Australian Printing Unions 1850–1950* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1966), 144.

²⁹² MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 18.

ART AND DESIGN FOR PRINT REPRODUCTION

Art students utilised several printmaking processes to facilitate craft-based, illustrative image making, including stencilling, linocut and woodcut. These practices would have informed students' requisite knowledge of artwork and technical specifications for advanced reproduction processes.²⁹³



Figure 5.29 **Three diverse printmaking examples from SMB magazines.**

From left: Levi Molineaux, *The Fossiker*, linocut, 1933; W. Edwards, (Junior Technical School student), No title, tinted linocut, 1938; Gladys Bilney, no title, woodcut, 1937.

Reproduced from SMB Magazine, 1933, 1938, 1937. (Federation University Historical Collection, Public domain.)

Technical art schools prioritised artwork preparation for lithographic (single plane) printing, utilising two types of photomechanical reproduction; line block (line art) and halftone (a conversion of continuous tone), ranging from monochrome to full colour (four-colour process) work.²⁹⁴ Acclaimed inventor and one of SMB's "many geniuses", Henry Sutton (1856-1912), developed a halftone process to convert photographs for print reproduction.²⁹⁵

To ensure printed work matched their vision, designers liaised with printers, plate makers and the compositors who manually 'pasted-up' various graphic elements into camera-ready art. Trained lithographers also acted as conduit between artist and printer, facilitating artwork

²⁹³ Richardson, *Art & Design in Australia*, 108.

²⁹⁴ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence* PP no. 36, (1901).

²⁹⁵ Refer: Austin McCallum, "Sutton, Henry (1856-1912)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (MUP, 1976), accessed 5 February 2019, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sutton-henry-4675>; and "Courier, 13 August 1932," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

reproduction and colour separation, however their creative involvement could vary.²⁹⁶ The BTAS Printing and Lithographic Course required a minimum of two years' work experience, likely supporting apprentices. It included instrumental and freehand drawing, lettering, artistic anatomy and historic ornament, to prepare students for the design and execution of "Show Cards, Posters, Labels, Calendars, Xmas Cards, Programs etc."²⁹⁷ Lithography was an accepted trade toward the teaching Art Master's Certificate.²⁹⁸

The course was delivered by student and local lithographic draughtsman, David Reginald Cochrane (1898-1982).²⁹⁹ Cochrane described himself as a commercial artist, indicating an overlap with lithographic art. By 1928 he had established Cochrane Studio in Peel Street, employing graduates such as Alex Morrison and Chris Johnson.³⁰⁰ Cochrane Studios declared insolvency in 1930 and its assets were auctioned toward paying significant liabilities.³⁰¹ In 1932, Cochrane offered to teach "Modern Lithographic Art and Reproduction by the Offset Lithographic Process" providing BTAS students with access to his new business, Offset and Process Co. printery, but enrolments were insufficient to proceed.³⁰²

General Design exams offered lithographic artwork questions, usually in two colours. Advanced exams sought small-scale works such as playing cards and book covers, Honours stage usually required an advertising poster to half or quarter scale. Most questions included a hand-drawn typographic component.³⁰³ In 1922, packaging and four-colour process options appear, including food labels and soap wrappers, but the "unintelligent use" of too many colours was to be avoided.³⁰⁴ Topics followed commercial trends, promoting primary

²⁹⁶ Colin Holden, "Completing the Picture: William Grant, Poster Production and the Lithographer's Role," *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 90 (2012): 99, <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about-us/our-publications/la-trobe-journal/la-trobe-journal-no-90-december-2012>.

²⁹⁷ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 18; SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11, 15.

²⁹⁸ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 105.

²⁹⁹ "Courier, 6 February 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); "Courier, 11 July 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 11.

³⁰⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1922), 22; *SMB Magazine* (1928), 16; "Courier, 4 March 1932," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³⁰¹ "Insolvencies," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 1 July 1930, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article202455869>; "Classified Advertising," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 1 July 1930, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4096654>; "Advertising," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 9 July 1930, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article202460096>.

³⁰² "Courier, 4 March 1932," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³⁰³ VED, Exams, "General Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1917, 1921; "General Design. Honours Stage," 1917, 1920.

³⁰⁴ VED, Exams, "General Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1922, 1925; "General Design. Honours Stage," 1922.

industries, British immigration and, in 1932, Melbourne Centenary Celebrations. Travel promotions featured escorted holidays to Japan, Java and a Barrier Reef cruise.³⁰⁵

Making an impression

Printers arrived in Ballarat on the heels of the gold rush, with at least 10 in operation by 1887.³⁰⁶ In 1922, Ballarat had several respected printeries and at least one pre-press production house, Campbell & Wilson Pty. Ltd. Among the city's printers, Baxter and Stubbs' electric presses output many illustrated journals, while Berry, Anderson and Co. and Tulloch and King's Works produced diverse materials. The Ballarat Litho and Printing Co. specialised in "high-class" prints and transfers.³⁰⁷ Some lithography students completed their practical experience here.³⁰⁸

Often designated as a lineage of graphic design, printing was a trade.³⁰⁹ Apprenticeships including Lithographic Printing, Printing (Composing), and Process Engraving were available throughout Victoria. At SMB, trade training was initially and briefly delivered by Mr Montgomery, likely James Nevin Montgomery (1875-1943), who spent just three years in Ballarat. The classes operated in a nearby, but perhaps rather unappealing, basement.³¹⁰

The local Master Printers' Association (MPA) promoted SMB's classes, made attendance compulsory for its apprentices and offered annual scholarships, as did the Ballarat Typographical Society.³¹¹ However, according to Donald Clark, they failed to direct the promised quantity of students to the school. This was perhaps unfair, as Montgomery's 1914 typesetting and machinery class had 24 registered students. Problematically, only a dozen attended regularly.³¹²

Montgomery was replaced by George Robertson Remfry (1883-1956) then, in 1916, the position passed to compositor George Black, who promised "to be an enthusiastic and

³⁰⁵ VED, Exams, "General Design. Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1926, 1927, 1933; "General Design. Honours Stage," 1928, 1932.

³⁰⁶ Withers, *The History of Ballarat*, 281, 246.

³⁰⁷ "Our Industrial Activity," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 19 July 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213036984>.

³⁰⁸ "Courier, 16 March 1928," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³⁰⁹ See VED, "Report of John Dennant," PP no. 1 (1904), 87; SMB, *Annual Report* (1914), 3.

³¹⁰ In the basement of the Wesley Church according to Perry, *History of the School of Mines*, 571; or the neighbouring museum building until 1923, "Courier, 2 July 1923", SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³¹¹ "Ballarat Courier, 4 February 1915"; "Ballarat Courier, 30 May 1915" and "Ballarat Courier, 9 June 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 60.

³¹² Clark, Report on the Ballarat Junior Technical School, 1915, 11; Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 30, 1914), 4, 10, 11.

successful teacher.”³¹³ Black began with 11 first year students, but several enlisted and only one, David Flockhart, completed second year (Grade II).³¹⁴ Commitment was also likely affected by non-compulsory attendance, evening classes and difficulty getting time out from work. Not discouraged, Mr Black’s class helped assemble the 1917 *SMB Magazine*.³¹⁵ Black continued teaching throughout the war, having been granted exemption from national service by the Ballarat Exemption Court.³¹⁶

In 1918, principal Smith toured local printeries recruiting for classes, and later urged the MPA and Typographical Society to influence better attendance. By 1921, attendances had increased substantially.³¹⁷ This improvement coincided with the appointment of Albert Edward Dorling (1881-1961) as part-time instructor, who held the post for almost 30 years. Dorling was a highly experienced practitioner and foreman at Tulloch and King printers where he worked until retirement. Dorling liaised with the Ballarat sub-branch of the Printing Industry Employees’ Union of Australia, providing annual reports and drawing further scholarship support. He authored a booklet titled *The Value of Technical Training as Applied to the Printing Industry* in 1927.³¹⁸

Dorling’s students shivered through classes in the SMB museum basement. In 1922, four children broke in and stole type and materials, of which only some was recovered by police. New items had to be purchased.³¹⁹ The next year, classes were rehoused in the former Lettering and Signwriting room, but the space was inadequate for the linotype printing machine donated by the Ballarat *Courier* in 1928. As printing fell under the new *Apprenticeship Act*, principal Smith suggested adding a storey to the Art School building. Disappointingly, the Public Works Department instead chose to remodel a galvanised iron building fronting Albert Street, detached from the rest of the school.³²⁰

³¹³ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (February 1916).

³¹⁴ Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 13, 1916), 7; Smith, “28 June 1918,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 9.

³¹⁵ *SMB Magazine* (1917), 5.

³¹⁶ “National Service,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 10 October 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154697211>.

³¹⁷ Smith, “25 October 1918,” “26 March 1920,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 16, 43; SMB, *Annual Report* (1921), 2.

³¹⁸ “*Courier*, 1 February 1921”; “*Courier*, 11 September 1922”; “*Courier*, 2 July 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “*Courier*, 27 August 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³¹⁹ Smith, “31 March 1922,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 73.

³²⁰ Smith, “31 August 1923,” “29 February 1928,” “21 March 1928,” “18 July 1928,” “17 October 1928,” “12 December 1928,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 101, 171, 173, 179, 183, 186; Smith, “17 April 1929,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 4.

During the Depression, the MPA and Typographic Society scholarships enabled Dorling to continue classes, and he maintained requisite numbers in subsequent years.³²¹ When Dorling retired in 1949, SMB was thought to be the only regional school operating printing classes in Australia.³²²

Examinations suggest mathematics and grammar were more highly prized in a printer than artistic creativity, but in 1905 many students entered the workforce somewhat illiterate.³²³ In 1915 separate exams were offered for Printing (Mechanical) and Printing (Composing Class), Grades I, II and III. Candidates for the latter were tested on correct spelling, punctuation and hyphenation, and examined on paper sizes, copy-filling, stock weight conversions and supply costs. They required a complete understanding of reprographic, print, measurement and typographic terms, and the ability to sketch a layout. Advanced students articulated the principles of composition, good taste, good style, and harmonious use of type and decoration. Practical components included setting type, inking the plate and pulling proofs.³²⁴

SMB students were mostly employed locally, but Albert E. Saunders established his own printery, the Globe Engraving Company, in Little Collins Street, Melbourne. He later provided printed samples to the school to assist instruction.³²⁵

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION

Design thinking is the ability to foresee a range of outcomes and navigate conscious and intuitive decision-making to achieve the most appropriate solution, while accounting for preceding and subsequent steps, ranging from client preferences to printer requirements. At the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS), design thinking was taught through a range of analytic, reflective and productive practices, both theoretical and practical.

Key subjects included General Design, Modelled Design and several applied, material subjects, to be discussed later. These were supported through drawing (particularly natural and plant forms) and allied practical and theoretical subjects. The appreciation and analysis embedded in Historic Ornament familiarised students with traditional approaches in order to

³²¹ Smith, “22 February 1933,” “17 May 1933,” “23 February 1938,” “22 February 1939,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 50, 56, 133, 149.

³²² “Printer Resigns from School,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 15 December 1949, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article244139817>; “Retirement of Printing Teacher,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 December 1949, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article189482274>.

³²³ VED, “Report of John Dennant,” PP no. 1 (1905), 66.

³²⁴ VED, Exams, “Printing (Composing Class),” Grades I, II and III. 1915.

³²⁵ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (July 1917), 1.

inspire innovation. Early examinations prioritised a Western cultural narrative, but gradually reflected interest in more diverse cultural and temporal locations, despite modernist rejection of historicism and unnecessary embellishment. The subject transcended fashion and broadened the field of study beyond the natural world. Its presence in the curriculum affirms the importance of material culture to art education at BTAS. In an extension of primary school drawing practice, indigenous flora provided source material for students to produce sought-after designs of Australian character.

Meanwhile, two-dimensional graphic arts courses were adapted to suit industry demand and changing reproduction technologies. The term ‘commercial art’ became synonymous with advertising, illustration and graphic design, and amalgamated lettering, illustration, photography and retouching. It was a collaborative field requiring an understanding of print and pre-press methods for clear communication between practitioners. The necessity for specialist ‘commercial art’ training advantaged technical art students over those instructed in fine art alone.

Lettering was a popular subject allied to engineering, sign- and ticket-writing, and design which enabled wider application and greater expression of letter forms than mechanical or photoset type. Photography was on the rise, however while methods of print reproduction were improving, illustration was preferred for many advertisements and catalogues. It also allowed greater scope for creativity and stylistic variation, and representational illustration was retired as inauthentic. BTAS produced many accomplished designers and illustrators. Further, the school trained lithographers and printers.

Some BTAS students tackled single subjects to supplement workplace skills, while others undertook full-time day courses over consecutive years. Commissioned briefs and work placement provided valuable real-world experience and graduates found employment in diverse settings throughout Victoria and beyond. Unfortunately, many women’s careers were cut short by a societal expectation of resignation upon marriage.

The overlapping skills and knowledge delivered through interconnected BTAS disciplines served the overarching goal of most technical art schools, the training of quality designers. A practised designer could develop more efficient and creative manufactures. Equally, a working knowledge of tools and materials could better inform design.

Chapter 6

Design and execution: material practice

Without understanding their materials, the designer is “groping in the dark instead of receiving the constant inspiration which the practical designer gains from his material, his tools and the use for which the article is intended.”¹

Australian industry leaders and governments repeatedly promoted the value of local, raw materials from the late 1800s through to the 1930s.² Where art schools isolated design from making, designers were deprived material appreciation and skills, while skilled artisans often lacked creative insight. In particular, the South Kensington system judged design without consideration of its intended material, fitness for purpose, or manufacturing requirements.³ A counter approach, personified in the artist-craftsperson, integrated design instruction and material practice, whereby design could be inspired as much by materials, tools and intended use as through concepts of beauty and taste.

Even as the Arts and Crafts movement receded, craft practice remained a valued design skill. During the 1920s, invention was elevated above reproduction and a period of intense experimentation with new materials, both in manufacture and form, informed design. Modern Australian designers actively embraced new materials and modes of construction.⁴ In the coming decades, form and function would become almost indivisible.

Among the material subjects offered at the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) were art metal, leatherwork, textiles, modelling, wood and stone carving, stained glass and pottery.⁵ Each subject incorporated design, preparatory drawing or modelling, and hand-tooled execution in material; a blended training intended for transfer to industrial and mechanised contexts. These subjects were available individually, and within industrial design and teaching qualifications.

¹ Caffin, “What Can I Do to Help the Industrial Art Movement?” (1899), xxxiv-xxxvii, xxxvi.

² MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 22.

³ Payne, *Art Metalwork* (1914), 15.

⁴ D.N. Linnette, “The Vogue for Metal Furniture,” *Decoration and Glass* 1, no. 2 (1 June 1935), 39, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-368066135>.

⁵ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

At its essence, the pedagogical system of design problem/brief, sketch/concept, model/prototype, presentation/critique and examination/assessment remains largely unchanged from a century ago.

MODELLING

Modelling was approached much like drawing instruction, only in three dimensions with clay. A foundation skill for the material practice of designers, artists, artisans and architects, it served as both prototype and finished art. Like drawing, students learned in progressive stages, working from ornamental and figurative casts, natural plants, and from life, while Modelled Design exams allowed greater originality.

Newly appointed Art Inspector, Carew-Smyth, encouraged the wide implementation of modelling practice in technical art schools, later reflecting it greatly improved work presented for examination.⁶ Notably, modelling was not offered at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Art School, and thus represents a key distinction from, and advantage for, technical art schools.⁷

At London's Royal College of Arts (RCA), modelling was separated into a Lower school catering to generalists (undertaken almost entirely from casts) and an Upper school that produced art masters and designers.⁸ Victorian examinations echoed this approach with Elementary and Advanced levels.⁹ From the late 1920s, apprenticed trade students, such as plasterers, usually undertook separate examination.

Elementary Modelling Ornament from the Cast exams favoured replication of a given architectural feature, such as a Gothic Boss (protrusion) or frieze-like element. Modelling Plant Forms from Nature candidates sculpted examples including Maple, Oak, Ivy or Arum

⁶ VED, "General Report on the Art Work done in the Technical Schools of Victoria, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1904), 69; VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1905), 67; and "Horsham Working Men's College," *Horsham Times* (Vic.), 5 August 1904, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article72833132>; and VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 11, 1907), 65.

⁷ Jordan, "The South Kensington Empire," 40.

⁸ Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 190; "Royal College of Art (including National Art Training School)," *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951*, University of Glasgow History of Art and HATII, online database, last modified 2011, accessed July 10, 2015, http://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/organization.php?id=msib4_1222355292.

⁹ For an Australia-wide overview of modelling education, see: Timms, "Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges."

Lily.¹⁰ The lack of Australian flora is surprising given its prevalence in other examinations and requests for same at exhibition.¹¹



Figure 6.1 **Modelling class at the Working Men's College, Melbourne.**

James Alexander Smith. *Students in a figurine modelling class, Working Men's College [picture]*. Photographic print: image 15 x 21 cm, on sheet 18 x 26 cm. c1920-1930.

(Courtesy State Library of Victoria [SLV]. Manuscripts Collection [MS1137] Papers, James Alexander Smith Collection. 49181599. Public Domain.)

Modelling the Human Figure from a Cast students replicated small body parts such as a hand or foot at Elementary level, with eight hours each allowed for modelling and casting under exam conditions. Surprisingly, the same time was allocated to the Advanced stage and larger anatomical components, such as the left arm and torso of 'Bronze Hercules', 'Discobulus' or a female back. Modelling the Head from Life exams provided just four hours to model the sitter's head and neck.¹²

A pose was described in Modelling the Human Figure from Life exams, usually a male nude wielding a simple prop, such as a rake or fishing rod, to add a sense of physical action. He sported a 'loin cloth' if women were present. When a woman was finally posed in 1939, it was as a statue of Venus of Knidos, a passive and unnatural posture compared to the male

¹⁰ VED, Exams, "Modelling Plant Forms from Nature," 1915, 1921, 1939; and "Modelling Ornament from the Cast," 1915; 1939 (Cast No. G18 Gothic Boss).

¹¹ For example, 'Ornamental modelling embodying Australian design' at "Arts and Crafts. Second Annual Exhibition," *Geelong Advertiser*, March 27, 1912

¹² VED, Exams, "Modelling the Human Figure from the Cast," Elementary Stage, 1915 (Model No. 2486, foot from the Laocoon group); 1924 (Model No. F15, foot); Advanced Stage, 1922 (Discobulus); 1924 (Hercules); and 1939 (Cast No. 2864, female torso, back); and "Modelling the Head from Life," 1915.

stances. Examination designated 16 hours for modelling and eight for casting across four days.¹³ Most candidates modelled in high (alto) relief, but the bar was raised for Art Teachers' Diploma students who modelled 'in the round'.

As discussed in Chapter Five, Modelled Design used clay to conceptualise predominantly monumental, architectural and interior design features, standing in for metal, wood, stone and even pottery. Several materials also had corresponding applied subjects. However, plaster, cement, earthenware, non-sheet metals, and perhaps even plastic were only examined through Modelled Design.

Ann Compton provides an overview of modelling techniques but cautions "significant gaps in our knowledge of modelling as it was practiced" in the early twentieth century.¹⁴ BTAS pottery students worked raw clay to improve plasticity and remove impurities, so it is probable modelling students did likewise. Apart from deft fingers, a range of tools were used to manipulate the clay. Relief works were built upon a board base, while complex pieces were more likely to require the construction of an armature and rotating stand. Modelling was an additive process; layers of clay were built and shaped over a frame, thus, cutting or carving was to be avoided.¹⁵ However, this doctrine softened during the 1920s as casts were marginalised, creativity superseded anatomical rigour, and reductive sculptural methods were increasingly employed.¹⁶

Simple modelling was undertaken by BTAS junior technical students, who occasionally delighted in flinging clay. However, its "lovely, slippery, squashy, greasy-like feeling" was less attractive in the depths of a Ballarat winter, and prompted emergency runs for coffee.¹⁷ It was a more serious activity for senior students. Elementary modelling was requisite for all drawing and Manual Arts teachers, as well as some art trades. The Art Teachers' Diploma required honours stage Modelled Design plus advanced modelling from the cast and life.¹⁸

¹³ VED, Exams, "Modelling the Human Figure from Life.," 1915, 1916, 1924, 1939. 1939 posed as the Venus of Knidos (by Praxiteles, Cast No. 27).

¹⁴ Ann Compton, "Plastic Pleasures: Reconsidering the Practice of Modeling Through Manuals of Sculpture Technique, C.1880–1933," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 3, no. 3 (2010): 311, doi:10.2752/174967810x12868890612286.

¹⁵ *SMB, Calendar 1914* (1914), 134.

¹⁶ Compton, "Plastic Pleasures," 318.

¹⁷ *SMB Magazine* (1917), 35.

¹⁸ Victorian Government, "Art Teacher's Certificate," *Victoria Government Gazette* 88, 12 April 1916, 1563, <http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/>; and VED, Exams, "Modelling the Human Figure from Life," 1939.

Senior modelling was probably taught by Arthur Melville Lilburne (1888-1918), a BTAS teaching graduate with “a deep interest in modelling, [and] ambitions in the direction of sculpture.” He became Art Master at the Melbourne Teachers’ College in 1915, but his career was short-lived. Aged 27, he enlisted in the AIF and was awarded the Military Cross, but sadly died of cerebral spinal meningitis in 1918.¹⁹

Principal Smith considered modelling ripe for expansion and in 1915 charged prized alumnus, Harold Herbert, with its delivery. Local business, Downer & Co., commissioned students to produce modelled busts, figurines and statuette samples for reproduction by the Eureka Terracotta and Tile Company.²⁰ In 1919, Walter Rowbotham (ARCA), replaced Herbert, assisted by third year student teacher, Victor Greenhalgh (1900-1983).²¹ Senior modelling exam passes grew, yet Smith considered Rowbotham’s output less than successful. In 1922 he moved to Caulfield Technical School and BTAS alumni, Thomas Trengrove (c1880-1954), stepped in.²²

In 1927, BTAS produced 45 passes between nature and cast. The same year, Harold Brown, Ernest Duncan, Donald I. Johnston, and Harold Jolly passed Modelling the Human Head from Life, likely as a component of the ongoing Art Teacher’s Certificate. Fifth year student teacher, Albert Moore, undertook his practical workshop experience in Modelling with Picton Hopkins & Son, Richmond.²³ In 1928, Greenhalgh, then modelling master, passed the rarely attempted Modelling Human Figure from Life exam.²⁴ When Ballarat lost its Manual Art places to Melbourne in 1929 however, candidate numbers plummeted to a handful.²⁵

The modelling process continued after students downed tools. Casting was a very important skill for advanced modelers, but training was not necessarily available everywhere. British students in Birmingham outsourced firing, casting or mould making.²⁶ In Victoria, most

¹⁹ “Courier, 9 June 1915,” “Courier, 15 June 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); NAA: B2455, Lilburne Arthur Melville.

²⁰ Smith, “31 May 1918,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 6.

²¹ “Ballarat Courier, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); Smith, “27 June 1919,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 28.

²² “Courier 4 May 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); Smith, “28 April 1922,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 74.

²³ Smith, “18 March 1925,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 128.

²⁴ “Courier, 22 February 1929,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁵ “Courier, 13 February 1925”; “Courier, 16 February 1926”; “Courier, 24 March 1926”; “Courier, 3 February 1927”; “Courier, 9 February 1927”; “Courier, 22 February 1929,” “Courier, 5 February 1931,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁶ Compton, “Plastic Pleasures,” 320; John Swift, “Women and Art Education at Birmingham Art Schools 1880-1920: Social Class, Opportunity and Aspiration,” *Journal of Art & Design Education* 18, no. 3 (1999): 317-326.

examination work was cast in plaster and, for many years, wrapped in tissue, packed in wooden boxes stuffed with sawdust and sent to Melbourne. While most art exams were sent to the Director of Education, modelling was addressed to the Art Inspector at the Art Centre within the Old Gaol Building, Melbourne.²⁷ Presumably, Director Frank Tate did not want his office riddled with statuary. Given the logistics, results for advanced modelling were sometimes published later than the two-dimensional exams.²⁸



Figure 6.2 **Relief modelling at East Sydney Technical College Art School.**
Sam Hood. *Young art students working in a 'life' class.* Original: glass photonegative. C1930.
(Courtesy State Library of New South Wales. FL1361704. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Carew-Smyth shared responsibility for modelling assessment with Henry Harvey (c1851-1936) from at least 1916. An English born designer and sculptor, Harvey was in his 60s when he took the role of Assistant Art Inspector.²⁹ Whether due to Harvey's retirement in 1928, or

²⁷ VED, Exams, "Casting Clay Models," 1926.

²⁸ Examinations were held in November and December. Results for most two-dimensional work were usually published the following February to early March, while advanced three-dimensional work was often published from mid-March, and sometimes as late as May, notably in 1921. Refer to Appendix, Table A-3, VED Art Examination results, DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee

²⁹ "Honor Tablets Should Be Artistic," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 5 May 1916, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article132733769>; "A Modelled Medallion," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 10 October 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article166043362>; "Obituary," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 07 May 1936, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11032881>.

at Greenhalgh's request, by 1931 Inspector Dean was assessing the school's fragile modelling work on-site, saving it from the rigours of freight.³⁰ That year, ten BTAS exam candidates worked from cast and five from plant. Another ten passed Modelled Design. Across Victoria, Modelled Design candidates maintained a strength of output unmatched by students working from life.³¹

In the UK at least, modelling came in for some negative criticism during the 1920s and 30s when compared with the honesty and directness of sculptural carving, and the subject was perceived as a relatively elementary craft.³² Yet in 1936, BTAS' three-year Art and Applied Art course offered a Modelling and Pottery stream.³³ Following successful sculptural commissions, Vic Greenhalgh became Melbourne Technical College (formerly WMC) art master in 1938. He was farewelled with praise and gifts. BTAS alumnus, Levi Molineaux took up the post temporarily but as a commercial artist, he was unlikely to bring any specialist modelling skill to the classes.³⁴

Carew-Smyth considered modelling "a cheap and excellent form of bimanual training."³⁵ Enthusiasm for the development of ambidexterity is supported in a recent study which found that the acquisition of bimanual motor skills resulted in enhanced synchronisation between regions of the brain for artists.³⁶ In 2006, an international survey found manual modelling and material manipulation skills remained fundamentally important in the development of design students' perceptual motor skills.³⁷

³⁰ "Courier, 12 December 1931," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³¹ "Courier, 3 February 1932," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); and Herbert, "Art," *The Australasian*, 17 September 1932.

³² Compton, "Plastic Pleasures," 310, 312.

³³ "Courier, 20 January 1936," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

³⁴ "Courier, 20 July 1938," "Courier, 21 July 1938," and "Courier, 13 July 1938," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

³⁵ VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1905), 67.

³⁶ Bhattacharya and Petsche, "Drawing on Mind's Canvas," 1, 11.

³⁷ Boucharenc, "Research on Basic Design Education," 18.

POTTERY

Disregarding technical differences, the terms pottery and ceramics have often been used interchangeably, attracting connotations ranging from hobby to profession.

Early Australian production potteries manufactured bricks, tiles, pipes and other utilitarian containers and fittings, and were usually located very close to a clay source. In 1862, despite access to good clay, Australia had “no adventurer in ceramic art.” Some believed Chinese immigrants could offer superior skill and valuable secrets for exploitation by a Victorian industry at low labour costs.³⁸ Instead, many sought English practitioners who closely guarded their trade secrets. Even then, experimentation was limited.³⁹ If the industry was to expand, potters needed to be trained locally.

Australian pottery instruction had a chequered history, its success or otherwise dependent on the will of government, support from local industries, and funding for suitable equipment and materials. The Horsham Working Men’s College offered classes until the local pottery works was “demolished in a storm.” The Bendigo School of Mines suffered poor accommodation and equipment, with classes limited to warmer months. In 1907, installation of a new kiln aimed to improve connections between the school and industry. However, a decade later it had failed to do so, with Carew-Smyth labelling the school’s facilities a “handicap.”⁴⁰

In Melbourne as at 1915, neither Swinburne nor WMC offered training.⁴¹ Brunswick housed a solid pottery industry, yet establishment of a specialist school was considered unwise given Australia’s struggle to compete with established creative industries elsewhere.⁴² Australia’s potters were thought creatively non-competitive. Taking a contrary stance, Carew-Smyth believed art schools could elevate local standards to match imported wares, contributing to a creative pottery industry to utilise Victoria’s excellent clays.⁴³ Efforts were made to generate a competitive ceramic arts industry and, for a time, BTAS was at the heart of research and development.

³⁸ *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 13 September 1862, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5722015>.

³⁹ Margolin, *World History of Design*, 411; William Hall and Dorothy Hall, *Australian Domestic Pottery: A Collector’s Guide* (Kenthurst, NSW: Kangaroo Press, 1992), 14; “Technical Training: Does South Australia Lag Behind?” *Evening Journal* (Adelaide, SA), Tuesday 3 February 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article207967377>.

⁴⁰ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 184; and “Art in Bendigo,” *Bendigo Advertiser* (Vic.), 22 October 1907, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89410547>; VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 15 (1915), 94 and PP no. 49 (1915), 79; “Bendigo Art School,” *The Bendigo Independent* (Vic), Tuesday 19 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219782427>.

⁴¹ VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 49 (1915), 80.

⁴² Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 201.

⁴³ VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 49 (1915), 80.

All fired up in Ballarat

Despite clay industries dating from the 1850s, few Ballarat residents considered themselves potters in 1915 and, according to Carew-Smyth, fewer specialised in art pottery.⁴⁴ Yet, with diverse types of quality local clays available, there was scope to develop a specialist industry in Ballarat for both production and studio potters. At this time pottery, terra cotta, china painting and modelling were offered at BTAS.⁴⁵

Principal Smith urged State government to appoint more pottery lecturers to support a creative industry. Reflecting their confidence in the school, the Education Department financed student teacher and 1916 dux, Amalie Feild (1894-1974), to study pottery and glass painting at Sydney Technical College, with a view to expand and improve classes at BTAS. In August 1917, armed with Feild's training and equipment list, the school made a further submission for funds. Hope for an "Australian 'Doulton Ware'" was raised.⁴⁶

Plans for a pottery kiln and glass furnace were drawn up; albeit located in the metallurgical department which Smith hoped would assist in developing glazes.⁴⁷ Smith solicited local brick manufacturer, Selkirk, to donate the 7,000 bricks required for its construction. He emerged with samples from the company clay pit, and half the bricks for free. Firebricks for the muffle were later despatched from Sydney.⁴⁸ Together, Smith and SMB principal, Maurice Copeland, also pitched the development of a local art pottery industry to the Eureka Terracotta and Tile Co., who promised "sympathetic co-operation and support", and planned a deputation to the Victorian Mines Department for assistance. Meanwhile, students began preparing specimens for firing. They also modelled commissioned statuary examples and experimented with painting dolls heads for Lucas & Co., in preparation for employment.⁴⁹

Staff of the science and art schools worked independently and collaboratively to test and analyse district clays which were found to be of very high quality and suited to white earthenware.⁵⁰ The experiments, promoted in the press, attracted attention from prospective

⁴⁴ Ancestry.com. "Division of Ballaarat; Subdivision of Ballaarat," 1915. *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903–1980 [database online]*; and "The Potter's Art," *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 9 October 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243782884>.

⁴⁵ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11.

⁴⁶ *SMB Magazine* 1917, 14.

⁴⁷ Refer to: "Star, 24 July 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); SMB, *Annual Report* (1917), 4; SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (August 1917), 2; (September 1917), 1.

⁴⁸ Smith, "31 May 1918," "26 July 1918," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 5, 10.

⁴⁹ Smith, "26 April 1918," "31 May 1918," "26 September 1918," "27 June 1919," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 3, 6, 15, 28.

⁵⁰ SMB, *Annual Report* (1918), 2.

students. Imported English glazes arrived in 1920, and in 1921 the facilities and kiln were finally completed.⁵¹

Students designed, built and decorated creative pieces to test local clays. Their second firing consisted of 70 or 80 experimental pieces described as “beautiful works of art” created with untempered “artist fancy.” A range of glazes were employed and assessed. Some unexpected but “strikingly effective tints” resulted from smoke entering the furnace through a cracked muffle. Another kiln-load was ready for firing four months later.⁵²

In the meantime, science principal, Reginald Callister, was appointed to investigate local clays by the Bureau of Science and Industry.⁵³ Callister’s expertise with ceramic materials eventually led him to England’s pottery centre, Stoke-on-Trent, where he taught at the pottery school. William Moore credited Callister with the success of art pottery at BTAS.⁵⁴ Certainly, he was a successful ceramic chemist, but the greater progress was arguably made by Feild, her colleagues, and their successors in the art school.

Thomas Trengrove was one such figure. Head-hunted by BTAS in 1922, Trengrove (who studied at the Ballarat West Gallery School under Carew-Smyth) had been experimenting with clays during his fourteen years as art principal at the Stawell School of Mines. Clay unearthed around Stawell was exported to potteries across Australia, but the locals were yet to manufacture anything with it themselves. Trengrove attempted to spark the community’s interest in art ceramics, with little success. When appointed Senior Assistant Art Master at BTAS, a Stawell city-councillor begrudged Ballarat for benefitting from Trengrove’s experiments. His protestations were too little, too late.⁵⁵

With local clays, some bespoke glazes, and Feild and Trengrove at the helm, BTAS art pottery classes promised a distinctive art pottery style. A special collection was developed for display at the Jubilee Education Exhibition in Melbourne.⁵⁶ More was learned with each successive burn. The school demonstrated that original, quality pieces could be manufactured, but a question mark remained around profitability.⁵⁷ In 1922, *The Herald* declared:

⁵¹ Smith, “30 April 1920,” “30 July 1920,” “24 June 1921,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 44, 50, 57.

⁵² “Courier, 23 February 1921” and “Courier, 27 June 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁵³ “Courier, 28 February 1921” and “Courier, 25 August 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁵⁴ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 229.

⁵⁵ “The Pottery Industry,” *Stawell News and Pleasant Creek Chronicle* (Vic.), 27 October 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article129493915>; and “Courier, 30 January 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁵⁶ “Courier, 29 July 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁵⁷ “Courier, 10 February 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

“Australia imports thousands of pounds worth of decorated pottery. After inspecting this work of the Technical schools at Ballarat, Geelong and Swinburne, one is forced to ask Why?”⁵⁸

BTAS’ decorative ceramics drew admiration from several visitors, including Max Meldrum and Ethel Campbell. A delighted chief architect of the Public Works Department declared he had “never seen anything like” the work.⁵⁹ Leonard Lumsden Grimwade (1864–1931), founder of Royal Winton, admired BTAS art pottery, noting it would find a ready market if commercially scalable.⁶⁰ However, renowned chemist, Sir David Orme Masson (1858-1937), suspected uncompromising expectations could hamper local industry, as “what he regarded as pure white was not good enough for the Ballarat experts.”⁶¹ Grimwade also attempted to allay local concerns. In fact, Callister’s research found nearby kaolin clays to be more plastic, consistent and whiter than English and Cornish clays, if less pure.⁶²

Despite the praise, Feild and Trengrove remained cautious, noting ongoing work was required to achieve uniformity.⁶³ To support their research, BTAS imported samples of English pottery from Doulton, Royal Lancashire, and Pilkington’s Tile and Pottery Co. Ltd., hoping to eventually display them in a refurbished SMB Museum.⁶⁴

Approximately 80 pieces of ‘Oriental ware’, fired in August 1923, were considered among the best to date.⁶⁵ In November, a technically successful firing overcame crazing problems to produce a fine matt surface and demonstrate “a very high degree of skill.”⁶⁶ Staff felt they had turned a corner. To accommodate expanding classes, the pottery department was remodelled, extended and equipped with a new motorised potters’ wheel and lathe purchased with an Education Department grant. The kiln was relined in 1925, and in 1927 the job of

⁵⁸ “The Potter’s Art,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 9 October 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243782884>.

⁵⁹ “27 January 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); and “Courier, 29 November 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁶⁰ SMB, *Annual Report* (1923), 8; and Ancestry.com. *Western Australia, Australia, Crew and Passenger Lists, 1852-1930*. For further reading see Royal Winton, “The Royal Winton Story,” accessed 10 February 2016, <http://www.royalwinton.co.uk/about-us/the-royal-winton-story/>.

⁶¹ “Courier, 2 October 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁶² “Courier, 11 October 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁶³ “Star, 27 August 1923” and “Courier, 3 September 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁶⁴ “Star, 27 August 1923,” and “Courier, 13 February 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁶⁵ “Star, 27 August 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–24).

⁶⁶ Smith, “30 November 1923,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 105; “Courier, 3 December 1923” and “Courier, 15 December 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); SMB, *Annual Report* (1924), 14.

grinding clays relocated students from the boiler room to a more convenient space adjoining the kiln. The classes maintained good numbers and the quality of work advanced.⁶⁷

Amalie Feild had established art pottery and driven it to relative success, but in 1927 she moved to Melbourne where she would teach at the WMC and eventually become an esteemed painter. Gladys Kelly (1906-1942) was appointed in her stead. Kelly had just completed her Manual Arts course at BTAS, specialising in pottery under Feild.⁶⁸ In 1931, having lost her teaching position when the Brunswick pottery school closed, Kelly followed her mentor to WMC to become its first full-time pottery teacher.⁶⁹

The case for a local ceramic industry had been made. Students could prepare the clay, create glazes, design, fire and finish the work. Principal Smith encourage Ballarat to facilitate a commercial enterprise before another city profited from their work.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, Ballarat procrastinated.



Figure 6.3 Alice Watson. "Design on the Waratah to be executed in clay". *Artwork – Folio of artwork undertaken at the Ballarat School of Mines Technical Art School. 1932.* (Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 12051. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

⁶⁷ Smith, "28 May 1924," "30 July 1924," "19 August 1925," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 114, 117, 138; "Star, 31 May 1924," *SMB Cuttings (1921-1924)*; "Courier, 17 October 1925" and "Courier, 21 February 1927," *SMB Cuttings (1925-1936)*.

⁶⁸ Smith, "16 February 1927," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 156; "Courier, 21 February 1927," *SMB Cuttings (1925-1936)*.

⁶⁹ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 39; and Timms, "Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges," 40.

⁷⁰ "Courier, 20 September 1924," *SMB Cuttings (1921-1924)*.

BTAS pottery attracted coverage in the local press and classes remained popular. Evaluation of clay deposits and studio experimentation continued, and the kiln was improved in 1929. Following a coal strike, Trengrove explored combinations of briquettes and wood for firing. Several students were also working at the Creswick pottery.⁷¹ By the 1930s, firings were achieving consistent results with clay substantially sourced from Canadian, an area of Ballarat. Student workmanship was considered excellent; some were creatively conservative, others showed “originality in design and coloring.”⁷²

In 1932, the popular classes were cramped and limited by just four available wheels. Smith’s representations to Inspector Dean resulted in just one additional power wheel and a useless hand wheel from the Brunswick school closure.⁷³ Despite vandals destroying a kiln of work in 1932, many objects subsequently emerged, including jars, dishes and ornaments, all “artistically shaped and decorated.”⁷⁴ The scope of BTAS’ activity led Michael Bogle to list pottery design as a speciality, alongside decorative metalwork.⁷⁵

Despite high hopes and energised efforts, a large-scale art-pottery industry eluded Ballarat. Local clays continue to be mined, the robust ones used in brick manufacture, the finer, white kaolin mostly exported. Advances in craft pottery did not fully translate to Victoria’s production potteries which continued to focus on utilitarian products.⁷⁶ Art pottery had not yet achieved the importance it commanded in other nations and a potential industry went largely untapped.

Amalie Feild, Gladys Kelly and Thomas Trengrove are notable for their legacy as teachers of ceramic art, the diffusion of their knowledge and skill, and the students they inspired. Potters such as Margaret Mahood (1901-1989), Klytie Pate (1912-2010) and Allan Lowe (1907-2001) studied under Feild and/or Kelly at the WMC.⁷⁷

Feild was reportedly reluctant to start the BTAS pottery class. This is surprising given the energy she devoted to the medium, course and students. She likely grew to enjoy the potters’ art but would ultimately devote herself to painting. In any case, only a single ceramic item

⁷¹ “Courier, 10 December 1929,” “Courier, 21 May 1929,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Smith, “20 March 1929,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 2.

⁷² “Courier, 14 May 1932,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁷³ Smith, “18 June 1932,” “20 July 1932,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 40, 41.

⁷⁴ “Courier, 29 September 1932,” “Courier, 19 December 1933,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁷⁵ Bogle, *Design in Australia*, 33.

⁷⁶ “Art in Industry,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 28 April 1934, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article10931894>.; Clark, *The Future* (1927), 5.

⁷⁷ Alisa Bunbury, *From the Earth I Arise: The Ceramics of Marguerite Mahood* (Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, 1997), 1.

was available for a 2010 exhibition of her work.⁷⁸ Kelly attracted little fame as a potter in her own right but lived in Brunswick, close to the ceramic industry, until her untimely death due to prolonged chemical exposure, aged 31, in 1942. Trengrove's classes remained popular, and he continued to experiment at BTAS until his death, aged 62, in 1954. He trained generations of potters who demonstrated a "very high level of competency", artistry and craftsmanship.⁷⁹

Historic Ornament examination sometimes covered pottery, for example, the characteristics of Henri Deux's work (Orion Ware), Samian Ware, and the differences between English porcelain studios and the production of sgraffito in Italian ceramics.⁸⁰ Pottery design was an option in some General Design exams too, however as this subject involved only concept and not execution, students were not at risk of getting their hands dirty.

During the 1920s and 30s, BTAS' success countered the ebbing popularity of pottery classes elsewhere in Australia, despite being a boom period for Australian pottery in general.⁸¹ In 1909, Sydney Technical College's excellent facilities were impeded by a rudimentary course. Later, access to just one dodgy pottery wheel left students at East Sydney Technical College pressing clay or pouring slip into moulds. Its course, which Feild experienced under the guidance of long-time instructor, Lewis J. Harvey (1879-1949), was practically defunct by the end of the 1920s.⁸² Brisbane Technical College is credited with establishing Australia's first comprehensive pottery course in 1916, but the old-fashioned instructor insisted on systematic modelling exercises and discouraged creativity in favour of skill. Again, the wheel was neglected, nor did students work with glaze, and the course increasingly attracted hobbyists.⁸³

Once Swinburne's pottery classes were firmly established around 1922, the department trebled in size. Like BTAS, it was bucking a trend. Brunswick Technical College launched its studio pottery in 1926 but the art-based syllabus irritated local manufacturers, and BTAS' Gladys Kelly taught for just two years before the department closed.⁸⁴ Conversely, Bendigo's School of Mines was criticised for failing to build art pottery capability, instead catering to

⁷⁸ Kovacic, *Archie & Amalie Colquhoun*, 16.

⁷⁹ "Courier, 17 August 1940," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948),

⁸⁰ VED, Exams, 1915, "Historic Ornament, Part I"; VED, Exams, 1921, "Historic Ornament, Part II."

⁸¹ Timms, "Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges," 39.

⁸² Timms, "Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges," 39, 40; and Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 23, 38-39.

⁸³ Timms, "Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges," 41.

⁸⁴ Timms, "Art Education in the Schools and Technical Colleges," 40.

established local industry requirements.⁸⁵ Perhaps a smart move given Brunswick’s fate. In Britain, apprentices had the upper hand, learning with materials on-the-job. London’s Royal College of Art did not install a pottery kiln until 1923.⁸⁶ Despite hiccoughs, technical art schools were at the vanguard of art pottery in Australia.



Figure 6.4 Left: *Eastern Suburbs Technical School: pottery classroom*. Photograph, 1923.

(Courtesy State Archives & Records Authority of New South Wales, FL1840474, Public Domain).

Right: *Swinburne Technical College. Pottery Class, 1930s*. Photograph: b&w; 15 x 20 cm, c1930s. (Courtesy Swinburne History Collection, Swinburne Commons, Public domain.)

A gendered speciality?

Witnessing smiling, young women potters at work, a Melbourne journalist ruminated on the almost divine process of creating ‘life’ from clay; “you sigh and ask (if you are single), ‘Who wouldn’t be a potter?’”⁸⁷ More down-to-earth, Carew-Smyth suggested pottery offered women “well-paid, artistic, and pleasant occupations” more liberating than “being shut up in ill-ventilated offices.”⁸⁸ Sometimes women were directed toward pottery to exclude them from other media, as the Bauhaus’ Walter Gropius is suggested to have done.⁸⁹ Directing women toward specific disciplines enabled the “establishment of a hierarchy of value and skill based on sex.”⁹⁰ Even in societies where women dominate pottery, their innovations are

⁸⁵ “Bendigo Art School,” *Bendigo Independent* (Vic.), 19 November 1918, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219782427.40>; and Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 40.

⁸⁶ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, “The Royal College of Art,” 90.

⁸⁷ “The Potter’s Art,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 9 October 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243782884>.

⁸⁸ See Victoria, Board of Inquiry into the Working Men’s College, *Final Report*, PP no. 14 (1911), 25.; VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 49. (1915), 80; and “The Pottery Industry,” *Stawell News and Pleasant Creek Chronicle* (Vic.), 27 October 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article129493915>.

⁸⁹ Eskilson, *Graphic Design*, 229, 232; Necipoglu and Payne, eds., *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local* (2016), 2.

⁹⁰ Buckley, “Made in Patriarchy,” 6.

often overlooked by men.⁹¹ Yet the triangle of femininity-pottery-domesticity allowed women to embrace the modernist stylings being popularised for domestic objects, reinforcing the contribution of female artists to Australian modernism. In 1940, BTAS students were at least credited with having “gone far beyond [...] plain cups, bowls and vases.”⁹²



Figure 6.5 *Ballarat School of Mines Ceramics Class, c1940s.* Photograph, 11.0 x 13.5 cm, c1940s.
(Courtesy FedHC, 00264. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

⁹¹ Davis, “Investigating the Diffusion of Stylistic Innovations,” 66.

⁹² “Courier, 17 August 1940,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

SCULPTURE

In South Kensington systems, sculpture was almost universally studied by drawing and modelling copies from pre-selected forms, yet sculpture harnessed diverse materials that could be built, carved or moulded. By the 1920s, avant-garde experimentation meant imitative learning approaches were falling out of favour, although there was a brief ‘return to order’ following the World War I. As late as 1929, London’s RCA sculpture department struggled to break with convention, the now celebrated Henry Moore (1898–1986) deemed an unsuitable teacher.⁹³ Eventually, modernist approaches to material invigorated sculptural practice. In a chicken-or-egg scenario, simplified forms allowed greater experimentation with media, while robust materials suited fashionably unadorned styles.

Artists’ exposure to international techniques and ideas reportedly improved Australian sculpture between 1890 and 1920.⁹⁴ In 1894, British-born sculptor Henry Harvey (c1850–1936) was teaching at the Working Men’s College (WMC), subsequently acting as an assistant Art Inspector and examiner.⁹⁵ Twenty years later, the expert Harvey shared a successful exhibition with several emerging BTAS graduates, including Arthur Lilburne.⁹⁶ Immediately following World War I, demand for memorials gave sculptural practice a boost, and in 1924 Australia’s first School of Sculpture was established at East Sydney Technical College under Rayner Hoff (1894–1937).⁹⁷ By the late 1920s, however, demand was waning.

Skills developed with craft materials such as wood, stone and metal were transferrable to fine art sculpting, and arguably equally commercial.⁹⁸ However, sculpture at Australian technical art schools was largely industrial, architectural or ornamental. Euro-classical forms dominated modelling classes from the antique, while historic ornament cast a broader geographical net, but prioritised architecture. The Art Teachers’ Diploma, within which

⁹³ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, “The Royal College of Art,” 58.

⁹⁴ Donald Williams, *In Our Own Image: The Story of Australian Art 1788–1989*. 2 ed. (Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1990), 80.

⁹⁵ “The Proposed School of Art in Prahran,” *Prahran Chronicle* (Vic.), 3 November 1894, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165213905>; Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 86.

⁹⁶ “Artists Taste Success,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 18 May 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242138072>; “Artistic Crafts Exhibition,” *Leader* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 May 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89309542>; Johanna, “Melbourne Chatter,” *The Bulletin*, 7 May 1914, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/254141156>.

⁹⁷ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 230.

⁹⁸ “Art and the State School,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 24 November 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206251469>; *SMB Magazine* (1920), 32; VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no.1, 1937), 23.

sculpture was a specialty craft option, also required examination in history and methods of sculpture.⁹⁹

Success as a sculptor was hard won, requiring creativity, draughtsmanship and “the competence and skill of the engineer.”¹⁰⁰ Materials were often expensive, their manipulation unforgiving and time consuming, sometimes requiring several stages of production. Work tended to be large and immobile. Given its expense, much sculptural work was commission based, often monumental and memorial. Eventually, functional objects and homewares would be recognised as sculptural opportunities, but this favoured industrial designers and emerging materials over traditional sculptors and approaches.

Ballarat was well endowed with traditional sculptural examples, earning the title ‘City of Statues’.¹⁰¹ Yet very few BTAS graduates specialised in art-sculpture. Victor Greenhalgh’s (1900-1983) student talent for classical sculpture led *SMB Magazine* editors to Romanise his name to “Victorio Greenhalghio (what sculpts).”¹⁰² Turning eighteen, Greenhalgh applied for the AIF but was relieved by Armistice just three days later. Greenhalgh’s early studies overlapped with those of Violet Sheppard Hambly (1902-c1990), and both taught at Victorian technical colleges before marrying in 1930.¹⁰³ Greenhalgh worked briefly at the Melbourne Technical College (MTC) in 1921, represented Bendigo’s School of Mines when the Victorian Art Teachers’ Association reformed in 1924, then returned to teach at BTAS in 1927 while undertaking advanced examinations for the Art Teacher’s Certificate.¹⁰⁴ In 1931 he accompanied his modelling and architecture students on a three-day excursion to view the construction of the War Memorial, inspect its sculptures, and view the work of students at Swinburne.¹⁰⁵

In 1936, art school students and staff submitted four proposals to the King George V memorial committee for a statue of their eponym. The final concept, presented with plans elevations, working details, and a plaster model, was budgeted and approved. Although responsibility for “the School’s design” fell to Smith and staff, Greenhalgh modelled the

⁹⁹ Vic. Govt., “Art Teacher’s Certificate,” *Gazette* 88, 1563.

¹⁰⁰ Daryl Lindsay, Director of the NGV, in “Sculptors Can Assist Architects,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 15 November 1949, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article189474606>.

¹⁰¹ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 101.

¹⁰² *SMB Magazine* (1917), 23.

¹⁰³ *SMB Magazine* (1929), 4; *SMB Magazine* (1930), 3.

¹⁰⁴ “Missionaries of Art,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1921215>; *SMB Magazine* (1927), 13; “Courier, 2 February 1928,” “Courier, 22 February 1929,” “Courier, 24 November 1930,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

¹⁰⁵ “Courier, 22 August 1931,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

central figure of the king, and the sculpture bears his signature. The completed master, praised for its likeness, was exhibited in the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery where it was awarded the prestigious Crouch prize. Soon after, the plaster model was carefully shipped to Naples, Italy, where it was moulded and cast in bronze. Its progress was keenly followed by Ballarat newspapers. The bronzed king was set upon locally sourced Harcourt granite masonry in Sturt Street, where it remains today.¹⁰⁶



Figure 6.6 **King George V Memorial, Ballarat.**

Victor Greenhalgh. *George V 1910-1936*. Bronze component. Ballarat, Australia, 1936; Naples, Italy, 1937. (Photograph Elise Whetter 2020. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0).

¹⁰⁶ Smith, “15 July 1936,” “19 August 1936,” “16 September 1936,” “23 June 1937,” “27 April 1938,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 107, 109, 110, 122, 137; “Courier, 23 June 1936,” “Courier, 22 March 1937,” “Courier, 9 June 1937,” “Courier, 21 July 1937,” “Courier, 21 September 1937,” “Courier, 26 November 1937,” “Courier, 16 March 1938” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); SMB, *Annual Report* (1936), 3; SMB, *Annual Report* (1939), 4.

Greenhalgh's skill led to many commissions, including eight Prime Ministerial busts in Ballarat's Botanic Gardens. An attempt to portray Malcolm Fraser did not meet Greenhalgh's own high standards and the work was replaced after his death.¹⁰⁷ He was not the first Ballarat sculptor to contribute to the avenue. That honour went to twenty-year-old Ken Walker in 1946 with his bust of Ben Chifley.¹⁰⁸

Greenhalgh joined Melbourne Technical College (MTC) as art master in 1938. BTAS alumnus, Levi Molineaux, took up the interim Ballarat post.¹⁰⁹ Under Greenhalgh, the MTC sculpture department incorporated stone and wood carving, modelling, pressed cement, metal work, sand-blasting and glass; both allied to architecture, and as discrete disciplines.¹¹⁰ Greenhalgh inadvertently contributed to the stained glass ceiling of the National Gallery of Victoria's Great Hall when he convinced Leonard French (1928-2017) to leave his sign-writing apprenticeship and study art instead.¹¹¹

Greenhalgh is credited with being an early adopter of modern style in sculpture, moving away from the academic traditions of predecessors. While his King George does not fit the modern moniker, later work was more progressive. Some work was thought reminiscent of Henry Moore. Elsewhere, he was described as a 'formalist'.¹¹² In 1942, Greenhalgh applied to be an official war sculptor, but it seems he did not serve in this capacity.¹¹³ During the 1930s and 1940s, Australian sculptors were "almost a forgotten race in their own land" and local commissions were few and far between.¹¹⁴ Expenditure on World War II overshadowed creative commissions (such as the Ballarat pioneers' memorial) and sculptors fell into

¹⁰⁷ National Portrait Gallery, "Victor Greenhalgh," *National Portrait Gallery*, last modified 2004, accessed 25 October 2019, <https://www.portrait.gov.au/people/victor-greenhalgh-1900>; Tom McIlroy, "The Portrait Malcolm Fraser Never Wanted You to See," *Canberra Times* (ACT), last modified 23 March 2015, accessed 25 October 2019, <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6070153/the-portrait-malcolm-fraser-never-wanted-you-to-see/>

¹⁰⁸ "Courier, 13 September 1946," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁰⁹ "Courier, 20 July 1938," "Courier, 21 July 1938," and "Courier, 13 July 1938," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹¹⁰ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35.

¹¹¹ Calum Alexander, "Vincas Jomantas: Launch of Monograph on Influential Sculptor," *RMIT University*, last modified 28 May 2018, accessed 25 October 2019, <https://rmitgallery.com/news/vincas-jomantas-launch-of-monograph-on-influential-sculptor/>.

¹¹² National Portrait Gallery, "Victor Greenhalgh,"; "100 Years of Art," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 October 1954, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article210669834>; "Art Notes," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 14 November 1950, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206410851>; "Achievement of Victorian Sculptors," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 1 September 1951, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205333359>; Alan Warren, "Seven Art Exhibitions Show Wide Range of Trends," *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 13 November 1950, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article244351005>.

¹¹³ NAA: AWM 93, 50/6/6.

¹¹⁴ "Even Artists Pay Tribute to the Horse Today," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 October 1949, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article22788614>.

“unwarranted obscurity.”¹¹⁵ To reanimate the field, around twenty sculptors formed the Victorian Sculptors’ Society (VSS), an off-shoot of the Victorian Artists’ Society, in 1947, with Greenhalgh its first president.¹¹⁶ In 1951, Greenhalgh co-judged the Commonwealth Jubilee art prize.¹¹⁷



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

131205

Figure 6.7 **Victor (Vic) Greenhalgh (left) instructing a design class at the Melbourne Technical College.** Keith Davis. Photograph, 29 August 1946. (Courtesy AWM, 131205. Public Domain.)

Victor Greenhalgh continued to teach at MTC (and RMIT) into the 1960s, with nine years at the helm. He is acknowledged for his contribution to Australian tertiary art education.¹¹⁸ Greenhalgh and Hambly retired to Coolangatta in 1968. RMIT University students benefit from his legacy through a scholarship established by alumnus Dr Bob Isherwood in 2004.¹¹⁹

Assisting Greenhalgh to prepare the King George V statue was BTAS student, Harold Jasper Symons (1909-1963), who later studied modern sculptural developments in Budapest,

¹¹⁵ “Courier, 19 April 1940,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); “Welcome Display of Sculpture,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 15 August 1947, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245088912>.

¹¹⁶ Association of Sculptors of Victoria, “History,” *Association of Sculptors of Victoria*, accessed 25 October 2019, <https://sculptorsvictoria.asn.au/page/history>; “Even Artists Pay Tribute to the Horse Today,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 29 October 1949, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article22788614>.

¹¹⁷ “£1000 Prize to Sydney Artist,” *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney, NSW), 16 August 1951, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article248601286>.

¹¹⁸ “Busts of P.M. And Deputy,” *Canberra Times* (ACT), 28 April 1969, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article107090890>; National Portrait Gallery, “Victor Greenhalgh,”

¹¹⁹ RMIT, “Victor Greenhalgh Scholarship” *RMIT University*, last modified 2019, accessed 30 October 2019, <https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/work-study-opportunities/scholarships/browse-scholarships/victor-greenhalgh>.

Hungary. Returning via London onboard the *Orama* in 1933, the 24-year-old titled himself ‘sculptor’.¹²⁰ Once home in the City of Statues, he described Ballarat’s statuary as obsolete and “laughable” compared to the simplified modernist works adorning continental gardens.¹²¹ In 1937, Symons was offered two years’ engagement assisting sculptor William Leslie Bowles (1885-1954), perhaps best known for his Australian War Memorial works.¹²² Yet, the bulk of Bowles’ assistance, post 1940, is credited to Raymond Ewers (1917-1998). Despite early confidence, Symons never became a renowned modernist sculptor.

BTAS graduate Allan Jeffery Beeson Wilkinson (1921-1997) was pottery instructor at MTC for more than twenty years from 1944, specialising in ceramic sculpture.¹²³ Wilkinson had sailed the Pacific aboard troopship *HMAS Westralia* as an able seaman, sketching as he travelled, and was later appointed a war artist. In 1946, the National War Memorial Board purchased the salt-glazed, stoneware bust of an unidentified Japanese prisoner, modelled from clay Wilkinson found ashore at Goodenough Island.¹²⁴ In 1951 he exhibited among a group at the VSS, alongside Vic Greenhalgh. A Melbourne critic suggests that what the Australian exhibitors lacked in historical tradition, they gained in expression through material. Wilkinson himself, however, was described as “an artist of talent but an absence of selective powers.”¹²⁵ A harsh assessment given he was the first Ballarat sculptor represented at the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. His ‘Battered Boxer’ was the only sculpture entered in the Crouch Prize in 1946.¹²⁶ An exhibition of Wilkinson’s work was curated in 2013.¹²⁷

¹²⁰ *Orama*, 11 November 1933. Ancestry.com. UK, *Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960* [database online].

¹²¹ “Ballarat Statues Obsolete,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 18 December 1933, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243217810>.

¹²² Smith, “15 September 1937,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 127; “Courier, 21 September 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹²³ Refer Timms, *Australian Studio Pottery and China Painting*, 183. A biography is available at Michael Bogle, ‘Skater12’, and ‘duggim’, “Jeffery Wilkinson,” *Design and Art Australia Online*, last modified 2017, 2013, accessed 29 October 2019, <https://www.daa.org.au/bio/jeffery-wilkinson/biography/>

¹²⁴ “Statue of Jap. Pow,” *Telegraph* (Brisbane, Qld.), 14 February 1946, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article188439632>; “News of the Day,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 14 February 1946, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206800940>; “Courier, 10 April 1946,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948); AWM, “Japanese Prisoner of War,” *Australian War Memorial*, accessed 23 August 2019, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C157136>.

¹²⁵ Alan McCulloch, “Art Review. Traditions in Sculpture,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 November 1953, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245038752>.

¹²⁶ “Courier, 10 April 1946,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹²⁷ Penny Webb, “Wheel of Originality,” *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW), 25 October 2013, accessed 29 October 2020. <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/wheel-of-originality-spun-20131024-2w47a.html>

LIGHT METAL WORK AND REPOUSSÉ

In the inter-war period, Australian technical college metal work favoured decorative iron, while precious metal smithing was the purview of apprenticed jewellers.¹²⁸ A few schools, including BTAS, taught art metal work to train both artistic expression and manual dexterity. Using sheets of pliable, light metal, the work embodied three-dimensional space as well as surface, and was considered appropriate for women. An example of repoussé work by BTAS' Miss E. Mann was included in Richard T. Baker's *Australian Flora in Applied Art* and a piece by Elsie Naples is held in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney.¹²⁹

As no forge or foundry was required, the soft metal could be worked with relatively inexpensive tools like pliers, drills, mallets and anvils, complemented by dainty jeweller saws and punches. Repoussé added dimension to flat surfaces, and advanced techniques were popular despite the challenge of working in reverse.¹³⁰ Tough, elastic copper and its more brittle alloy, brass, were affordable and forgiving materials. Mistakes could be reworked with limited risk of breakage, a distinct advantage for learners, but there were associated risks from dangerous chemicals, gas flames and toxic fumes.

Light metal arts were taught in many parts of the world.¹³¹ Carew-Smyth had studied repoussé metal in London's Guild School of Handicrafts; however, such institutions were not necessarily the dominion of working-class, vocational students.¹³² Metalwork was among the applied arts practised by Australian modernists, who continued arts and crafts tradition while shunning established art hierarchies.¹³³ Light metal also had commercial application to product and interior design, an example being pressed metal cladding, popular in Australian homes around Federation.

¹²⁸ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 51.

¹²⁹ Smith, ed. "Nationalism," in *Documents on Art and Taste*, 230; Figure 46 in Richard T. Baker, *The Australian Flora in Applied Art* (Sydney: Department of Public Instruction (NSW), Technical Education Branch, 1915), 39; Elsie Naples, "A copper trinket box by Miss E. Naples," Pentagonal copper repoussé box with hinged lid. 115 x 330 x 315 mm. c1912. Museum of Applied Art and Sciences, A1490, accessed 29 October 2020, <https://ma.as/173644>

¹³⁰ VED, "General Report in Art in Technical Schools by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 5 (1910), 69.

¹³¹ For example, Austria, Chile, Germany, Greece, Japan, Sweden and the United States, and British sites beyond South Kensington's reach such as Central London School, the Glasgow School, and Birmingham.

¹³² Stephen Knott, "Working Class, Middle Class, Upper Class, Evening Class: Supplementary Education and Craft Instruction, 1889–1939," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 7, no. 1 (2014): 16, doi:10.2752/174967814x13932425309471.

¹³³ Bogle, *Design in Australia*, 55.

BTAS became well known for its art metal work, as did Prahran Technical School. At Swinburne the medium “flourished” under emigre silversmith, Albert Woffinden.¹³⁴ Less salubriously, panel-beater Wilfred Kenneth (c1883-1957) was instructor at BTAS between 1915 and 1936, yet his students’ art metal was described as handwork “of exquisite beauty.”¹³⁵ Kenneth worked two nights per week and received twice the remuneration of the sign-writing teacher. His popular classes stretched accommodations and the State was approached for a grant to better equip and staff the subject. Kenneth taught boys and girls at preparatory and senior levels, including the Art Metal Work and Repoussé industrial design specialisation.¹³⁶



Figure 6.8 **Limited examples of light metal work remain in the Federation University Historical Collection.** Clockwise from left; *Shield - Senior Technical Schools Athletics Association Herald Shield, 1918-1940.* Timber and metal repoussé, 50 x 33cm, c1918; Herbert H. Smith (attributed), "In Memory of Maurice O. Copland," Copper repoussé plaque, mounted on blackwood, c1920; and *Metalwork - Turned copper bowl, 4.0 x 10.0 cm, date unknown.* (Images courtesy FedHC 10931, A00349, 08335. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Demand for student skills is evident in many commemorative commissions. In 1917, BTAS designed and completed an honour board in oxidised metal and fiddleback blackwood for the Sydney Sports Club. A similar project utilising Queensland maple was produced for the

¹³⁴ Bogle, *Design in Australia*, 33; VED, PP no. 1 (1932), 5; and Jordan, *The Swinburne Technical College Staff Newsletter* (1959), online.

¹³⁵ “Courier, 7 July 1932,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

¹³⁶ Kenneth took 6 months leave from BTAS to work at WMC and Swinburne College in 1931, then moved permanently to MTC in 1936. SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (July 1915), 3; SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 2; Smith, “17 June 1931,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 29-31; “Courier, 18 February 1937”, SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

Ballarat Old Colonists Club.¹³⁷ Many groups commissioned similar but unique items.¹³⁸ The metal work program, renowned for its memorial commissions, welcomed twelve returned soldiers to its classes between 1918 and 1922. In total, 402 returned service men would train with SMB.¹³⁹



Figure 6.9 **Work of returned soldiers at the 1919 Arts and Crafts Society exhibition at Government House.** "Art Metal Work (Ballarat School of Mines)." Reproduced from digital archive, *Weekly Times* (Melbourne, Vic.) 22 November 1919. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article222566623>. Public Domain.

The repatriation classes catalysed into a new business, the Decorative Metal Craft Company in Chancery Lane, Ballarat (as distinct from The Art Metal Company, also operated by BTAS graduates).¹⁴⁰ Working in copper, brass and nickel silver, the company created dozens of items both useful and ornamental, which were stocked locally, interstate and in New Zealand. The company's work was noted by William Moore in *The Story of Australian Art*, and described as "beautifully finished, and each item is a work of art" by the local paper.¹⁴¹ The group could have established in Melbourne but elected to remain close to the supervision and influence of BTAS.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (October 1917).

¹³⁸ Smith, "31 May 1918," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 6.

¹³⁹ "Star, 29 April 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921-1924).

¹⁴⁰ Smith, "26 March 1920," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 42; "Courier, 28 August 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921-1924); "Advertising," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.: 1865-1924). 21 December 1921, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article219325755>; and "Our Industrial Activity," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.: 1865-1924). 05 July 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213035537>.

¹⁴¹ Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 229; "Our Industrial Activity," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.: 1865-1924). 05 July 1922, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213035537>.

¹⁴² *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 16 February 1923, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213543888>.



Figure 6.10
Alice Watson.
Two enameled buttons. c1930.
(Courtesy FedHC, 22141. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

When repatriation classes concluded, spaces were quickly filled by women.¹⁴³ Large numbers warranted additional classes. Perhaps it is owing to the increased female presence that the metal work included more personal items such as decoratively enamelled jewellery boxes, pendants and brooches.¹⁴⁴ A small jewellery and enamelling class, introduced in 1922, added to the teaching load of assistant art master, John Rowell. Wilfred Kenneth and artist Eugenie Bertha Durran (1889-1989) (Rowell's wife), exhibited some early samples alongside Rowell's paintings at the Athenaeum Hall.¹⁴⁵ Coloured enamels could be quite toxic, and the process was known to tax even the most experienced metal worker. Yet, the students apparently coped ably with the medium, displaying "some really beautiful specimens."¹⁴⁶

Students produced diverse plain and enamelled goods which attracted much attention at BTAS exhibitions, where the school was anxious to explain that, despite looking difficult, art metal was accessible and affordable.¹⁴⁷ In a 1932 shop window display to attract new students, the "delicate and exquisite electric lamp shades" created by teacher Claudia McIlvena, and students Miss Moorhouse and Mr James, warranted praise, as did Miss O'Grady's afternoon tea service. A decorative enamelled punch bowl mounted on blackwood pillars by a young Fred Proctor, also drew attention.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, the reportage offers little indication of the styles employed, and examples have all but vanished.

After twenty years teaching at BTAS, Kenneth moved to MTC in 1936, passing his reins to protégé, Frederick Gladstone Proctor (or Procter) (1898-1977). The school acquired a metal lathe from Collingwood Technical School in 1934.¹⁴⁹ After students entered designs for manufacture by Stokes & Sons, Melbourne, in 1939, the school installed its own small electro-plating plant, but the shadow of war stalled progress.¹⁵⁰ A shortage of copper and

¹⁴³ *SMB Magazine* (1923), 5.

¹⁴⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1930), 35.

¹⁴⁵ "Star, 29 April 1922"; "Courier, 5 October 1922," *SMB Cuttings* (1921-1924).

¹⁴⁶ "Courier, 7 October 1925," *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936); and "Courier, 18 August 1922," *SMB Cuttings* (1921-1924).

¹⁴⁷ "Courier, 6 August 1926," "Courier, 7 July 1932," *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936).

¹⁴⁸ "Courier, 9 July 1932," *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936).

¹⁴⁹ "Courier, 18 February 1937," *SMB Cuttings* (1936-1948); Smith, "16 August 1934," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 72.

¹⁵⁰ Smith, "19 July 1939," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 158; *SMB, Annual Report* (1940), 7.

brass suspended classes for several years, until they were resumed in 1948 with a limited supply.¹⁵¹

Students who elected to sit Departmental examination spent three hours on design, then specified their materials prior to executing the project in blocks over following days. In 1917, surface decoration was not mandatory, allowing students to prioritise three-dimensional form. Elementary candidates could create a circular copper tray or brass sugar bowl, senior students a circular desk bell (leaving a space for a button) or a clock case, with an opening for a dial. Tableware, candlesticks, tobacco jars, a lightshade, and even a small dinner gong were exam projects over the next twenty years, and by 1939 students could design for any metal. Presumably this was limited to what each school could provide.¹⁵²

Material change

Metal became a darling of modernist designers, however stainless steel and tubular chrome were better manipulated by machine, as were many of the angular forms coming into vogue. To capture the new aesthetic, the Bauhaus cadre attempted to remove all sign of the human hand in their art metal work, creating the illusion of machine manufacture.¹⁵³ As practicality was prioritised, the decorative tradition of art metal work was suppressed.

Adoption of new metal designs was slow in Australian homes as their introduction was an ‘all or nothing’ enterprise. A single modern piece stood stark against existing traditional furniture and fittings, and replacing a whole room was an expensive exercise.¹⁵⁴ Eventually, pressed metal walls and ceilings retreated behind clean plaster surfaces and traditional decorative metal was hidden or discarded. Economic factors, presumably stemming from these changing tastes, led to the closure of many small metal firms during the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ “Courier, 1 June 1948,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹⁵² VED, Exam, “Light Metal Work,” 1917; 1920; 1921; 1926-1933; 1939.

¹⁵³ George H. Marcus, “Disavowing Craft at the Bauhaus: Hiding the Hand to Suggest Machine Manufacture,” *The Journal of Modern Craft* 1, no. 3 (2008): 345, doi:10.2752/174967808x379425.

¹⁵⁴ Linnette, “The Vogue for Metal Furniture,” (1935), 49.

¹⁵⁵ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 51.

WOOD CARVING

Around 1900, wood carving in the British tradition was offered in colonies from Colombo to Cape Town and was one of the earliest crafts imported and taught in Australian technical art schools. However, Australia did not have the manufacturing capacity for wood carving to be a truly industrial practice, despite the hopes of Inspector Monkhouse and the Education Department.¹⁵⁶ Meanwhile, budding carvers were criticised for persisting with the decorative habits of the Victorian era, and instead asked to seek “simplicity and reticence.”¹⁵⁷



Figure 6.11
A wood carving class, likely in South Australia. Photograph; 25.5cm x 20cm. 1926.
(Courtesy State Library of South Australia, B 54124. Public domain.)

Unlike carpentry or sloyd-style construction, wood carving was a subtractive art, sometimes copied from a modelled example. Primarily carved in relief to reveal the raised image, wood sculpture ‘in the round’ was rarely practised in Australia.¹⁵⁸

Wood carving was offered within BTAS’ Industrial Design course and as a stand-alone craft subject. It was taught to art teachers alongside modelling, stencilling, leather and repoussé. For decades, Margaret Crombie Young (1868-1943) oversaw wood carving at BTAS, which

¹⁵⁶ VED, PP no. 28 (1903), 91; and VED, PP no. 39 (1901), 93.

¹⁵⁷ “A.N.A. Competitions,” *Mount Alexander Mail* (Vic.), 10 March 1905, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199570723>

¹⁵⁸ “Wood Sculpture” *Decoration and Glass* (1 June 1935), 24.

was an appealing subject for women. At the Hobart Technical School, women occasionally outnumbered men six to one.¹⁵⁹ The popularity of wood carving among women rather than ‘tradesmen’ reinforces its perception as craft rather than industry. Still, hobbyists contributed to school income, so they were not turned away. This is perhaps why very few candidates sat and passed Victorian Education Department examinations. Between 1902 and 1905 just two of Ballarat’s four students, and six of the WMC’s 27 candidates passed. Bendigo had no candidates. With just 16 published BTAS passes between 1908 and 1935, nine elementary successes in 1912 is a statistical outlier. Perhaps students were discouraged by the wood carving room which remained “cold and lonely during the evenings.”¹⁶⁰ Low Victorian numbers and pass rates continued.¹⁶¹

Wood carving offered professional practice opportunities through commission. In Adelaide’s case, the South Australian government extracted 10 per cent of the fee.¹⁶² In Ballarat, Miss Young’s carving helped attract some of the school’s commission work, primarily honour boards.¹⁶³

In June 1923, the Victorian Education Department elected to gift a new school at Villers-Bretonneux, France, funded by the efforts of Victorian State-school children, to acknowledge the deaths of thousands of Australian volunteers there during World War I. Semi-circular pediments carved from Queensland maple and blackwood were sought to adorn the school’s Assembly Room. BTAS was approached by Mr Evan Smith, Chief Architect to the Public Works Department (who was engaged on the main War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux) and Carew-Smyth, to design and supply 24 decorative carvings “of Australian birds, animals and flora” based on Smith’s draft drawings.¹⁶⁴ The commission was expected to occupy students for months, but other hands would complete the bulk of the work.

In October 1924, the Ballarat *Courier* boasted BTAS’ selection to produce the panels was further proof of the Education Department’s favour.¹⁶⁵ There is evidence pottery teacher Thomas Trengrove carved some panels, including that of a “kookaburra, gum leaves and

¹⁵⁹ Broughton, “Essay: A Place for Art,” 52-53.

¹⁶⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1921), 25.

¹⁶¹ Refer VED PPs.

¹⁶² Adelaide School of Art, Report, *Education Gazette*, 18 March 1912, quoted in Weston, “The Professional Training of Artists in Australia,” 240; “Fine Art Exhibition,” *Mount Alexander Mail* (Vic.), 20 October 1913, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199584996>.

¹⁶³ “*Courier*, 5 June 1922,” *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924).

¹⁶⁴ Smith, “15 October 1924,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 121; *SMB, Annual Report* (1924), 12.

¹⁶⁵ “*Courier*, 4 October 1924”, in *SMB Cuttings* (1921–1924); “Emblematic Memorial Panels,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 9 December 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article211548754>.

fruit.”¹⁶⁶ Still, it seems the request was too great for one school, likely due to a shortage of students, and there is no indication that Young contributed. So, following some “delays and other interruptions,” Art Inspector Carew-Smyth asked Harry Raynor, a teacher at the Gordon, to produce some of the panels.¹⁶⁷ It is unclear if these eventuated.

Subsequently, yet another individual assumed responsibility for the work. John Erskine Francis Grant (1884-1957), art master at the Daylesford Technical School, completed at least 12 of the semi-circular carvings and corner pieces, possibly assisted by his students.

Dr Lachlan Grant, of the Australian War Memorial, suggests his great-grandfather not only redesigned the panels, but credits him with introducing Australian flora and fauna to them (which, given it was part of the original brief, was not the case). Without the original drawings of Evan Smith and others, it is difficult to substantiate Grant’s claims to redesign. A display board titled “Designed and Executed by Mr. E.J. Grant, Daylesford Technical School” features 12 images.¹⁶⁸ The work was overseen by Evan Smith, who ordered an additional four pieces as the work progressed, possibly those produced by Trengrove.¹⁶⁹

Ballarat’s contribution was forwarded to the Department in May 1925.¹⁷⁰ An image of sixteen designs were printed in the December edition of the *Education Gazette*, and two of Grant’s examples in the *Australian*.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ “Courier, 24 January 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Clare Gervasoni, “Trengrove, Thomas H.,” *Federation University*, last modified 2006, accessed 7 May 2019. <https://federation.edu.au/about-us/our-university/history/geoffrey-blainey-research-centre/honour-roll/t/thomas-h.-trengrove>.

¹⁶⁷ “Carving for French School,” *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston, Tas.), 18 December 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article153707096>; “Emblematic Memorial Panels,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 9 December 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article211548754>; “Geelong,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 10 December 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155548561>.

¹⁶⁸ Claire Hunter, “From Daylesford to Villers-Bretonneux,” *Australian War Memorial*, last modified 23 April 2018, accessed 8 May 2019, <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/From-Daylesford-to-Villers-Bretonneux>; Claire Hunter, “Anzac Day 2020: Anzac Contribution Etched into French History,” *Canberra Times*, 23 April 2020, accessed 15 October 2020, <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6731491/anzac-contribution-etched-into-french-history/>

¹⁶⁹ See: Hunter, “From Daylesford to Villers-Bretonneux”; “A Daylesford Artist,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 8 February 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155787496>; “Daylesford,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 11 May 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article21155558>; “Wood Carvings for Villers-Bretonneux Memorial School,” *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), 12 December 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article140725219>; “Villers- Bretonneux Memorial School,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 4 December 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2170884>.

¹⁷⁰ Smith, “20 May 1925” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 131.

¹⁷¹ *Education Gazette*, 15 December 1925, 254; W. A. Donald (photographer), “Wood Carvings for Villers-Bretonneux Memorial School,” *Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.), Saturday 12 December 1925, 48, accessed 21 October 2020, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/140725219>



PILASTER-CAPS OF AUSTRALIAN WOOD FOR THE SCHOOL AT VILLERS-BRETONNEUX.

Figure 6.12 "Pilaster-caps of Australian Wood for the School at Villers-Bretonneux." Photograph reproduced from *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid*, 15 December 1925, 254. (Image courtesy Federation University Historical Collection. Public domain).



Figure 6.13 **Four of the carvings not attributed to John Grant, thus likely undertaken by Thomas Trengrove or BTAS students.** Victoria School pilasters, Villers Bretonneux. Sandra Opie (photographer, 2012). (Images courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, 15885, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Despite the work being shared, both the *Courier* and *Argus* reported the carvings had been executed at BTAS. The Villers-Bretonneux school was officially opened in May 1927, by which time Chief Inspector McRae stated the carvings were the work of “the Victorian technical schools.”¹⁷² Interestingly, other contributions have been erased from the Franco-Australian Museum Villers-Bretonneux website, which only credits Grant and his students.¹⁷³ These Australian carvings are significant, and their history is worthy of greater academic investigation.

BTAS continued to teach wood carving and exhibit examples into the 1930s.¹⁷⁴ However, by this time the wood carver became subordinate to their material. In line with modernist principles, turning and carving were relinquished in favour of demonstrating woods’ characteristic colour, grain, rings and even knots. Veneering techniques offered a budget version of the new aesthetic but did not facilitate carving.¹⁷⁵ Wood craftspeople needed to find an alternative expression of their skill.

In 1938, under BTAS graduate Vic Greenhalgh, the MTC launched a department of sculpture that incorporated wood carving. Styles suited to modern architecture were sought; and Italian Renaissance influences were replaced with Egyptian and Assyrian styles.¹⁷⁶ Presented as a progressive move, this still demonstrates a reliance on historical forms which had been studied for decades. Looking forward continued to involve mining the past.

STONE CARVING

More than twenty years following the discovery of “the Bindi limestones” marble deposit in Gippsland, in 1903 Victoria still lacked the artists trained to carve it, prompting sculptor Charles F. Summers to propose a sculpture academy, populated with Italian instructors, attached to the Working Men’s College (WMC).¹⁷⁷ Yet, in 1927 Donald Clark noted Australia’s stone resources remained under-utilised, claiming the State’s “excellent marble

¹⁷² “*Courier*, 24 May 1925,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936); “*Country News*,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 23 May 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2119935>; and “*The Schools*,” *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 31 March 1927, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3846520>.

¹⁷³ “*Victoria Room, Victoria School*,” *Musee Franco Australien, Villers-Bretonneux*, accessed 21 October 2020, <https://www.museeaustralien.com/en-au/ecole-victoria>

¹⁷⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1930), 36.

¹⁷⁵ Rosalie Wilson, “*Sheer Surface in Decoration*,” *Decoration and Glass* (1935); and Kate Carmel, “*Against the Grain: Modern American Woodwork*,” in *Craft in the Machine Age: 1920-1945*, ed. Janet Kardon, (New York: American Craft Museum, 1995).

¹⁷⁶ *VED*, PP no.1, 1937), 23; *VED*, PP no. 1 (1938), 24.

¹⁷⁷ “*A School of Sculpture*,” *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 01 October 1903, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article189347005>.

has scarcely been touched.”¹⁷⁸ The undeveloped state of this industry is reflected in technical training.

Victoria’s 1915 elementary Stone Carving exam replicated a specified cast in a small piece of “easily-worked stone.” Advanced students were to design and carve a stone pilaster capital, however no passes were published.¹⁷⁹ Where Gordon students sat, but failed in 1918, Carew-Smyth’s high standards were partly blamed.¹⁸⁰ There follows a long gap in BTAS examination until budding sculptor, Harold J. Symons, passed the 1931 (Elementary) and 1932 (Advanced) examinations, the latter requiring a horizontal panel for the foyer of a “modern theatre.” Three hours were provided to draw or model his design at full size, then 24 hours to carve it.¹⁸¹

Modelled Design exams sometimes included options for carved stone, *sans* the actual carving. Many were architectural elements such as a finial, boss, balcony console (bracket) or archway keystone. Other projects included a panel for a wall fountain and Gothic-style church font. Monumental masonry included a “Child’s Grave.”¹⁸² These exams also offered questions seeking decorative elements for production in cement.¹⁸³ General Design exams, too, sought two dimensional concepts for stone features, such as a drinking fountain, garden seat, sundial or memorial tablet.¹⁸⁴ Historic Ornament provided some masonry questions, from Assyrian pavements and Byzantine pierced marble to Renaissance stone, and many other forms of ornamental carving.¹⁸⁵

The lack of student numbers in stone carving suggests Ballarat’s young masons followed a different learning path, likely an apprenticeship with supplemental classes in Modelled or General Design. Harry Doncaster was a stone worker employed by F. H. Commons and living at Ballarat’s New Cemetery when he undertook Lettering at BTAS in 1925.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁸ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 5.

¹⁷⁹ VED, Exams, “Stone Carving,” Elementary Stage. 1915; Advanced Stage. 1917.

¹⁸⁰ “Gordon College,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic), 11 April 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165252520>.

¹⁸¹ “Courier, 26 January 1932,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936), VED, Exams, “Stone Carving,” Advanced Stage. 1932.

¹⁸² VED, Exams, “Modelled Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1917, 1922, 1924, 1928, 1930.

¹⁸³ VED, Exams, “Modelled Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1921.

¹⁸⁴ VED, Exams, “General Design. Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924.

¹⁸⁵ VED, Exams, “Historic Ornament,” 1915, 1923, 1931, 1934, 1939.

¹⁸⁶ Student Enrolment Cards, FedAHC, M10822, Student No. A617.

STAINED GLASS

Stained glass incorporates the lead-light process however, instead of plain glass, sections are illustrated with stains and enamels (mostly mineral oxides) and kiln-fired to fuse the image. Stained glass held greater artistic merit than lead-lighting, which was derided as mere assembly, although painted pictorial elements could overwhelm the glass' translucency.¹⁸⁷

From vague origins as an ecclesiastical art which harnessed light to evoke the divine, stained glass was long restrained by the conservative establishments that commissioned its production, but eventually it became accessible to a wider clientele. In the nineteenth century, Australian architects, builders, businesses and homeowners imported standardised window components to glaze their architecture. Problematically, the catalogue-ordered, flat-pack pieces often required padding and fudging to fit their architectural destination, design elements were combined with *ad hoc* results, and the glass was not manufactured for Australian conditions.¹⁸⁸

In stasis during the 1890s depression, Australia's fragile stained-glass industry found strength to re-emerge post Federation. Some artists considered their commercial work distasteful and chose anonymity.¹⁸⁹ Invisibility renders identification of many stained-glass artists almost impossible. In Victoria at least, the legitimacy of stained-glass as an art owes some credit to English émigré William Montgomery (1850-1927), a founding member of the Victorian Artists Society, who had no qualms signing his glass work.¹⁹⁰

In the wake of World War I, demand for bespoke commemorative and memorial windows created some opportunity for local designers. Still, ongoing importation and the separation of artist and maker sullied the reputation of stained glass so that during the 1920s it was considered a lost art.¹⁹¹ The Great Depression further limited demand. Then, in Europe at least, another war created enormous demand for the restoration and replacement of destroyed windows. In Australia, surging requests for memorial glass coincided with orders for town

¹⁸⁷ "Stained Glass," *Recorder (Port Pirie, SA: 1919 - 1954)*. 15 July 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article96102435>.

¹⁸⁸ For a detailed examination, see Jenny Zimmer, *Stained Glass in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984).

¹⁸⁹ See: Zimmer, *Stained Glass in Australia*, 103.

¹⁹⁰ Bronwyn Hughes, "William Montgomery," accessed 31 March 2019. <https://williammontgomeryartist.wordpress.com/>.

¹⁹¹ Eleanor Purser, "Stained Glass," *Age (Melbourne, Vic.)*, 20 August 1927, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206173443>.

centenary commemorations. Some of these were undertaken by skilled European designers who travelled to Australia post war.¹⁹²

The specialised facilities required for fire-art glass techniques such as blowing and moulding, restricted most Australian technical art students to stained glass processes which had remained largely unchanged across centuries. Sometimes student experience mirrored traditional practice, whereby artists conceptualised the work and prepared an illustrative template, or *cartoon*, at actual size, which was then translated and assembled by artisans.¹⁹³

Glass art was not limited to window dressing and translated to other types of decorative objects, but Victorian Education Department exams do not reflect this scope. General Design examinations included stained glass design but not execution. Early briefs were for commerce and cathedrals; a Fire Insurance Office, a Gothic church window and private residence, among others.¹⁹⁴ Not until 1923 does the exam suggest leading should be integral to the design.¹⁹⁵ Historic Ornament exams occasionally discussed the medium. The practical Stained-Glass examination of 1915 provided just eight hours for execution of a domestic door window, incorporating a house number. This was clearly inadequate time for quality work, and in 1917 students were afforded 24 luxurious hours to build a window half the size.¹⁹⁶

The habit of anonymity has left few breadcrumbs to follow, but we know of some key commissions undertaken by BTAS graduate and teacher, Amalie Feild. In 1916, the Education Department commissioned designs for a series of stained-glass windows (to be executed locally) to adorn the new Agricultural High School's large assembly room (now Peacock Hall at Ballarat High School).¹⁹⁷ The project perhaps identified inexperience, as the following year Feild was sent to Sydney to learn more. At principal Smith's request, and at the Department's expense, Feild undertook instruction with a "leading Stained Glass Firm" coinciding with her pottery studies at the Sydney Technical College.¹⁹⁸ This was likely

¹⁹² Zimmer, *Stained Glass in Australia*, 107.

¹⁹³ *SMB Magazine* (1930), 36; Smith, "30 January 1920," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 38; Royal Institute of British Architects & Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, "Stained Glass and Its History: An Address Given before the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects on 6th May, 1930, by Mr. Napier Waller," *Journal of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects* 28, no. 3 (July 1930): 59-63, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-404992434>, 59.

¹⁹⁴ VED, Exams, "General Design – Advanced Stage," Grade II, 1915, 1916 and 1917 respectively.

¹⁹⁵ VED, Exams, "General Design – Advanced Stage," Grade I, 1923 and 1924.

¹⁹⁶ VED, Exams, "Stained Glass," 1915 and 1917.

¹⁹⁷ *SMB, Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (August 1916); "Localisms," *Dunmunkle Standard and Murtoa Advertiser* (Vic.), 23 February 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article130051382>. Photographs may be found at <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5baf7a4c21ea6c11089c0942> (accessed 19 October 2020).

¹⁹⁸ *SMB, Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (August 1917).

Tarrant & Co. in Darlinghurst, where some of Feild's later commissions would be assembled. Upon her return, BTAS installed a glass furnace for the adhesion of mineral oxide stains to plate glass.¹⁹⁹ The Agricultural High project may have served as inspiration for the 1923 examination, which specified a window to match an Australian blackwood hall.

St Andrew's Kirk, Ballarat, had previously imported windows from Ballantyne & Co. in Scotland, but in 1920 Feild was commissioned to memorialise 62 men of the parish (named in an accompanying brass panel) lost to World War I. Her design features the biblical character of David, sword aloft, clad in shining gold armour with blue and vermillion robes, overlooked by four angels in pastel tones.²⁰⁰ Feild designed two further windows memorialising individuals for St Andrew's, which were executed under her supervision at Tarrant's in Sydney.²⁰¹

The David window demonstrates painterly similarities to other examples of Tarrant's production, but Feild's design is simplified, without superfluous borders or decorative devices. Against the tendency to overpaint at the time, Feild utilises the leading as line and underplays painterly details for all but the faces. Her composition is also more dynamic and reflects modern trends. Frederick J. Tarrant wrote to Smith in admiration of her innovative design.²⁰² Feild's later window commissions included the Lydiard Street Methodist Church and the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, which featured Sir Galahad and a chalice that presumably represented the Holy Grail. This was executed locally by Robson's Glass.²⁰³

Leadlight was not immediately identified as a medium for modern art. Ecclesiastical history aside, its centuries-old methods restricted radical new approaches. Glass panels could not blend or even butt together, and any interaction of colour was neutralised by the dark lead used to house them, an effect Sam Atyeo described as "like two fighting cocks with a wall between them."²⁰⁴ Eventually, stained glass artists incorporated modern subjects including landscape, activities and figures in contemporary dress, while grappling with the medium's

¹⁹⁹ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (September 1917); Smith, "30 June 1922," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 79.

²⁰⁰ "St. Andrew's Kirk," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 3 May 1915, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article161075386>. Photograph of Feild's window available at: <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/display/90260-st-andrews-kirk-memorial-window> (accessed 18 December 2015).

²⁰¹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1920); and *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 11 April 1921, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page412474>.

²⁰² "Courier, 4 April 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁰³ "Courier, 4 October 1924," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁰⁴ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., "S.L. Atyeo (1910–1990), Talks on Modernism, 1932–1933," in *Modernism & Australia*, 101.

limitations.²⁰⁵ In fact, stained glass was an excellent medium for abstracted works, where an entire object might be represented through its essential fragments.

The 1923 Stained Glass exam sought “modern and simple” design for a domestic window. In 1924, “decided originality” was requested for a Melbourne ‘Savage Club’ smoking-room window.²⁰⁶ Subject matter became more diverse and engaging during the 1930s, with window briefs for an aquarium, herbarium, and infant’s school.²⁰⁷

By the late 1920s, Victoria was considered a leader in stained-glass, but the small-scale industry did not encourage designers to specialise, the higher pay rates of commercial art luring them away.²⁰⁸ Few Australian art schools were offering more than cursory courses in stained glass during the 1920s. They were urged to follow the ‘mother country’ and establish proper training in the field.²⁰⁹ It was carried out at BTAS until 1926 but disappears once Feild transferred to Melbourne WMC in 1927.²¹⁰ For years afterwards, the only glass painting and gilding was done by sign-writing students. In 1939, Inspector Dean suggested a demand for glass craftspeople still existed but that the subject was barely practised within technical art schools, which he blamed on poor equipment.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ “Stained Glass,” *Examiner* (Launceston, Tas.), 11 May 1928, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article51477199>.

²⁰⁶ “Stained Glass,” VED Exams, 1923; “Courier, 14 February 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); VED, Exams, “General Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1924.

²⁰⁷ VED, Exams, “General Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade I, 1930, 1934, and 1939.

²⁰⁸ Brenton, “Victoria Leads in Stained Glass Art,” *Herald* (3 August 1929).

²⁰⁹ “Stained Glass,” *Recorder* (Port Pirie, SA), 15 July 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article96102435>.

²¹⁰ “Courier, 18 February 1926,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²¹¹ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35.

EMBOSSSED LEATHER WORK

Embossed leather work came from the same stable as book binding, wood carving, modelling, and decorative needlework; an industry suited to the application of art. Beyond toxic tanneries, leather was a relatively clean medium that facilitated simple work for school children through to advanced levels of craftsmanship. The soft, yielding material was available in a range of types and thicknesses and required relatively simple tools. A range of methods were applied to leather, some not dissimilar to repoussé metal.²¹² Coloured stains could be employed, but it was important not to lose the qualities of the material in the process. On occasion, pyrography was applied.

Despite its industrial connections, embossed leather work was usually a minor study, which did “not present enough technical difficulties” to be considered a manual art. Where undertaken by women, leather work could be categorised as a ‘minor’ art, alongside textiles and flower arranging.²¹³ The 1907 Australian Exhibition of Women’s Work included leather examples, as did subsequent ANA exhibitions, and BTAS students participated in working demonstrations at the Melbourne Jubilee exhibition.²¹⁴ In 1914 Viola P. Jackson exhibited in Melbourne with fellow BTAS alumni Harold Herbert, Stanley Tompkins and Arthur Lilburne. Alongside the sculpture, water colours and jewellery of her peers, Viola’s skilful embossed leather work, including a fire screen with lyrebird and waratah motifs, was described as exquisite. She undertook further studies at Prahran Technical Art School and accepted a teaching position at Melbourne High School in 1916.²¹⁵

As demand for traditional leather goods such as saddlery lessened, producers turned to ‘fancy’ goods including wallets, folios, watchbands and cigarette cases. The Education Department’s General Design exams sought concepts for pocket-wallets, book carriers, notebook covers, table mats, furniture panels, fire screens, photo frames and albums. In some

²¹² Simple leather working methods are more fully explained in Rankin and Brown, *Simple Art Applied to Handwork II*, 87-89.

²¹³ Payne, *Art Metalwork* (1914), 53; Elissa Author, “The Decorative, Abstraction, and the Hierarchy of Art and Craft in the Art Criticism of Clement Greenberg,” *Oxford Art Journal* 27, no. 3 (2004): 339-364, 355.

²¹⁴ ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, 1914*, 82, 85; “Courier, 26 August 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²¹⁵ Johanna, “Melbourne Chatter,” *The Bulletin*, 7 May 1914, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/254141156>; “Arts and Crafts Displayed,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 11 May 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article242144317>; “Artistic Crafts Exhibition,” *Leader* (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 May 1914, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89309542>; *SMB Magazine* (1916), 22; “Ballarat West School of Art,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 6 March 1906, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209228912>; “Prahran Technical Art School,” *Malvern Standard* (Vic.), 20 May 1911, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article66388672>.

cases, a defining shape was prescribed (for example, an elliptical mat), while some questions required a single motif based on a plant form or a linear pattern. On occasion, the styling was completely open to the candidate. Embossed areas were indicated with light and shadow.²¹⁶

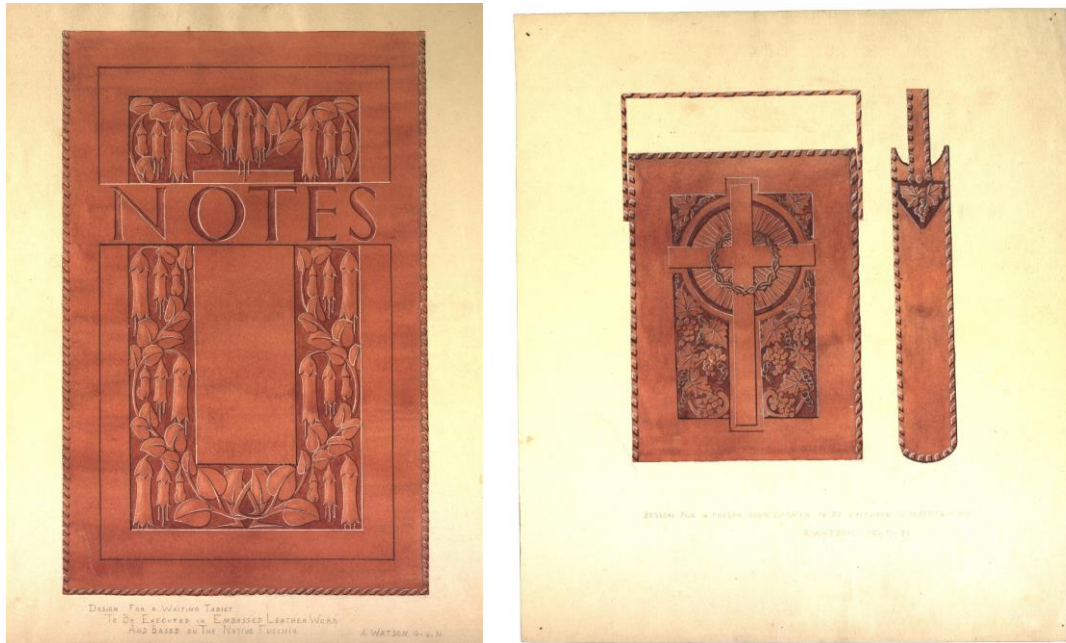


Figure 6.14 Alice Watson. *Design for a waiting tablet to be executed in embossed leather work and based on the native fuchsia.* Ink and gouache, 1931; and (right) *Design for a prayer book carrier to be executed in leather work.* Ink and gouache, 1931.

(Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, m12051-10-11 and m12051-30. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

An understanding of the development of leather work, book decoration and bindings was occasionally required within Historic Ornament exams, seeking descriptions of Moroccan leather and Japanese vellum, or knowledge and sketches of leather bindings. Some exams provided scope to adapt motifs from these studies, for example, a 1932 brief to design a case for a “mah-hongg set.”²¹⁷

A practical examination in Leather Embossing was first offered in 1910. A relatively popular subject, student success rates demonstrate its manageability. Following three hours to design and estimate materials, Elementary students were allowed just eight hours for the project’s execution, and Advanced students given 24 hours. Until the mid-1920s, ladies’ handbags were a regular exam assignment, featuring embossed decoration. The use of plant forms or

²¹⁶ VED, Exams, “General Design – Advanced Stage” Grades I and II, 1915-1939.

²¹⁷ VED, Exams, “Historic Ornament, Part II,” 1927, 1931, 1932.

native flora often featured. Carew-Smyth himself commissioned some examples from BTAS in 1920.²¹⁸

Ballarat's tanning industry, which at its peak included 15 tanneries, had ceased to exist by 1924. The decline was similar in Geelong and Warrnambool, where an inability to compete with Melbourne manufacturers was blamed. The rank, toxic tanneries were likely forced to relocate as residential areas encroached on their boundaries. Even disused, they could take lives.²¹⁹ The leather industry continued to hold promise for Melbourne, at least. In 1927, Donald Clark believed it worthy of a specialist technical school and repeated the call during subsequent years; but such an industry did not necessarily require designers.²²⁰

Coinciding with Dean's appointment as Art Inspector, Departmental exams demonstrate a shift. Instead of the annual handbag, advanced objects varied each year; including a 12 inch "circular d'oyley holder", a trinket box, and a travelling case to hold writing materials. This last assignment allowed an unprecedented 48 hours to complete.²²¹

Style and design were increasingly at the candidate's discretion; however, monograms and initials were often forbidden. Briefs continued to designate household items such as a 'modern radio cabinet' mat, a pair of leather bookends, or a case for a pocket camera, indicating the so-called domestic art could transition into modern homes.²²² Yet State exhibitions sometimes showed work that was 15 to 20 years old, and even contemporary work was not considered much more advanced, notably due to coarse finish and lack of colour.²²³ From 1931, colour was requisite in Advanced leatherwork exams, and optional at Elementary stage. Yet, from this time, few BTAS students undertook examination, likely due to the loss of Manual Arts students, for whom 'light crafts' were requisite.²²⁴

²¹⁸ Smith, "26 March 1920," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 43.

²¹⁹ "Crippling the Country," *Mail* (Adelaide, SA), 8 March 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article63861333>; "Missing Boy," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 5 November 1928, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204241447>.

²²⁰ Clark, *The Future* (1927), 27; Clark, *Some Notes* (1929), 50; MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 30.

²²¹ VED, Exams, "Embossed Leather - Advanced," 1926, 1927

²²² VED, Exams, "Embossed Leather," Elementary and Advanced, 1933; "General Design – Advanced, Stage I," 1934.

²²³ "Courier, 4 March 1932," *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936); Herbert, "Art," *The Australasian*, 17 September 1932.

²²⁴ "Manual Art Training," *Bendigo Advertiser* (Vic.), 12 November 1909, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89885674>. Also refer to Appendix, Table A-3, VED Art Examination results, DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee; and exhibition of teacher works prior to assessment, "Courier, 7 July 1926," "Courier, 30 July 1927," *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).



Figure 6.15 John T. Collins. *Drawing to Accompany Craft*. Produced for the Art Teachers' Secondary Certificate at BTAS. Two drawings: post paint, pen and ink on black paper; on board 55 x 38 cm. 1940. (Courtesy State Library of Victoria [SLV] H2000.119/122. ©SLV)

In Britain at least, the application of design to leather persisted into the mid-1950s; by maintaining a strong craft tradition it avoided significant mechanisation. Yet the revolution came. Manufacturers began using presses to create unrealistic grains in cow leather, often to create the appearance of another creature's hide or to conceal flaws. Synthetic materials imitated leather and revolutionary fasteners, such as zippers, superseded heavy buckles and clasps.²²⁵ Regardless of changes to industrial hide manufacturing, embossed leather craft continued at some Victorian (junior) technical art schools.²²⁶

²²⁵ Farr, Michael. *Design in British Industry: A Mid-Century Survey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955, vii.

²²⁶ For example, Sale, Sunshine and Brighton Technical Schools, "Education Week Display," *Gippsland Times* (Vic.: 1861-1954), 21 August 1950, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article63314162>; "Sunshine Girls Score at Show," *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic), 16 September 1952, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article245277866>; and "Boys Trespassed into Girls' Arts," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 19 August 1954, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205688688>.

STENCILLING

From rudimentary masking to sophisticated serigraphy, stencils were the apparatus of the designer, artist, interior decorator and tradesperson. The bulk of BTAS student stencils appear to have been hand-cut. The binary nature of this technique (colour or an absence of colour) disguises its difficulty. Naturalistic forms were not suited to successful stencilling which required conventionalised designs. Bridging elements were incorporated to hold loose items, or ‘islands’, in place, which created particular challenges for typography.

Advanced Grade I General Design exams questions regularly presented stencilling as a largely domestic activity with briefs for curtains, cushions, tablecloths, a kindergarten scrapbook, child’s nursery wall, and a fire screen.²²⁷ However, the technique’s marketable applications were demonstrated at exhibitions.²²⁸ Grade II exams featured more commercial briefs, usually for wall friezes and murals. During the 1930s, specialist apprentice exams featured clients such as an Art and Craft society and an Oyster Bar.²²⁹ These exams only required concepts.

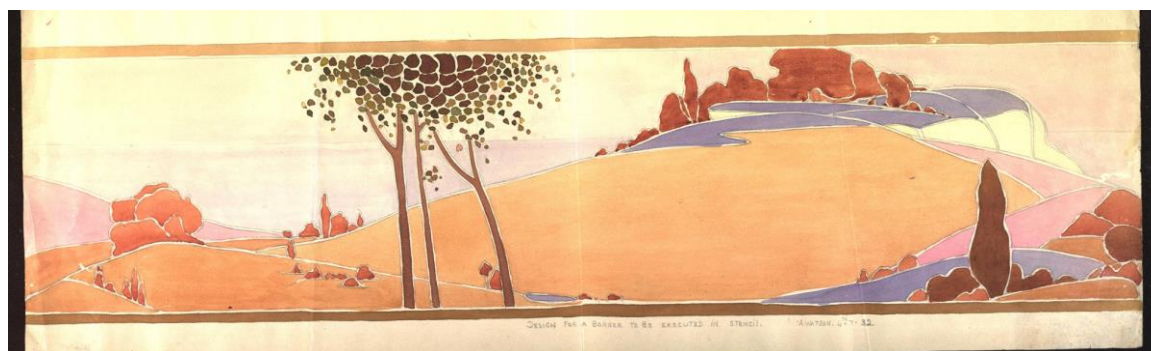


Figure 6.16 Alice Watson. *Design for a border to be executed in stencil*. Gouache. 1932.
(Courtesy Federation University Historical Collection, m12051-4. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Applied Stencilling exams required practical execution of a stand-alone design, repeating elements, or interconnecting pattern; sometimes specifying a motif, theme or maximum number of colours.²³⁰ The single question usually identified a panel, frieze or mural that afforded design flexibility. Advanced students generally had eight hours to design, cut, and transfer their stencil to a pre-prepared panel.²³¹

²²⁷ For example: VED, Exams, “General Design — Advanced Stage,” Grade I, 1915-1917, 1920-1925.

²²⁸ ANA Metropolitan Committee, *Fifth Australian Exhibition* (1909), 21.

²²⁹ VED, Exams, “General Design: Apprentices – Advanced,” Grade I and II. 1934.

²³⁰ For example: VED, Exams, “Stencilling,” 1915, 1926.

²³¹ For example: VED, Exams, “Stencilling,” 1917.

Stencilling's presence in a range of day and evening courses demonstrates its diverse application and utility. At BTAS it sat within the three-year Signwriting and four-year Decorating and Signwriting courses, the Decorative Needlework specialisation of the Industrial Design Course, and the Art Teacher's and Manual Arts courses, and thus attracted relatively equal numbers of men and women.²³²



Figure 6.17
Angus Henderson.
Hand cut stencil of the
logo of the Ballarat
Junior Technical School.
27.4 x 19.8 cm, 1914.
(Courtesy FedHC, 13241. CC
BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Toward the close of the Great War, Australian fashion manufacturers found it difficult to procure popular, patterned dress fabrics. Ballarat company Lucas & Co. turned to BTAS students whose experimentation produced many workable designs. They toiled through the holidays to produce “dozens of yards” of material which was utilised by Lucas dressmakers. Additional students were trained to meet extended requests.²³³ In 1934, students produced a large stencilled banner featuring the school colours, crest and motto for the Victorian Technical Schools' Centenary festivities.²³⁴

A deceptively simple process, stencilling was not without innovation. In the 1920s, *porchoir* was a popular technique used in book illustration. Later, lacquered films offered a new stencil generation process.²³⁵ Commercial illustration also utilised masking techniques of varying sophistication, such as spatter-work and airbrushing.²³⁶ BTAS alumnus, Harold Herbert, is credited with producing innovative water colour stencils.²³⁷

The technical requirements of screen-printing meant designers generated more abstracted, stylised and colourful images than they had for lithographic reproduction. Regardless of process, flat colour and simplified styles were widely adopted by designers, BTAS students among them.²³⁸ Simultaneously, leisure travel became a realistic option for many people, thus

²³² SMB, *Prospectus for Year 1908*, (1907); *SMB Magazine* (1920), 32; SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915).

²³³ SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (February 1918); Smith, “31 May 1918,” *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 6.

²³⁴ Smith, “16 August 1934,” *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 72.

²³⁵ Romano and Romano, *Encyclopedia of Graphic Communications*, 744.

²³⁶ White, “Part 14: Spatter Work, Ross Boards and Mechanical Tints,” in *Commercial Art School* (1927), 6.

²³⁷ “A Ballarat Artist,” *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 25 October 1920, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213374109>.

²³⁸ Drucker and McVarish, *Graphic Design History*, 226.

the style became almost synonymous with tourism posters in several nations. Remarkably, Australia's first registered screen-printery was not established until 1937.²³⁹

Ivy Wilson's (1907-1975) student folio contains several stencils hand-cut from paper and card. Among them are stylised graphics of *correa*, waratah, gum, and kangaroo apple as well as kookaburras, cockatoos and a koala. One example of a wreath was subsequently translated into embroidered needlework. Wilson's folio possibly consists of mostly junior technical work, as she appears only to have sat a single senior exam, Drawing Plant Forms from Nature.²⁴⁰ Alternatively, given her focus on textile-based arts, she may have been an evening trade student.



Figure 6.18 **Designs for stencils, possibly undertaken during Girls' Preparatory Classes.** Ivy Wilson. *Ballarat Technical Art School Folio - Artwork by Ivy Wilson, c1920-1922; and Embroidery by Ivy Wilson, c1921* (Clare Gervasoni, photograph).
(Courtesy FedHC, 13241 and 23168. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

²³⁹ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 51.

²⁴⁰ "Courier, 10 February 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924);

TEXTILES

The decorative capacity of knotting, knitting, stitching and weaving is evident throughout human experience. Technical art schools from Germany to Sri Lanka, America to Chile taught diverse types of textile design and manufacture.²⁴¹ Michael Bogle explains Australia's unhurried industrialisation sustained textile crafts at technical art schools "after they had withered away elsewhere."²⁴² Even so, at BTAS the textile subjects were primarily vocational and led to the employment of many graduates; chiefly in dressmaking and millinery, decorative needlework and, to a lesser extent, weaving and stencilling.



Figure 6.19 **Ballarat's Lucas & Co. employed dozens of skilled, local women.**

Lucas Making up section 1945. Photograph. 1945.

(Courtesy Max Harris Photography Collection, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, MH1834. ©BMI.)

Cultural and historical variations notwithstanding, textile-arts were considered feminine industries, linked to domestic practice, and categorised as requiring so-called sex-specific skills; the work was decorative and painstaking, and women were thought dextrous and patient. Their designation as lesser within patriarchal structures, might explain the absence of

²⁴¹ For example, Ziegert, "The Debschitz School, Munich", 37; Gorchakoff, "An Analysis of Art Curricula in Colleges and Universities," (1935), 64; Espinoza, "The School of Applied Arts, University of Chile (1928-1968)," 80.

²⁴² Bogle, *Designing Australia*, xv.

contemporary documentation compared with other crafts.²⁴³ Modernism might have reinforced its position in history; compared with architectural modernist monoliths, the small scale and detail of textiles seemed unworthy of critical discussion.²⁴⁴

Yet, Australia's willingness to accept modernism within interior design meant textiles were one of the earliest forms of its expression and dissemination, particularly through magazines, store displays and contemporary public spaces. Textiles presented artists with a more acceptable format for experimentation with form and colour than a traditional canvas. Development of synthetic dyes introduced the textile industry to the modern era of consumer-driven colour, further inspiring designers.²⁴⁵ Commercial mills produced dress-fabrics and haberdashery, floor coverings, upholstery fabrics, curtains and drapes, for domestic and mercantile settings. Some manufacturers collaborated with Australian textile designers, but there was room for improvement. In 1932, Ure Smith noted extensive opportunities for businesses with creative vision, and 15 years later Claudio Alcorso called for greater collaboration between industry and designers.²⁴⁶ The collaborative nature of textile design, outside a fine art context, results in considerable anonymity within the field.

DRESSMAKING, MILLINERY AND NEEDLEWORK

Following BTAS' amalgamation, Needlework, Dressmaking and Millinery Department classes were instructed by Miss J. Wright (who also took Physical Culture, remunerated at £150 per year) and Mrs E. Green (for 85 per cent of fees). By 1914, the three-year Dressmaking, Design and Fashion Drawing course was offered alongside trade classes, sharing the Architectural and Engineering Drawing room in the new Art School building from 1915. Wright was then assisted by Miss A. (probably Annie) Holmes and Amalie Feild, and sometime instructor, Miss E. Cornell, also delivered classes to State school pupils.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 49; Buckley, "Made in Patriarchy," 6.

²⁴⁴ Necipoglu and Payne, eds., *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local* (2016), 2.

²⁴⁵ Felicia Willis and Scott Neitzke, "Pigments of the Imagination," *Today's Chemist at Work* (June 2003): 33, https://pubs.acs.org/subscribe/archive/tcaw/12/i06/pdf/603willis_neitzke.pdf

²⁴⁶ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., "Sydney Ure Smith (1887–1949), 'Editorial Notes', Art in Australia, 1932," and "Claudio Alcorso (1913–2003), 'Foreword', A New Approach to Textile Designing, 1947," in *Modernism & Australia*, 106, 523.

²⁴⁷ SMB, *Official Calendar 1909* (1909); SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 108; Clark, *Report on SMB* (October 30, 1914); "Star, 13 August 1915" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (August 1915); SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 2; "Unknown, n.d. May 1916" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

Additionally, the Education Department required female Manual Art teachers to learn millinery.²⁴⁸

At the end of 1919, with burgeoning classes and Wright battling ill health, principal Smith sought to appoint a supervisor for a Women's Department of Technical Training at BTAS, comprising "Dressmaking, Ladies' Tailoring, Plain and Decorative Needlework and Millinery" as well as the Girls' Preparatory Technical Classes, "with the right of limited private practice." One of Amalie Feild's elder siblings, Mrs Gertrude Margaret McIlvena (1880-1949), initially an assistant, would supervise the area for more than 20 years.²⁴⁹ McIlvena had been widowed with three children when her husband, (Robert) George, suicided in 1911.²⁵⁰ Their daughter, Claudia, trained as an art teacher at BTAS during the 1920s, also joining the staff in 1930.²⁵¹

With a steady hand in charge of classes, Smith's responsibilities turned to the woes of unsuitable accommodation. In 1920, the Gaol Governor's residence was taken over, and included female common and teachers' rooms, however the space was problematic.²⁵² As enrolments grew, Smith had walls removed, but the building was freezing cold in winter, very hot in summer, with no ventilation and only one exit. In addition, students had to queue for hours to access one of just four sewing machines in 1920, and seven in 1921.²⁵³ For a decade, Smith's reports express frustration with successive governments' lack of interest in improving conditions for the primarily female cohort, particularly as £100,000 was to be spent on other SMB repairs.²⁵⁴

Despite unsatisfactory working conditions, the 1928 dressmaking examiner claimed the quality of students' work was "not surpassed by any other School in the State."²⁵⁵ Meanwhile, students held annual displays of their work. Refurbishments finally approached satisfactory

²⁴⁸ Smith, "28 November 1919," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*.

²⁴⁹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1919); Smith, "29 August 1919," "28 November 1919," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 32, 35.

²⁵⁰ "Fatalities and Accidents," *Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA), 6 December 1911, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5311425>; Ancestry.com, Public Records Office Victoria; Victoria, Australia; *Coroner Inquest Deposition Files (1840-1925)*.

²⁵¹ *SMB Magazine* (1930), inside cover. Also, Appendix, Table A-2, DOI: 10.25955/604d8c6d9c78a.

²⁵² SMB, *Annual Report* (1920), 5; Smith, "28 May 1920," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 46; "Courier, 14 March 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921-24).

²⁵³ "Courier, 17 May 1932," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936); Smith, "27 May 1921," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 55.

²⁵⁴ Smith, "28 July 1926," "18 May 1927," 28 September 1927," "29 February 1928," "27 June 1928," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 151, 160, 165, 172, 177; Smith, "18 September 1929," "19 February 1930," "16 July 1930," "20 April 1932," "16 August 1933," "16 August 1934," "20 February 1935," "17 June 1936," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 9, 12, 19, 39, 60, 72, 79, 103.

²⁵⁵ Smith, "12 December 1928," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 185.

in 1936, certainly a better space for the four-year Dressmaking and Ladies' Tailoring course.²⁵⁶ Classes continued to attract record attendances, with students on waiting lists.²⁵⁷ Given the individual and practical nature of teaching dressmaking, McIlvena's responsibilities were overwhelming. A string of variously experienced people assisted over the years, many were 'cadets', employed for a small salary and tuition. Some, like Bessie Robertson, had completed a five years' teaching course.²⁵⁸ McIlvena continued to teach beyond Smith's retirement in 1940.²⁵⁹

DECORATIVE OR ART NEEDLEWORK

Needlework's vast terminology, from 'Abaca' to 'Zephyr Shirting', outweighs most other crafts, as the more than 520 pages of *The Dictionary of Needlework* attest.²⁶⁰ Plain Needlework (basic embroidery) and Plain Dressmaking were practical, construction-based trade subjects that were also taught at Schools of Domestic Arts for "general housewifery" or domestic service.²⁶¹ Decorative needlework, or fancy work, was an ornamental applied art that served no structural purpose within the article or garment. Gradually, a nineteenth century tendency to trace unoriginal, imported patterns was displaced by a preference for original design, and naturalism was supplanted by conventionalised motifs. Decorative, surface embroidery involved "the mastery of a large variety of stitches, and a knowledge of form and colour" applied in a range of threads to various materials.²⁶² An enterprising needlework designer might sell their patterns to others.²⁶³

Practical Decorative Needlework exams designate a female gender expectation through pronouns. Its categorisation as a home industry (alongside knitting and crochet) or as a 'light craft' suited to women challenged the subject's legitimacy as an industrial art.²⁶⁴ Yet it was commercially viable. South Australian students had sold 1,500 pieces of "artistic

²⁵⁶ "Courier, 30 October 1936," SMB Cuttings (1936–48); "Mail, 28 January 1937," SMB Cuttings (1936–48); Smith, "18 November 1936," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 114.

²⁵⁷ Smith, "15 March 1939," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 151.

²⁵⁸ "Courier, 14 March 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–24); "Courier, 25 September 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Smith, "18 July 1928," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 180; Smith, "21 April 1937," "15 March 1939," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 120, 151.

²⁵⁹ "Courier, 9 September 1930," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Smith, "21 February 1940," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 167.

²⁶⁰ Sophia Frances Ann Caulfeild and Blanche C. Saward, *The Dictionary of Needlework* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1882. Reprint, 1972. USA: Arno Press Inc.).

²⁶¹ VED, PP no. 27, 1922), 6.

²⁶² Marion Fletcher, *Needlework in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11.

²⁶³ "Courier, 18 August 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

²⁶⁴ ANA Metropolitan Committee, *Fifth Australian Exhibition* (1909), 51; "Arts and Crafts. Second Annual Exhibition," *Geelong Advertiser*, March 27, 1912, 4; "Manual Teaching in Schools," *Ballarat Star* (Vic.), 12 November 1909, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article215908927>.

needlework” by 1901.²⁶⁵ Decorative Needlework was a specialisation of BTAS’ Industrial Design Course and, in 1939 was listed under ‘Remunerative Careers’.²⁶⁶ Student work was exhibited alongside pottery, leather, metal, wood and commercial art. However, it was still sometimes discussed in terms of its value in homemaking.²⁶⁷

Weston Bate explains whitework (white stitching on white fabric) experienced dramatic industrial growth in Ballarat around 1910, in large part due to the Lucas & Company factory which employed 400 seamstresses at the time.²⁶⁸ This social revolution echoed the arrival of whitework elsewhere which, once established, added “considerably to the poorer classes” by providing female employment.²⁶⁹ There is no evidence BTAS offered soldier repatriation classes in needlecraft in the wake of World War I.



Figure 6.20
Alice Watson.
Embroidery example. c1931.
(Courtesy FedHC, m12051-31. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

Arrasene cloth with coloured wool or raffia, requiring a large-eyed needle.²⁷¹ In 1931, a tea cosy. Students were also required to supply samplers of several stitches. Advanced students had scope to employ their choice of colours, materials, and any type of embroidery,

Following the war, materials were difficult to access, and embroidery was not encouraged by art schools, resulting in a dearth of Australian examples. The practice, work, and even its terminology was dismissed and disparaged.²⁷⁰ This might explain the little discussion of embroidery in the BTAS historical record despite its popularity at examination between 1916 and 1930. Exams provided three hours for design and 12 and 24 hours for Elementary and Advanced execution, respectively. Supervisors provided a certificate of the dates and times work was undertaken. In 1926, students designed and decorated a small wallet of

²⁶⁵ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 138.

²⁶⁶ SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 11; “Courier, 28 January 1939,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²⁶⁷ For example: “Courier, 26 August 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 16 December 1925,” “Courier, 29 August 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); “Courier, 9 December 1937,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

²⁶⁸ Bate, *Life After Gold*, 31.

²⁶⁹ Caulfeild and Saward, *The Dictionary of Needlework* (1882), 172.

²⁷⁰ Fletcher, *Needlework in Australia*, 33, 160.

²⁷¹ VED, Exams, “Decorative Needlework – Elementary” and “Decorative Needlework – Advanced,” 1926, 1931; Caulfeild and Saward, *The Dictionary of Needlework* (1882), 14.

excluding appliqué. Students would have needed to be mindful of their own needlework capabilities when designing, so that they could realistically complete the finished articles within the time provided.

Needlecraft was also a design speciality, with options provided in General Design examinations. Grade I projects were notably domestic—a decorative tea-cosy, cushion, doily or book covers. Fashionable elements, such as a dress panel or scarf appear during the 1930s.²⁷² Grade II designs scaled to include a music room *portière* (door curtain) or society banner. From the mid-1920s, Advanced projects spanned ecclesiastical, ceremonial and commercial regalia, including altar cloths and hangings, scout group, friendly society and agricultural hall banners, a shipping office fire screen, theatre curtains and an usherette’s uniform. Colour became explicitly important.²⁷³ Lettering examinations also occasionally included needlework options. In 1933, careful consideration would have been given to lettering “ST. KILDA LIFE SAVING CLUB, VICTORIA – 1922” for embroidery.²⁷⁴

Fletcher claims it was not until the 1950s that a needlework renaissance could be identified.²⁷⁵ Yet, in 1934 Melbourne Technical College’s Diploma of Applied Art (Various) offered a Needlecraft major, suggesting a healthy industry.²⁷⁶ In 1932 Olive Scott, a trained BTAS teacher, was appointed as a designer in needlework embroidery at Myers’ Mills, alongside two other former students.²⁷⁷

WEAVING

At the beginning of the 1900s, high hopes were held for Australian textile design. Drapers and clothing manufactures sought a wider variety of fabrics, and Art Inspector Carew-Smyth noted the potential of designed textiles. Yet, the industry was considered too small to justify a specialist profession.²⁷⁸ Australia’s first textile school was established at the Gordon Technical College in 1910, affirming Geelong as a textile industry hub. However, with little

²⁷² For example: VED, Exams, “General Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade I, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1930, 1933.

²⁷³ For example: VED, Exams, “General Design – Advanced Stage,” Grade II, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1934, 1939.

²⁷⁴ VED, Exams, “Lettering. Advanced,” 1933, 1939.

²⁷⁵ Fletcher, *Needlework in Australia*, 33, 160.

²⁷⁶ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 13.

²⁷⁷ “Courier, 24 September 1932,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

²⁷⁸ “Technical Education,” *Fitzroy City Press* (Vic.), 17 August 1900, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article65667934>; “Fine Weaving at Gordon,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 4 June 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165745419>.

student interest in design, the school was forced to prioritise yarn preparation.²⁷⁹ Ballarat also hosted a robust textile industry, including woollen mills producing tweeds and other knitted fabrics. Local clothing manufacturers, Lucas & Co., echoed broader calls for new textile designs, collaborating with BTAS students in 1919.²⁸⁰ In 1921, 73-year-old Eady Hart began selling commercial textile dyes made from local indigenous plants, which were tested on “feathers, straw, wool, silk and cotton.”²⁸¹

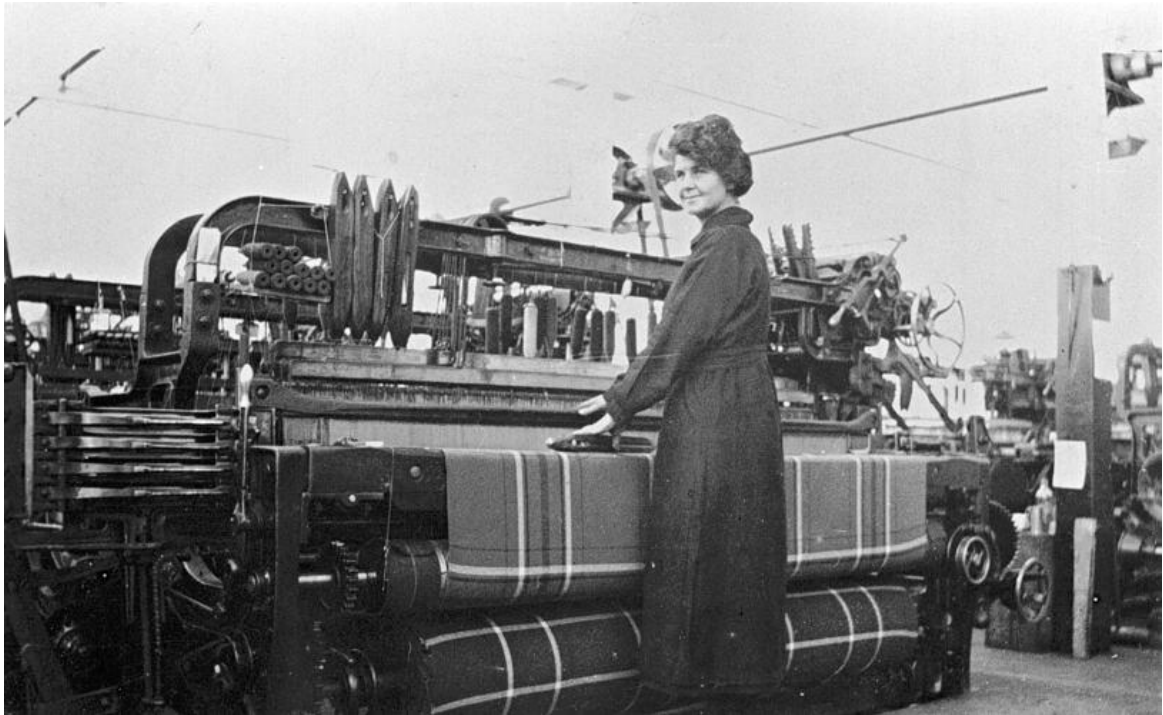


Figure 6.21 **Demand for weavers was high in Ballarat during the 1920s.**

Ethel McKenzie operating a loom at Myer's Mill, Ballarat.

Photographic 35mm negative (copy), c1925.

(Courtesy Museums Victoria Collections, The Biggest Family Album in Australia, MM1914, 767201. Public Domain.)

Exciting possibilities were anticipated when weaving classes were established at BTAS in 1927 to address a skills shortage. Hand-loomng facilitated innovative and intricate designs not necessarily attempted on a powered loom; something Victorian educators had witnessed in German trade schools, decades earlier.²⁸² BTAS’ cramped dressmaking space was

²⁷⁹ “Gordon Technical College,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 4 August 1910, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article149721745>; “Gordon Technical College,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 28 January 1911, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article149032229>; “Fine Weaving at Gordon,” *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 4 June 1919, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article165745419>.

²⁸⁰ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (February 1918).

²⁸¹ Bate, *Life After Gold*, 119.

²⁸² “Courier, 29 June 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 5.

reconfigured to accommodate two hand looms donated by regional firms.²⁸³ As European artists were expressing interest in hand looming, at least one BTAS student hoped to see an “extensive revival” of the craft in Australia.²⁸⁴ Unfortunately the classes lapsed, perhaps for want of a qualified instructor.

In 1933 Ballarat’s mills were working to capacity, however tariff amendments soon reduced business. Still, in 1935 Inspector Dean urged BTAS to re-establish weaving classes to meet employer demands. MTC’s Harold Brown (a BTAS alumnus) provided an example loom, its construction to be copied, and offered intensive training to any staff prepared to travel to Melbourne. If required, the loan of two advanced looms could be furnished. A modest start was made with Miss B. Saunders (likely Industrial Art graduate, Bertha Mary Saunders) delivering two classes per week, but the classes appear short-lived.²⁸⁵

Further calls for a specialist Australian textile school were still unmet by the end of the 1930s when a school “on lines similar to those of Bradford and Leeds” was suggested at the Victorian Technical Schools conference.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Smith, “18 May 1927,” “15 June 1927,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 160, 162; “Age, 21 May 1927,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

²⁸⁴ “The Hand Loom,” *SMB Magazine* (1928).

²⁸⁵ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*; VED, “Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean,” PP no. 1 (1933); Smith, “17 July 1935,” “28 August 1935,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1929-1940*, 87, 88, 90; “Courier, 20 February 1936,” *SMB Cuttings* (1936–1948).

²⁸⁶ *SMB, Annual Report* (1938).

For the English perspective: Ethel Mairet: “A statement on Hand Loom Weaving as an accessory to trade; and a comparison with what is being done on the continent and suggestions for a first-class weaving school,” sent to James Morton between February 14 and March 28, 1933, CSC EMA Envelope 24; in Knott, “Working Class, Middle Class, Upper Class, Evening Class,” 13.

ARCHITECTURE

Design and architecture have been described as “entangled disciplines, with a long history of interdependence, collaboration and overlap.”²⁸⁷ To Victorian Art Inspector Carew-Smyth, architecture was “the mother of applied arts” straddling art, science and trade.²⁸⁸ At technical art schools, architectural studies allied multiple art-based trades and practices. Architects regularly designed fittings, furniture and embellishments to accompany their buildings and “played prominent roles” in Australian art and crafts societies. Architectural knowledge was equally important to craftspeople.²⁸⁹ Thus, not all who studied architecture intended to become architects. For example, BTAS principal, Herbert Smith, personally conceptualised both the school’s new building and its fittings.²⁹⁰

Victoria had no systematic or prescribed course in architecture until 1914. Instead, the Victorian Institute of Architects (later the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, RVIA) required an apprenticeship and successful completion of their examination to issue membership. Several schools offered architectural classes to support apprentices.²⁹¹ By 1910, SMB boasted a Department of Architecture headed by George William Clegg (1870-1958), a Fellow of the RVIA and partner in Clegg, Kell and Miller. Subjects included Building Construction, Architectural Drawing and Design, and Drawing for Builders and Artisans which qualified students for employment and prepared them for RVIA examinations.²⁹²

The comparative value of architectural courses triggered debate and dismay. According to Smith and Dare, Frank Tate believed the standard of technical college instruction was too low, while Carew-Smyth and Donald Clark suggested the University of Melbourne program was poorer than that of the Bendigo School of Mines.²⁹³ Overall, the RVIA claimed the Education Department syllabus was disunited and obsolete, text books were unsuitable to Australian conditions, and projects were piecemeal. Additionally, University students found

²⁸⁷ Jessica Kelly and Claire Jamieson, “Practice, Discourse and Experience: The Relationship between Design History and Architectural History,” *Journal of Design History* 33, no. 1 (2019): 2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epz045>.

²⁸⁸ Victoria, Board of Inquiry into the Working Men’s College, *Final Report*, PP no. 14 (1911), 128.

²⁸⁹ VED, “Report... by T.S. Monkhouse,” PP no. 39 (1901), 91; Margolin, *World History of Design*, 581.

²⁹⁰ “Ballarat Star, 24 July 1915,” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²⁹¹ Victoria, Board of Inquiry into the Working Men’s College, *Final Report*, PP no. 14 (1911), 128; Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Final Report*, PP no. 29 (1901), 207.

²⁹² “Star, 24 July 1908,” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916), 4; Di Campbell, “George William Clegg (1870-1958),” *Federation University Australia*, last modified 21 February 2008, 2005, accessed 15 January 2020, <https://federation.edu.au/about-us/our-university/history/geoffrey-blainey-research-centre/honour-roll/c/george-william-clegg-1870-1958>; SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 98, 107.

²⁹³ Murray-Smith and Dare, *The Tech*, 109.

it difficult to leave their workplace to attend day lectures, while some sought additional training overseas to “keep pace with modern architecture.”²⁹⁴

To remedy the situation, in 1914 the RVIA, University authorities and technical school representatives (including Herbert Smith) drew up a new Architectural Diploma Course which combined study with four years’ workplace experience. Applicants, aged about 15 years, required a Junior Technical Certificate or equivalent practical experience with success in some exams. Carew-Smyth believed the new diploma did not include enough artistic content, despite expansion on previous courses.²⁹⁵ First year included 15 hours of drawing per week. Second year students drew from casts and photographs; modelled ornament and plant forms, undertook Elementary General or Modelled Design and began their workplace experience. Third and fourth-year students took Advanced subjects while continuing their practical, industry experience.²⁹⁶

The same year, BTAS also offered a gender-specific program titled “architectural draughtswoman’s course.”²⁹⁷ It is unlikely instruction varied greatly from the male-directed drafting courses, but certainly it was thought (by men) that “domestic architecture and gardens should, be vitally interesting” to women.²⁹⁸ Architectural and Instrumental Drawing was later offered to junior girls. Similarly, junior boys could undertake diploma level courses as a pathway to University studies in engineering, science or architecture. Some BTAS students subsequently attended the University of Melbourne’s Architectural Atelier.²⁹⁹

In 1918, BTAS instructor Clegg relocated to his Melbourne office, and Herbert Smith recommended Ballarat architect Lewis Stansfield Smith (1887-1971) replace him. However, from 1920 Percival Selwyn Richards (1865-1952) and Herbert (Les) Coburn (1891-1956) were joint instructors in architecture and building construction. Coburn taught until 1948.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁴ Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA), “Technical Schools Architectural Diploma Course,” *Journal of Proceedings* 13, no. 1 (March 1915), 33, 46, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-401016436>.

²⁹⁵ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (November 1914); VED, PP 1915, no. 15 (1915), 94.

²⁹⁶ RVIA, “Technical Schools Architectural Diploma Course,” 34.

²⁹⁷ “Courier, 15 October 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916).

²⁹⁸ Herbert, “Art,” *The Australasian*, 13 April 1935.

²⁹⁹ Smith, “30 July 1924,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 117.

³⁰⁰ SMB, *Principals’ Monthly Report to Council* (January 1918); Smith, “26 April 1918,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 3; *SMB Magazine* (1920), 2; Clare Gervasoni, “Herbert Leslie [Les] Coburn (1891-1956),” *Federation University Australia*, last modified August 2008, accessed 15 January 2020, <https://federation.edu.au/about-us/our-university/history/geoffrey-blainey-research-centre/honour-roll/c/herbert-leslie-les-coburn-1891-1956>.

In 1923, five BTAS students passed the Grade I architecture exam. The Gordon published two Grade I and three Grade II passes, while Maryborough boasted the only Grade III pass.³⁰¹

Around this time, new movements and materials began driving change in architecture and interior design. From the late 1920s historic and ornamental exercises yielded to the study of materials and structural elements, and traditional presentation of drawings in elevation gave way to modern perspective illustrations.³⁰² This is reflected in Victorian examinations.³⁰³

If International Style architecture aimed to reconcile “artistic endeavour and technical and mechanical practice”, then technical art schools complied.³⁰⁴ Yet not everyone was eager to embrace the modernisation of architecture. As early as 1913, some Australian commentators feared modernism and a movement toward individualism threatened experience and tradition. Author Lewis F. Day declared; “Throw tradition to the winds, and they will blow it back in your face.”³⁰⁵ Within the same publication others assert Australian architects contributed to a lethargic building industry by using obsolete designs. It seems there was little ongoing professional development within the industry; almost an equal number of architects operated outside the RVIA as within it. Of members, only a third regularly attended meetings, and disparate sub-committees made little progress.³⁰⁶

By the 1930s, architecture’s alliance to applied art was being called into question. In his assessment of a student exhibition at the Melbourne Art Centre, Harold Herbert found the architecture work “a bit stereotyped and poor in creative effort.” By way of apology, he noted students could not be expected to excel in all branches of art and suggested a specific architectural program might be better.³⁰⁷ Commercially, this was reflected in calls for greater collaboration between individual artists, artisans and architects.³⁰⁸

The rejection of traditional ornament within popular styles like Art Deco, further obviated the need for architects to also be applied artists. Arguably, modernism became overly dominant

³⁰¹ “Courier, 6 February 1923,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

³⁰² Julie Willis, “Conscious Design: The Melbourne University Architectural Atelier 1919–1947,” *Fabrications* 13, no. 2 (2004): 55, doi:10.1080/10331867.2004.10525183.

³⁰³ VED, Exams, “Perspective, Part III,” 1924.

³⁰⁴ Julier, *Dictionary of Design Since 1900*, 140.

³⁰⁵ Day, FBAA and MBFA, “Style in Art and Architecture,” (1913), 9, 23.

³⁰⁶ Federated Builders’ Association of Australia (FBAA) and Master Builders’ Federation of Australia (MBFA), “Melbourne Architects and Builders. Are They Up-to-date?” *Building* 6, no. 70 (12 June 1913), 50 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-264754837>.

³⁰⁷ Herbert, “Art,” *The Australasian*, 17 September 1932.

³⁰⁸ Stephen, McNamara and Goad, eds., “Sydney Ure Smith (1887–1949), ‘Editorial Notes’, Art in Australia, 1932,” in *Modernism & Australia*, 106.

to the exclusion of new architectural ideas, its ubiquity in direct contradiction to its original position of rejecting the past.³⁰⁹

Gradually, some colleges were granted advantages over others, possibly due to the influence of Inspector Dean, himself an RCA Associate in Architecture. The Melbourne Technical College (MTC, formerly WMC) was recognised by the University of Melbourne, while Swinburne students received two years' credit upon entering the University course. In 1935 and 1936, a nation-wide shortage of draughtspersons saw BTAS lose the bulk of their Architecture & Building Construction students to employment, whether their qualifications were complete or not. In 1939, MTC was fully recognised by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), with the Gordon pushing for an upgrade of their partial recognition in addition to concessions from the University. Meanwhile, BTAS attendances improved, and the school continued to advertise a four-year architectural course.³¹⁰

Among BTAS' architectural students were John Sutcliffe who became a war records staff draughtsman on his return from the front in 1919.³¹¹ Graduates Elliot Gower and J. La Gerche were awarded first prize of £500 for their designs to complete the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery, Melbourne. The previous year, the pair won fourth prize for a design "in connection with Parliament House, Canberra."³¹² Architectural recipients of the MacRobertson prize included Thomas Montgomery Shattock (1923), Jack Colburne (1929) and David Best (1930 and 1931). Several graduates were employed by the Public Works Department, while others joined private practises.³¹³

Examination in architecture was requisite for the men undertaking the Art Teachers' Certificate and Diploma, although women were off the hook. Among the teachers who passed Grade III architecture were Donald I. Johnston, Harold Brown, Thomas Trengrove, Herbert Malin, Ernest H. Duncan, Edwin Robinson and Albert Williams.³¹⁴

³⁰⁹ Michl, "A Case Against the Modernist Regime in Design Education," 38.

³¹⁰ Smith, "15 May 1935," "15 July 1936," "22 February 1939," "21 February 1940," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 83, 107, 149, 167; VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1937), 24; VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35; "Courier, 28 January 1939," SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

³¹¹ *SMB Magazine* (1919), 18.

³¹² "Courier, 8 May 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

³¹³ Smith, "20 February 1929," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 188; "18 September 1935," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 91.

³¹⁴ "Courier, 9 February 1927," "Courier, 10 February 1928," "Courier, 5 February 1931," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

During the early twentieth century, technical art schools remedied the South Kensington bias toward copy and conceptualisation by revaluing material practice. Invention overtook replication within industrial design and architectural fields, and honest use of material was favoured over ornamentation. Designers sought authenticity.

Many of the subjects which informed design hardly changed. Plants were still drawn, casts were still modelled, history continued to be studied. However, the range of material applied art subjects grew, each bringing their own techniques, technologies and learning opportunities. Hand-built crafting of artisanal products provided an understanding of materials and associated processes which was hoped to translate to larger scale manufacture.

Many materials were expensive or difficult to source, so concepts were mocked-up as clay models. At its simplest, clay modelling was a cheap and efficient form of bimanual training which developed students' perceptual and motor skills. However, modelling was also a sophisticated skill that served architects, builders, interior designers, monumental artists, industrial artists and other trades. It was practised by fine artists and sculptors, and advanced levels were requisite for some art teaching qualifications. Moulding and casting were supplementary but critical skills. The importance of modelling was second only to drawing in Victorian technical art education, largely due to the efforts of Carew-Smyth. Its delivery at technical art schools demonstrates a fundamental difference to teaching at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Art School in the early twentieth century.

The Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) offered a range of material subjects, most with opportunity for examination. Their popularity varied, as did scope for experimentation. From 1917, the School of Mines, Ballarat (SMB) and BTAS were putting considerable energy into ceramic research and development. Teachers meticulously experimented with local clays, glazes and firings, with students preparing both the clay and the bulk of finished works. Despite successful burns and complimentary reports, staff were apprehensive about clay whiteness and consistency of kiln output. Hopes for large-scale art pottery manufacture in Ballarat were never realised.

Early technical art sculpture was akin to ceramic modelling, but growing disfavour of mimetic training and increased interest in the properties of other materials led to other forms of sculptural art, many of which were difficult, time consuming and expensive. The field was not well supported in Victoria, and success was hard won. Only a handful of BTAS students are remembered for their sculptural talent.

Wood carving was a popular subject among women and men, but not well attended at examination, while stone carving was practically invisible, with students likely restricted to Modelled Design. By comparison, light metal work was an affordable, accessible and popular craft. Post-war, soldier repatriation training produced a successful art metal enterprise, women's classes reflected a shift in product making, and decorative enamelling was introduced in 1922. Meanwhile, the textile industry was only partially catered to by Victorian technical art schools and varied according to local industries. BTAS Decorative Needlework graduates worked alongside utilitarian sewers at busy local manufacturers, although demand for weavers was inconsistent, and classes came and went. Leather embossing was a popular subject but had little industrial value.

Until 1927 at least, BTAS students undertook dozens of commercial, commemorative and memorial commissions in a range of materials, among them the high profile, but somewhat controversial, Villers-Bretonneux Australia School wood carvings. Repoussé plaques and shields were very popular, while glass commissions appear to have been the sole responsibility of Amalie Feild until her resignation. Stained glass was practically absent from all technical schools by 1940.

As pedagogy prioritised innovation and highlighted material qualities, approaches to form and ornamentation also shifted. Many decorative craft practices were displaced by modernist aesthetics and machine-friendly materials. Architecture, which had been taught *ad hoc* at various Victorian institutions, was fertile ground for debate between adhering to tradition and breaking new ground. In 1914, a new Architectural Diploma Course combined theory, practise and workplace experience to unify training, although women were directed toward domestic drafting.

The integration of design and execution in material practice sought symbiosis between artist and maker to the benefit of industry, yet these largely craft-based subjects were open to artist, teacher and trade cohorts, so their contribution to industry varied greatly.

Chapter 7

Art teacher training

Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) teacher alumni were prevalent within Victorian schools, and this is perhaps the institution's greatest legacy. For more than thirty years, various sources claimed BTAS "supplied the Education Department with more trained technical teachers than any other similar institution in the State" and that graduates could be found "in almost all the art schools in Australia."¹ The training of artists, designers, craftspeople and art teachers overlapped, yet their goals clearly differed.

Teachers are powerful agents in the production of meaning and symbolic value of art.² In fact, teachers' pedagogic action (what and how they teach) has been described as a form of symbolic violence, given it is culturally arbitrary yet enforced.³ Akama and Barnes explain that while teaching might seem peripheral to art and design, "it can exert a strong influence over students' future pathways and perspectives."⁴ These concepts give weight to an argument that the Victorian Education Department's teacher training structure "perpetuated an inbred system of official courses and teaching methods" which stymied innovation.⁵ Similar criticisms have been made of England's cyclical appointment of teachers trained within, and for, South Kensington's self-perpetuating systems.⁶ Bourdieu discusses the problematic nature of self-replicating educational bureaucracies.⁷

Yet, there are distinctions worth making. Art education was valued in Victoria from kindergarten through to tertiary level, and educator training was tailored according to teacher classification and school type, with several pathways and qualifications available. With established credentials from its predecessor institutions, BTAS provided multiple types of art teacher training.

¹ SMB, *Short Resume* (1918), 2; "Courier, 29 October 1936," SMB Cuttings (1936–48).

² Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production," 319.

³ Daniel J. Schubert, "Suffering/symbolic Violence," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell, (Durham [U.K.]: Acumen, 2010), 188.

⁴ Akama and Barnes, "Where Is Our Diversity," 35.

⁵ Hammond, "Changes in Art Education Ideologies," 280.

⁶ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, "The Royal College of Art", 304; Smith, "Art Teacher Training in Britain," (1985), 104.

⁷ Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, 151.

GENERALIST TEACHERS

At the turn of the twentieth century, Director of Education, Frank Tate, diversified the State school curriculum, necessitating an improved system of professional teacher training, which incorporated drawing under the direction of Ponsonby Carew-Smyth.

Drawing was a critical explanatory skill for generalist teachers. With limited access to diverse visual resources, teachers needed to generate their own representative and demonstrative illustrations. Teachers acted as pictorial repositories for their students, drawing creatures, plants, objects, complex scenes, diagrams and maps to visually support their teaching. Carew-Smyth believed if teachers understood basic objects and elements, they could mentally re-assemble new images as required.⁸



Figure 7.1 **The educational and decorative application of drawing to classroom blackboards.** From left: *Woodwork class at Hindmarsh.* Photograph; 14.5 cm x 24.1 cm. c1930; *A writing class in progress at Hindmarsh Primary School.* Photograph; 14.4 cm x 24.2 cm. c1930.

(Courtesy State Library of South Australia, B 70326/2 and B 70326/3. Public domain.)

As discussed previously, working teachers accessed regional Drawing Centres, District Inspectors and Education Department publications for their professional development. Meanwhile, new teachers undertook Drawing Part I, II or III within the State School Junior Teachers' Course, subject to their classification. Part I incorporated instrumental and freehand geometry, and construction of simple patterns; Parts II and III consisted of drawing objects and plants, from observation and memory respectively. All demonstrated an in-class drawing lesson. The subject was not universally embraced. Carew-Smyth found some students lazy in their approach and was aghast at the collection of "botanical monstrosities" submitted.⁹ However, drawing soon came to be considered a foundational teacher skill.

⁸ VED, ed., "Drawing" *Education Gazette*, September 22, 1910, 231.

⁹ VED, ed., "Drawing" *Education Gazette*, September 22, 1910, 230-31.

From its opening in 1926 until 1931, many Ballarat Teacher Training College students undertook drawing and craft instruction at BTAS for two half days per week. BTAS also provided special Saturday classes to State School teachers on recently introduced Pastel Drawing.¹⁰

Victorian primary school teachers taught drawing to their young charges with varying success, however the introduction of manual arts and the establishment of State secondary education required specialist educators.

ART TEACHERS: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

Victoria's Organising Inspector of Manual Training, John Byatt, and Art Inspector Carew-Smyth agreed on the value of manual art training and drawing instruction. Most teachers, however, were unprepared to teach beyond elementary levels, so new qualifications were introduced around 1910, coinciding with the establishment of State-operated secondary schools; the Drawing Teacher's Primary Certificate, Drawing Teacher's Secondary Certificate, and Trained Manual Arts Teacher's Certificate. The senior Art Teachers' Certificate and Diploma increased offerings in 1912.¹¹

The Drawing Teacher's certificates extended teacher qualifications which, from 1914, were recognised by classifiers. They remained largely unchanged during Carew-Smyth's tenure. Each required examination in a range of drawing and design subjects and an in-class teaching demonstration. Secondary Certificate candidates also submitted a certified folio of drawings, decorative applications, architectural features or furniture, and an example of elementary craft work. It seems the Education Department did not issue the first certificates until 1920. Yet, Carew-Smyth notes students were completing the course in 1915.¹² BTAS reported several students qualifying for the Secondary Certificate in 1915, suggesting they were early and committed adopters.¹³ In the years to July 1926, the Department reported 65 students had gained their Secondary Certificate at BTAS compared with just 15 at WMC, the next on the list.¹⁴ Some secured industry employment, demonstrating the qualification delivered skills valued beyond the Department.

¹⁰ Smith, "29 February 1928," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 170.

¹¹ Docherty, "The Technical Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 701.

¹² MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 21; Docherty, "The Technical Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 701; VED, "Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector," PP no. 49 (1915), 78.

¹³ SMB, *Annual Report* (1915), 4.

¹⁴ Smith, "28 July 1926," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 150; "Courier, 31 July 1926," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

The Department was still short of “highly qualified” secondary and technical art teachers in 1929. The Drawing Teacher’s Secondary Certificate was revised and compulsory for State art teachers by 1932.¹⁵ Through the delivery of these certificates, BTAS and the Working Men’s College (WMC) “materially improved” the quality of art teaching at schools throughout Victoria.¹⁶ Docherty notes the Department issued 210 Primary and 232 Secondary certificates between 1920 and 1945.¹⁷ Some were likely undertaken as part of other qualifications.¹⁸

Following Byatt’s arrival, in late 1900 nine holders of the standard Trained Teacher’s Certificate undertook a second, extension year in Manual Arts (TTC:MA). They formed a vanguard to teach primary school manual arts and deliver in-service teacher training.¹⁹ However, the rapid growth of junior technical and secondary high schools a decade later necessitated more comprehensive training.



Figure 7.2 **Examples of applied and manual arts undertaken at secondary technical schools.**
Display including rugs, needle work and leather work at Brighton Technical School.
Photographic negative: flexible base; 20.3 x 25.7 cm. c1930–1939.
(Courtesy SLV, H2009.21/62. Public domain).

¹⁵ VED, PP Second Session no. 7, 1929. 10; “From Gaol to Art School,” *Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), 25 August 1932, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article243042179>.
¹⁶ MTC, *Technical Education in Victoria, 1868-1934*, 21.
¹⁷ Docherty, “The Technical Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 701.
¹⁸ Vic. Govt., “Art Teacher’s Certificate,” *Gazette* 88, 1563.
¹⁹ Warwick Eunson, “Book 7: The Education and Supply of Teachers,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 873.

The new, three-year Trained Manual Arts Teacher's Certificate included drawing, craft practices, English, and Theory of Teaching. Men's craft included sloyd and carpentry, building construction, sheet metal and elementary blacksmithing. Women undertook plain and art needlework, drawing and design, and "various forms of light craft work."²⁰ Successful graduates were intended for secondary high and junior technical schools.

The Melbourne Continuation School and WMC shared responsibility for the first cohort of Manual Arts students in 1909. This inaugural year was perhaps briefly titled First Class Certificate (Manual Arts) (FCC:MA).²¹ These candidates were selected for their academic credentials and not for any artistic ability. The results, according to Carew-Smyth, were disappointing, and he recommended all future candidates have strong creative skills.²² Successful applicants were first-class junior teachers of "good moral character [and] sound constitution", assessed at an interview and medical examination.²³ Holders of the Drawing Teachers' Secondary Certificate were later preferred.²⁴ Upon completion, students committed to work wherever the Education Department sent them for the next four years.²⁵

The Ballarat Manual Arts experience

From 1910 the Department distributed Trained Manual Arts Teacher's Certificate (henceforth contracted to 'Manual Arts' in this thesis) places relatively equally between BTAS and WMC, approximately ten-apiece each year. (Swinburne was provided some places in 1913). Having demonstrated success, Ballarat was granted 10 of 20 places in 1914 and eight in 1915.²⁶ In 1921, of the 20 applicants interviewed by Carew-Smyth, 11 received places at Ballarat; six to young women, and five to men.²⁷ Despite the Department advertising a preference for male applicants, an ongoing gender balance indicates institutions were conscious of the need for teachers of both sexes.²⁸ Smith encouraged students from the Girls'

²⁰ "Manual Art Training," *Bendigo Advertiser* (Vic.), 12 November 1909, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89885674>.

²¹ "Training of Teachers," *Age* (Melbourne, Vic.), 12 November 1909, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article196038825>; Hammond, "Changes in Art Education Ideologies," 128.

²² "Report on Instruction in Art in Technical Schools," VED, PP no. 44 (1910), 94.

²³ "Education Department, Melbourne, 12th December 1917. Manual Art Studentships," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 15 December 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1670210>.

²⁴ VED, "Report on Art and Applied Art, by William Dean," PP no. 1 (1937), 23.

²⁵ "Education Department, Melbourne, 12th December 1917. Manual Art Studentships," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 15 December 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1670210>.

²⁶ VED, PP no. 12 (1912), 105; VED, PP no. 6, 1913), 131; "Star, 28 November 1914" SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); SMB, *Annual Report* (1914), 3; SMB, *Principals' Monthly Report to Council* (February 1915).

²⁷ "Courier, 26 February 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921–1924), 9.

²⁸ "Education Department, Melbourne, 12th December 1917. Manual Art Studentships," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 15 December 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1670210>.

Preparatory Technical Classes to apply.²⁹ Yet, despite equal representation among BTAS candidates, female teachers did not receive equal remuneration. In 1925, the starting salary for female Manual Arts teachers was just under 80 per cent of the male starting salary.³⁰

Until the new BTAS building opened in 1915, Manual Arts and other art students worked together in an old warehouse opposite City Hall, or above a stables and boot shop.³¹ Self-describing as ‘Manuals’, the students undertook a disciplined program, academically and structurally. The procedure of ‘signing-in’ eventually became irksome, one wag suggested “teachers should take it in turn” to sign on for students, who brazenly shared the responsibility among themselves anyway. To encourage punctuality the doors were strictly closed the moment class started. Latecomers, drawing board tucked under one arm, were forced to knock timidly to beg entry.³²

A request for late morning starts echoes a timeless teenage complaint, as did demands for more snack breaks to prevent hunger and fatigue. Students could spend long hours standing at their work, and night lessons were particularly uncomfortable given the cold night air. Working alongside non-teaching students, BTAS Manual Art students were conscious of perceived hierarchies but confident they could match or exceed the skills of their rivals.³³

The pace of learning during the three-year program was taxing. Students undertook a crammed curriculum that included design, decoration, painting, stencilling, modelling, wood and metal work, dressmaking and millinery, in addition to ‘Theory of Teaching’, causing at least one student to lament “we will know a little of everything and nothing in particular.”³⁴ Unsurprisingly, Donald Clark, Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, found that the Manual Art students were equipped with a strong work ethic. The course aligned with a general trend for teachers to specialise. Ironically, the breadth of subjects undertaken in the Manual Arts course ran counter to this aim; “... the hard-toiled Manual Art tackles [all subjects] and emerges an adept in the art of—everything.”³⁵ Carew-Smyth personally inspected the Manual Arts pre-service teachers, including demonstrations of practical teaching within a classroom setting, which was a requirement for certification. It was deemed a “fairly severe test for

²⁹ Smith, “31 January 1919,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 20.

³⁰ “Courier, 10 November 1925,” *SMB Cuttings (1925–1936)*,

³¹ *SMB Magazine* (1916), 21.

³² *SMB Magazine* (1921), 23.

³³ *SMB Magazine* (1921), 23.

³⁴ *SMB Magazine* (1921), 23.

³⁵ *SMB Magazine* (1920), 23.

intending teachers.”³⁶ Despite its rigorous nature the course remained popular, and its graduates taught generations of children throughout Victoria.³⁷

Owing to government cutbacks in 1922, the Manual Arts intake was suspended.³⁸ When reinstated in 1923, of 10 students selected for BTAS, seven had received their preparatory training in the junior school. In 1924, 10 of 17 places were awarded to BTAS, the remaining seven to WMC, and a similar balance continued for a couple more years. The *Ballarat Star* suggested the large number of scholarships allocated to BTAS endorsed its “reputation as the first Art School in the State.”³⁹ This reputation would be shaken by Departmental machinations. As early as 1919, Smith felt the school’s contribution was not being justly recognised, seeking organisational improvement again in 1921.⁴⁰

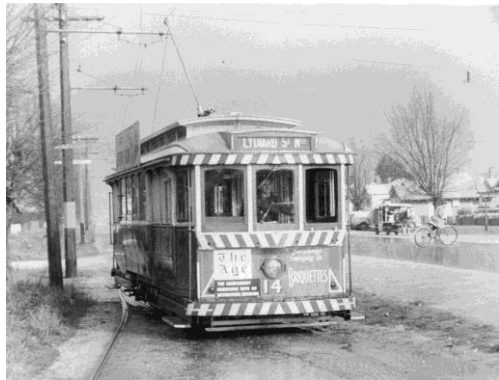


Figure 7.3
Manual arts students travelled to English classes by tram for some time. Tram in Grey St Sebastopol. Photograph. No Date. (Courtesy Max Harris Photography Collection, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute, MH1285. ©BMI.)

Initially, Ballarat’s Theory of Teaching subject was delivered each Monday afternoon at Dana Street Primary School, an easy two-block walk from BTAS.⁴¹ When the class was moved to Ballarat High School (BHS), several kilometres and a tram ride away, it triggered problems for the future of the course at BTAS. Students and parents concerned by the inconvenience and expense, argued the teacher of University English at SMB could deliver the appropriate lessons to save students travelling. The Council agreed and endorsed the request to the Minister of Education, Alexander Peacock.⁴²

This approach to the Minister opened a can of worms. Peacock agreed travel between the two locations was disruptive but claimed students were “deficient in the art of teaching on its completion.”⁴³ Peacock offered no evidence for this claim, and it served as a smokescreen to

³⁶ “Star, 12 December 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924), 97.

³⁷ *Technical Education in Victoria* 1934, p. 21.

³⁸ Smith, “25 November 1921,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 66; “Star, 28 November 1921,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924), 42.

³⁹ “Star, 28 October 1922,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁴⁰ Smith, “28 March 1919,” “24 June 1921,” “29 July 1921,” *Art Principal’s Reports 1918-1929*, 23, 57, 58.

⁴¹ *SMB Magazine* (1921), 24.

⁴² “Courier, 28 February 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924).

⁴³ “Courier, 22 July 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

conceal the Education Department's desire to centralise Manual Art teacher training, moving all trainees to Melbourne. In an angry response, BHS chairman, Mr F. Brawn, MLC, emphasised that government inspectors had always found Ballarat Manual Art students "to possess superior qualifications to those candidates from other centres." Lobbing the ball back at the Minister, Brawn continued that if there was fault to be found, it lay with the Department, which failed to provide a "proper basis of training for the profession of teachers."⁴⁴ This was the first attempt to move all Manual Arts trainees to Melbourne, despite the bulk of applicants coming from Ballarat and district.⁴⁵

BTAS was training a record 40 Manual Arts teachers in 1925 when Smith became aware of a Departmental scheme to transfer future cohorts to Melbourne. Trusting SMB council would respond strongly, Smith supplied them with a list of all students trained since 1905, highlighting teachers. The school was allocated just five students in 1926.⁴⁶

That year, retiring Art Inspector Carew-Smyth was appointed to WMC to establish a specialist art teachers' training college. Twenty-five years earlier, Carew-Smyth had called for a centralised art school and museum, along South Kensington lines, yet in the intervening years had been a staunch supporter of regional institutions. Still, the move pricked fears for all forms of art teacher training at BTAS. Meeting with government representatives, including Carew-Smyth, SMB president Middleton was assured "the prestige and importance of [BTAS] would in no way suffer."⁴⁷ In the list of attendees reported, principal Smith is conspicuous by his absence.

Government promises proved hollow, despite new inspector Dean's complimentary assessment of BTAS' 17 final students.⁴⁸ In 1927 the State announced all future Manual Arts students would be trained at Melbourne Teachers' (Training) College (MTTC) in conjunction with WMC; a heavy blow to Ballarat given more than 15 years of course delivery on an equal footing with Melbourne. It was a short-sighted move given the State's desperate need for secondary teachers of drawing, art and manual art.⁴⁹ Furious protest led to the decision being

⁴⁴ "July/August 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁴⁵ "State Parliament," *Geelong Advertiser* (Vic.), 20 July 1925, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209611547>.

⁴⁶ Smith, "18 February 1925," "15 July 1925," "17 February 1926," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 126, 136, 144.

⁴⁷ "Courier, 19 March 1926," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁴⁸ Smith, "17 November 1926," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 155; "Courier, 20 November 1926," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁴⁹ "Vacancies for Teachers," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 1 December 1926, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3823980>.

temporarily reversed, although the commute to Ballarat High was over. Eleven new places (26 Manual Arts in total) were instead attached to the newly opened Ballarat Teachers' College with practical art undertaken at BTAS.⁵⁰ Perhaps reading the writing on the wall, long-term BTAS teachers including Amalie Feild, Harold Brown and John Rowell moved on. None of these staff had been particularly well paid, and the school found it very difficult to replace them at the advertised salaries.⁵¹ The same year, Donald Clark analysed several upsets for technical teachers, including their reclassification as secondary school staff in *The Future of Technical and Industrial Training in Victoria*.⁵²

The Department persistently attempted to centralise Manual Arts training in Melbourne. Dean agreed to convey SMB council concerns to government authorities but made no promises.⁵³ The battle seemed lost in 1928, but Smith persevered and BTAS was granted six candidates in 1929.⁵⁴ No Manual Arts were appointed to Ballarat in 1930, but three of the current cohort were offered a fourth year to extend their qualifications. Adding insult to injury, valued staff member, Harold Jolly, was transferred to oversee art classes at MTTC.⁵⁵ Perhaps owing to the Depression, no Victorian places were offered in 1931, although BTAS' remaining seven students were able to teach-out.⁵⁶ The same year, Ballarat's Teacher Training College closed, and BTAS lost in excess of 60 annual enrolments.⁵⁷ Future regional candidates would study in Melbourne with the rather unsatisfactory compensation of a travel allowance.⁵⁸

Despite their specialty training, some Manual Arts students found workforce reality did not always match expectation; 'Mr Jones' spent most of his time taking rolls, record keeping, leading the students in the national anthem at assemblies, making announcements, fixing broken doors and desks, shovelling gravel, and tending the head-teacher's seedlings!⁵⁹ Having gained work, Miss 'PYN' found it vastly different from art school life, and

⁵⁰ "Courier, 11 February 1927" and "Courier, 12 February 1927," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); VED, PP no. 14, 1928), 31.

⁵¹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1927), 3.

⁵² Clark, *The Future* (1927), 16.

⁵³ "Courier, 10 February 1928," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); VED, "Report on the Teachers' Colleges," PP no. 14, 1928), 31.

⁵⁴ Smith, "29 February 1928," 170; "20 February 1929," *Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929*, 187; *SMB Magazine* (1928), 16.

⁵⁵ Smith, "19 February 1930," "19 March 1930," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 11, 13.

⁵⁶ Smith, "18 February 1931," "18 November 1931," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 26, 35.

⁵⁷ Smith, "17 February 1932," *Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940*, 38.

⁵⁸ VED, PP no. 1, (1931), 7; "Courier, 1 March 1928," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁵⁹ "Scenes from the everyday life of an M.A.," in *SMB Magazine* (1929), 19.

discovered that through “unpopularity or is it misunderstanding” of women, most boarding houses preferred men.⁶⁰

The impact of Manual Arts centralisation compels further investigation. Eunson notes that despite offering the same certificate, there were “marked differences” in subject emphasis between BTAS and the Melbourne course.⁶¹ Did centralising the power of the Melbourne Teachers’ College reprioritise the practical artistic, academic and pedagogical components of the course?

Manual Arts certificates filled teacher gaps in primary and secondary schools. Senior technical schools, however, required educators with more comprehensive experience.

TERTIARY ART TEACHERS FOR SENIOR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

The period of rapid expansion of technical education led to high demand for suitably trained teachers, who were scarce owing to the additional skills and training they required. Yet, while most teacher certification conformed to standard syllabi and examination set by the Education Department, there was more than one way to qualify as a senior technical school educator. Most were employed to impart their industry or trade experience, with all the diversity of approach that afforded, and some undertook teacher training. Technical art instructors, however, usually embodied formal art and teacher qualifications, often with practical trade, or at least guild, experience. Until the twentieth century, their upper echelons were usually trained outside Australia, often at the Royal College of Art (RCA), South Kensington, London.⁶²

Ponsonby Carew-Smyth had introduced art teacher training at the Ballarat West (Gallery) school to fill a gap, noting Melbourne’s Training College (MTTC) was not suitably equipped to do the same.⁶³ Non-uniform teacher experience prompted Art Inspector Thomas Monkhouse to seek a prescribed syllabus and standard examples of instruction toward the end of his tenure in 1903 and his successor, Carew-Smyth, adopted the cause. Quality educators were needed to encourage industry confidence, but many applicants were amateur craftspeople with little or no teaching experience. Carew-Smyth believed senior technical art teachers needed to be educators, artists and artisans in equal measure, in other words, artist-teachers.

⁶⁰ *SMB Magazine* (1927), 42.

⁶¹ Eunson, “The Education and Supply of Teachers,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 875.

⁶² For example, Jordan, “The South Kensington Empire,” 35, 39; Cochrane, *The Crafts Movement in Australia*, 12; Weston, “The Professional Training of Artists in Australia,” xv; 101; Erickson and Hugo, *Art & Design in Western Australia*, 15; Hammond, “Changes in Art Education Ideologies,” 58, 77. Refer also to “South Kensington: The colonisation of art education” in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

⁶³ Victoria, Royal Commission on Technical Education, *Minutes of Evidence*, PP no. 36 (1901), 500.

From 1906 he agitated for the establishment of a special qualification for teaching in technical art schools via a course of study tailored to local, Australian requirements.⁶⁴ The concept would not bear fruit until 1914, with opportunity to undertake the recently established Drawing Teachers' Secondary Certificate or Manual Arts certificate in the meantime. Carew-Smyth also arranged professional development programs delivered by material specialists during school breaks, with admittance by application to the Director of Education. In 1910, the training focused on wrought iron work, in 1911 it centred on moulding and casting along with visits to craft workshops. Of the 18 teachers participating, three were women.⁶⁵

Carew-Smyth credited technical art schools with initiating most of the State's trade classes, owing to teacher training in the fundamental principles of all crafts, and specialisation in some.⁶⁶ He noted BTAS had been central to training technical art teachers, although many graduates undertook capstone studies in England.⁶⁷ More was to be done.

Government Technical Teacher Studentships

In 1915, five-year Government Technical Teacher Studentships (GTTS) were established to generate a pool of well-trained, technical teachers of all disciplines. The resulting Technical Teacher's Certificate (TTC) became the minimum qualification to teach at senior technical schools. The art cohort, supervised by Carew-Smyth, graduated with the variant Technical Art Teacher's Certificate (TATC). Significantly, these certificates were only delivered by approved technical schools, effectively ruling out the Melbourne Teachers' College (MTTC).⁶⁸

The select-entry studentship incorporated theory and practise of both trade and teaching. Candidates studied their preferred art or trade course for three years, teaching one day a week in a junior technical school. The following two years, they work in industry, practised teaching, and studied English and Theory of Teaching.⁶⁹ Applicants were required to be at least 16 years old, have a junior technical qualification (or equivalent), demonstrate an

⁶⁴ VED, "General Report on Art in Technical Schools, by P.M. Carew-Smyth," PP no. 1 (1906), 55; VED, "Report on Instruction in Art in Technical Schools," PP no. 44 (1910), 94.

⁶⁵ "Technical Art Teachers," *Bendigo Advertiser* (Vic.), Saturday 8 April 1911, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article89841470>; VED, PP no. 12 (1912), 105.

⁶⁶ VED, "Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector," (PP, no. 49, 1915), 79.

⁶⁷ Victoria, Board of Inquiry into the Working Men's College, *Final Report*, PP no. 14 (1911), 130.

⁶⁸ "Courier, 17 June 1915," "Courier, 10 February 1916," SMB Cuttings (1907-1916); "Technical Education," *Leader* (Melbourne, Vic.), 19 June 1915, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91367047>; Long, *A History of State Education*, 251.

⁶⁹ "Technical Education," *Leader* (Melbourne, Vic.), 19 June 1915, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article91367047>; Long, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (1922), 252.

aptitude for teaching, and be of sound health and “good moral character.”⁷⁰ Like Manual Arts students, these studentships provided an annual allowance in return for a four-year commitment to the Education Department upon completion.

In the first intake, 46 applicants vied for 25 GTTS vacancies at SMB, but only one entered an art-based trade. This was Ballarat junior tech student, Albert Edward Williams (1899-1986) in Sign Painting and House Decorating.⁷¹ Williams undertook work placement with the Ballarat Lithographic Co. and taught at BTAS and the Ballarat and Castlemaine junior technical schools. In his second year, he was reported to be “shaping very well” and setting the standard for other student-teachers.⁷² Carew-Smyth selected him for further training at WMC in 1926, after which he returned to BTAS as an Assistant Art Master in 1928. Williams facilitated the Old Boys’ Association Committee, the Sports Committee and school Cadets, and was occasional sub editor of the SMB Magazine. In 1942, following more than 25 years connected to BTAS, Williams moved to Maryborough Technical School.⁷³ Much of Williams’ student folio is housed in the Federation University collection.

As their qualifications dictated, the bulk of Manual Arts graduates subsequently taught at junior technical and secondary high schools, while graduates of the five-year technical studentships were usually appointed to senior technical art schools.⁷⁴ To rise through the ranks, however, required considerably more commitment.

An almost Sisyphean task

As early as 1915, State Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, announced BTAS was “the chief training ground for teachers in the State. The principal art teachers in half the technical schools of Victoria were trainees of the school.”⁷⁵ However, principals, heads and senior staff often required advanced training which, until this point at least, often meant the British Art Master’s Certificate (or Art Class Teacher’s Certificate) achieved by completing all 26 stages of South Kensington’s national curriculum together with teaching experience.⁷⁶ The result

⁷⁰ “Courier, 17 June 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–16).

⁷¹ “Courier, 5 January 1914,” “Courier, 10 February 1916” SMB Cuttings (1907–1916); *SMB Magazine* (1916), 55;

⁷² Clark, Report on the Ballarat Junior Technical School, 2 November 1916.

⁷³ *SMB Magazine* (1920), 2; *SMB Magazine* (1922), 2; SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 8; “Courier, 27 November 1922,” in SMB Newspaper Cuttings (1921–24), “Courier, 17 June 1926,” “Courier, 16 March 1928,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936); “Courier, 6 December 1942,” SMB Cuttings (1936–48).

⁷⁴ For examples, refer Appendix, Table A-2, DOI: 10.25955/604d8c6d9c78a.

⁷⁵ “Ballarat Courier, 24 July 1915” SMB Cuttings (1907–16), 67.

⁷⁶ Glasgow School of Art, “Records of The Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, Scotland, 15th century-2014, GSA Archives,” accessed 10 July 2015,

was an influx of South Kensington values. Perhaps spurred by British curricula changes in 1913, BTAS advertised an Art Master's Certificate in 1914 and 1915.⁷⁷ Candidates required a qualification to practise an "artistic trade, craft or occupation" plus a good general education. A pass required success at 13 Departmental examinations, including a practical craft exam.⁷⁸ It was quickly superseded by new State-based qualifications. Overseen by Inspector Carew-Smyth, the Education Department's Art Teachers' Certificate and Art Teachers' Diploma were introduced in 1914. Designed to deliver depth as well as breadth, their attainment was interminably long and arduous. Ten years later, not one candidate had completed even half the workload. It was almost 30 years before the first graduates emerged.⁷⁹

Applicant prerequisites included both Drawing Teachers' Primary and Secondary Certificates as well as trade qualifications. To achieve the Art Teachers' Certificate, students generated a folio of drawings and models from plants, antique and life, general and historic design, sketches of historic ornament, and architectural drawings including plans, elevations, sections and construction detail. Fifteen Departmental examinations were then required, including all three grades of architecture, two grades of building construction, historic ornament and advanced design, several drawing and modelling exams, human anatomy, and "Principles of teaching and school management as applied to Art subjects and schools." Interestingly, women were given a free pass on the architectural subjects.⁸⁰

Anyone tenacious enough to attempt the Diploma, required the above Certificate and a thicker folio to house extensive examples of architectural drawing, painting, modelling, and design. A further 12 examinations were undertaken at Advanced and Honours levels, plus practical tests of their craft skill.⁸¹

The qualifications attracted few takers. One critic estimated the average 13-year-old, beginning their training at a junior technical school, would need approximately nine years study just to complete the necessary prerequisites, and a further eight years to complete the course. Studying full time, that same student would be 29 or 30 years of age before they

<http://www.gsaarchives.net/archon/index.php?p=collections/findingaid&id=392&rootcontentid=3611&q=prospectus#id3612>; Smith, "Art Teacher Training in Britain (1985), 103, 142; Macdonald, *A Century of Art and Design Education*, 224.

⁷⁷ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 105-106; SMB, *Prospectus B*, (1915), 7;

⁷⁸ SMB, *Calendar 1914* (1914), 105.

⁷⁹ VED, PP no. 1 (1914), 104; "Courier, Wednesday 19 August 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925-1936); VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35; Docherty, "The Technical Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 701.

⁸⁰ Vic. Govt., "Art Teacher's Certificate," *Gazette* 88, 1563.

⁸¹ Vic. Govt., "Art Teacher's Certificate," *Gazette* 88, 1563.

qualified for the Art Teacher's Certificate, let alone the Diploma.⁸² Ongoing employment as a teacher could add several years to completion dates.

A British advantage

Given the difficulty of the local Certificate and Diploma, it is unsurprising the Education Department had difficulty finding Victorian teachers with 'advanced qualifications' in applied art. By comparison, a young person attending the Royal College of Art (RCA) London could achieve an Art Master's Certificate (full Associateship in all four schools) by the age of 25. Thus, Victoria continued to appoint RCA graduates.⁸³ Perhaps perception of London's cultural superiority over the colonies partly led to their ongoing, preferential treatment.⁸⁴ However, the time and expense to achieve local qualifications was a clear disadvantage. Those who could afford to travel and study in London could return to Australia after just a handful of years, with a Diploma and Associateship of the RCA, including the sought-after post-nominal, ARCA.

From Australia, the RCA might have been considered the pinnacle of art schools, but it is important to note some British historians do not record it that way.⁸⁵ Less than six per cent of full-time English art teachers had an RCA diploma.⁸⁶

Frank Tate believed Australians were every bit equal to their British counterparts, but controversially suggested Victorian art schools were unable to train teachers beyond junior standard. The SMB council took exception, responding in a strongly worded letter that, in their case at least, they had "abundant proof that such a statement is without foundation."⁸⁷ The local newspaper maintained the rage, expressing two months later that Tate was not fully across the matter; a blunt statement given he was Director of Education.⁸⁸ The author claimed local schools had proven capability in training teachers beyond the standard set by South Kensington's own Art Master's Certificate.⁸⁹

⁸² "Courier, 19 August 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936). Docherty states seven years just to complete the Certificate: Docherty, "The Technical Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 701.

⁸³ "Courier, 13 June 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁸⁴ Boyanoski, "Decolonising Visual Culture," 17.

⁸⁵ Stuart Macdonald, "Men for the Royal College," *JADE Journal of Art & Design Education* 3, no. 2 (1984): 135.

⁸⁶ Cunliffe-Charlesworth, "The Royal College of Art," 19.

⁸⁷ Selleck, "Tate, Frank (1864–1939)," online; "Courier, 20 June 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁸⁸ "Courier, 19 August 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁸⁹ "Courier, 19 August 1925," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

Tate was overlooking an important factor. It was not the quality of the candidates that privileged British students, but the disparity between how quickly an RCA Art Master's Certificate could be achieved compared to the Victorian Art Teachers' Certificate or Diploma. Nor were they even recognised outside the State. The laborious and impractical nature of these qualifications meant there was very little incentive to take them up.

Clearly, the Education Department needed to take responsibility and address these serious curricula issues, reforming and streamlining advanced art teacher training rather than criticising local education providers who were constrained, by the very same body, as to the qualifications they could offer. Cynics believed local talent was being deliberately stymied “to provide an excuse for the appointment of men from outside the service with English and other qualifications to senior positions.”⁹⁰ Possibly, Carew-Smyth's high expectations maintained the unwieldy qualifications. Perhaps the anti-polytechnic philosophy of Donald Clark that encouraged greater, industry-linked specialisation among technical schools, was also influential.

It is difficult to believe that Tate was deliberately hampering Victorian teachers, given his own regional experience. Yet, he claimed junior applied art teachers had no pathway to advanced qualifications, thus limiting career advancement. In 1925, he initiated an Art Teachers' Training College at Melbourne's WMC, citing its proximity to the Teachers' College and University.⁹¹ The college would receive funds, an expert art principal (Carew-Smyth), and the opportunity to deliver specialist courses.⁹² Fearing damage to its reputation, as well as a gouging of its student pool, BTAS asserted its good name, reputation and a “record which no other Art School in the State can approach.”⁹³

Despite Tate's vision, Carew-Smyth, now heading WMC's art teacher programs, was unwilling or unable to shelve the Art Teachers' Certificate and Diploma. Another cohort was chosen to attempt the courses, and the flogging of a dead horse continued. To cater to this new group, WMC advertised three *male* positions requiring “high qualifications from an art school of recognised standing”, teaching experience, and a substantial knowledge of art and its application to industry.⁹⁴ In accepting BTAS-trained staff, it suggests the school had

⁹⁰ “Courier, 19 August 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹¹ “Courier, 13 June 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹² “Courier, 13 June 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹³ “Courier, 20 June 1925,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹⁴ “Age, 9 July 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

‘recognised standing’. One position was filled by female BTAS teacher and alumna, Amalie Feild.

In centralising programs and displacing teachers, the Department succeeded in rearranging the deckchairs, but the dreadful Art Teachers’ Certificate and Diploma remained unaltered. Thirty years after its introduction, the first three graduates of the original Art Teachers’ Certificate emerged in 1939. BTAS graduate, Harold Jolly, was the first to complete the marathon Diploma.⁹⁵ Frustratingly, they crossed the finish line just as Dean decided to reconfigure both programs.

Even without Art Master qualifications, senior BTAS teachers were titled art masters or mistresses for many years. This formalised teacher-student relationships as master and novice, reinforcing a pedagogy which has been described as “pseudo-atelier.”⁹⁶ Many senior technical art teachers, who were specialists in an art, craft or design field, understandably identified not only as art teachers, but as artists, or artist-teachers. This was the experience in other nations also.⁹⁷

Re-evaluation

BTAS continued to train teachers despite the Department’s tendency toward centralisation in Melbourne. In 1930, BTAS was training 13 student teachers, 16 art teachers, and served 55 people in the general teachers’ class, while maintaining strong student numbers generally; 377 compared with 206 SMB trade students and 89 undertaking science.⁹⁸

In 1929 Dean sought to revise and extend the Drawing Teachers’ Secondary Certificate and the Trained Manual Arts Teachers’ Certificate, sometimes confusingly referred to as Trained Teachers’ Certificate (Manual Arts).⁹⁹ Manual Arts was discontinued in 1932 but re-established in Melbourne in 1936.¹⁰⁰ From the same year, BTAS annually advertised a three-year Art Teachers’ Course, which became a four-year course in 1942.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35.

⁹⁶ Fennessy, “All Together and at Once the Practice,” 156.

⁹⁷ Stankiewicz, “Projection and Coordinates,” 18.

⁹⁸ Reporting on the 61st Annual Meeting of the SMB Council, “Courier, 20 February 1930,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

⁹⁹ VED, PP Second Session no. 7, 1929, 10; VED, “Report on the Teachers’ Colleges,” PP no.2, 1929, 26; VED, PP Second Session no. 7 1929, 10; Eunson, “The Education and Supply of Teachers,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 943.

¹⁰⁰ Hammond, “Changes in Art Education Ideologies,” 284.

¹⁰¹ “Courier, 20 January 1936”; “Mail, 28 January 1937”; “Courier, unknown [January or February] 1938”; “Courier, 28 January 1939,” “Courier, 31 January 1942,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

Following more than a decade of wrangling and reform, in 1939 the Education Department still found itself lacking suitable technical art teachers. Summer schools and refresher classes including “lectures, discussions, and excursions” were held, and the long-winded Art Teachers’ Certificate and Diploma were rescinded, modified, and re-installed with identical titles.¹⁰² Undertaking them remained daunting. They were unpopular but, unsurprisingly, highly regarded.¹⁰³ In 1950, the Drawing Teachers’ Primary and Secondary certificates, and the Art Teachers’ Certificate and Diploma were all discontinued, replaced with a new, four-year Diploma of Art (incorporating a two-year Certificate).¹⁰⁴ Yet, by 1955, senior technical art teachers were again in short supply.¹⁰⁵ The Education Department’s policy and curricula chickens had come home to roost.

FEATURE TEACHERS

In 1973 Docherty wrote “the development of art education in Victoria owes much to the interest, ability and drive of a number of artists who occupied various positions in the technical service.”¹⁰⁶ He goes on to exclusively list BTAS alumni; Harold Brown, Stanley Tompkins, Victor Greenhalgh, Donald I. Johnston, and Harold Jolly. He also highlights Harold Herbert and Horace Dowling but makes no mention of female colleagues. In fact, for the most part, male accomplishments are better recorded by traditional histories, in part because they were elevated to senior ranks. For example, all 28 artist educators with a feature paragraph in Green and Blake are male; five of whom studied at BTAS.¹⁰⁷

Several BTAS artist-teachers have been discussed in earlier chapters, however the following examples briefly highlight the significant contribution of some BTAS diaspora to technical art and administration.

Harold Richard Brown’s (1889-1976) art teacher training was interrupted by his World War I service. He worked briefly at Echuca before returning to BTAS as a teacher in 1922. ‘Hal’ Brown had a strong rapport with students, overseeing sports and the “blood, love and hate” of the Dramatic Society’s weekly meetings. As a cousin of MacPherson Robertson, Brown

¹⁰² VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 33, 35; Victorian Government, “Regulation XI. (E) - Drawing Teacher’s Certificate, and Regulation XII. (B)-Art Teachers Certificate and Diploma, Rescinded and the Undermentioned Regulations Made in Lieu Thereof,” *Victoria Government Gazette* 249, 2 August 1939, 2764, <http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/>

¹⁰³ Docherty, “The Technical Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 701.

¹⁰⁴ Docherty, “The Technical Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 733.

¹⁰⁵ Dimmack, “Art Education in Australia,” 18.

¹⁰⁶ Docherty, “The Technical Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 733.

¹⁰⁷ O. S. Green and L. J. Blake. “Book 10: The Teacher and the Community,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 1331-42.

perhaps played a part in securing his philanthropic attention. Brown's 1927 assignment to Castlemaine was followed by a period as Assistant Art Inspector to Dean.¹⁰⁸ Appointed head of the WMC School of Applied Art in 1931, Brown was charged with countering the curricula dominance of teacher training by diversifying course offerings. A "superb organiser and manager", Brown attracted professional artists to teaching roles with a combination of securely paid part-time work, access to college facilities, and the freedom to maintain personal artistic practice.¹⁰⁹ His success foreshadowed significant influence in later art education reforms.¹¹⁰ Docherty credits him with launching a 'revolution' in art education.¹¹¹

Several other graduates joined the WMC payroll including Amalie Feild, Gladys Kelly, Ethel Kift, Jeffrey Wilkinson and Gilda Gude. Sculptor Vic Greenhalgh permanently joined the Melbourne Technical College art school in 1938, and later became its head.¹¹² Greenhalgh is credited with having "greatly influenced the trend of Australian artists and art teachers."¹¹³ He is identified as forming the "first dedicated and modern industrial design course in Australia" in 1945, inspired by a "North American push towards dedicated study of industrial design."¹¹⁴ Arguably, his time at BTAS informed his approach. Both Greenhalgh and Brown were inaugural members of the Victorian Art Teachers' Association, revived in 1924.¹¹⁵

On the recommendation of BTAS principal Herbert Smith, a recently qualified Stanley William Tompkins (1891-1972) was appointed assistant art master at Swinburne Technical College in 1922, which had offered the subject for less than two years. School histories paint Tompkins in glowing terms, noting his skill, enthusiasm, presence and style. The art school grew rapidly. Well before he replaced Tranthim-Fryer as head in 1928, Tompkins was "the dominating force" who, over forty-five years, "built up a school of enormous prestige."¹¹⁶ Cyril Gordon Gibbs (1906-1992) also cut his teeth at Swinburne upon graduating in 1927.

¹⁰⁸ NAA: B2455, BROWN HR; *SMB Magazine* (1919), 18; *SMB Magazine* (1921), 27; *SMB Magazine* (1922), 2, 7; *SMB Magazine* (1924), 19; *SMB Magazine* (1927), 12; *SMB Magazine* (1929), 4; 27 October 1922), 10; SMB, *Annual Report* (1927), 3; "Courier, 12 February 1924," SMB Cuttings (1921-1924); "Courier, 12 February 1927," "Courier, 25 February 1927," "Courier, 1 December 1928," "Sun, 24 November 1931" SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

¹⁰⁹ Murray-Smith and Dare, *The Tech*, 228.

¹¹⁰ Beggs-Sunter, *A Centre of Culture*, 12.

¹¹¹ Docherty, "The Technical Division," in *Vision and Realisation*, 733.

¹¹² *SMB Magazine* (1920), 2; *SMB Magazine* (1921), 27; SMB, *Annual Report* (1922), 8; *SMB Magazine* (1922), 22; "Courier, 9 March 1922," SMB Cuttings (1921-24).

¹¹³ Green and Blake, "The Teacher and the Community," in *Vision and Realisation*, 1340.

¹¹⁴ Fennessy, "All Together and at Once the Practice," 104.

¹¹⁵ "Missionaries of Art," *Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 30 April 1924, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article1921215>.

¹¹⁶ Hames, *Swinburne, 75 Years of Distinction*, 28; Jordan, *The Swinburne Technical College Staff Newsletter* (1959), online.

Gibbs interwove his commercial art practice with teaching, and established Gibbs-Smith Studio in Sydney around 1931. In 1939 he became chief instructor at the Brisbane Technical College Art School, where he remained for 34 years. Gibbs was highly active and influential in art and educational associations, all the while a prize-winning watercolourist.¹¹⁷

Colleagues, Francis Charles Mellow (1900-1985) and James Graham Hopwood (1908-c1987), became fixtures at the Melbourne Teachers' (Training) College (MTTC). Having completed the three-year Manual Arts certificate at BTAS in 1920, Charles Mellow went on to achieve the rarely completed Art Teachers' Certificate and Diploma. Indeed, he is credited with designing the award documents.¹¹⁸ He remained at BTAS for his first year of teaching, then worked throughout Victoria. Mellow was among three BTAS alumni selected to attend further art teacher training at WMC by the newly installed Carew-Smyth in 1926.¹¹⁹ When the Trained Manual Arts Teachers' Certificate was reinstated at the MTTC in 1936, Mellow was appointed to teach it. He oversaw art teacher training for the next 28 years, eventually becoming Vice-Principal.¹²⁰ Mellow is credited with significant and innovative cross-sector art teacher course reforms and assisted development of the College's renowned A.J. Law Art Collection.¹²¹

Between 1925 and 1933, Graham Hopwood studied for the Trained Teachers' Certificate and Art Teachers' Certificate at BTAS, joining the MTTC lecturing staff by at least 1960.¹²² Hopwood authored *The History and Appreciation of Art* (1947-1952) and the bestselling *Art Students' Handbook* (1955-1966) and supplement, both self-published. Their 1972 replacement, *Handbook of Art*, was a carefully indexed, practical, budget-priced compendium that became commonplace among Australian art students.¹²³ It discussed art from diverse

¹¹⁷ Germaine, *Artists and Galleries of Australia and New Zealand*, 214; "Courier 22 February 1939" SMB Cuttings (1936-48); Glenn R. Cooke, "Cyril Gibbs," *Design and Art Australia Online*, last modified 2011, 2008, accessed 10 October 2019, <https://www.daa.org.au/bio/cyril-gibbs/biography/>

¹¹⁸ "Courier, 4 February 1921," SMB Cuttings (1921-24); Green and Blake, "The Teacher and the Community," in *Vision and Realisation*, 1333.

¹¹⁹ "Courier 17 June 1926" SMB Cuttings (1925-1936).

¹²⁰ Eunson, "The Education and Supply of Teachers," in *Vision and Realisation*, 943; Melbourne Teachers' College, *Handbook: Melbourne Teachers' College 1968* (Education Department Victoria, 1968), 5.

¹²¹ Green and Blake, "The Teacher and the Community," in *Vision and Realisation*, 1333; Eunson, "The Education and Supply of Teachers," in *Vision and Realisation*, 908, 943-44; and Collet, "The Role of Art and Craft Collections," 91-100.

¹²² Eunson, "The Education and Supply of Teachers," in *Vision and Realisation*, 946.

¹²³ Graham Hopwood, *The History and Appreciation of Art: A concise treatise covering prescribed art courses in secondary schools*. (Melbourne, 1947); Graham Hopwood, *Art students' handbook*. (Graham Hopwood, North Balwyn, Vic, 1955); Graham Hopwood, *Supplement to the "Art students' handbook"*, (Specialty Press, Victoria, 1963); Graham Hopwood, *Handbook of Art* (Balwyn, Victoria: Graham Hopwood, 1971, reprint, 1987); and Graham Hopwood and Colleen Fry, *Handbook of art: a*

temporal and geographic contexts and was thought refreshing for taking Aboriginal art “from the anthropologist and [giving it] its rightful place in the world of art.”¹²⁴ Later editions were revised by Colleen Fry, and continued in print until at least 2009. *Appreciation* provides key examples of architecture and ornament, the majority illustrated by Hopwood himself, and offers an overview of movements in painting, but just three pages on “art in everyday life.” *The Handbook of Art* is more expansive in scope, including cultural regions, but is weighted to men working within Western traditions.

Several Ballarat graduates assisted State art inspectors Carew-Smyth and Dean. Some, such as Harold Herbert, Harold Brown and Mervyn Timmings, for a relatively short period. Others left a legacy forged over many years, particularly Harold Jolly (1899-1991) and Donald Ivan Johnston (1894-1956).

Harold Jolly was part of a strong BTAS cohort during the 1910s prior to becoming an assistant art master alongside Amalie Feild in 1919. He was a hard-working and popular teacher, heavily involved in student activities as SMB sports master, annual procession wrangler, and business manager of the *SMB Magazine*. A prized staff member, when the Education Department notified Jolly he would be transferred to Wangaratta, the SMB council protested to the Director of Education, and Jolly remained in Ballarat. The reprieve lasted a year. In March 1930, Jolly was sent to the Melbourne Teachers’ College as lecturer in art. He toured Victoria’s primary schools to demonstrate best practise, disseminating his BTAS philosophies.¹²⁵ In an effort to maintain his Ballarat links, he headed the Melbourne branch of the Past Students’ Association. Jolly became assistant to art inspector William Dean. The pair co-authored several publications including *Handwork for Schools* and *Drawing with Pastels*.¹²⁶ In a spectacular effort, Jolly was the first candidate to complete the decades-long Art Teachers’ Diploma in 1939.¹²⁷ When the inspector fell ill, Jolly assumed the additional duties until Dean’s death in 1948. If Jolly hoped to formally assume the role, he instead remained an assistant, this time to another BTAS graduate and former colleague, Donald Johnston. From 1957 until his retirement in 1964, Jolly was Inspector of Technical Schools.

history of painting, sculpture and architecture from the earliest times to the present day, revised edition, (Science Press, Marrickville, NSW, 2009).

¹²⁴ June Stephenson, “Handbook of Art,” *Education: Journal of the N.S.W. Public School Teachers Federation*, 16 February 1972, 20, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-710506132>

¹²⁵ *SMB Magazine* (1929), 2; *SMB Magazine* (1930), 1; “Courier, 17 March 1930,” “Courier, 3 April 1930,” “Courier, 11 August 1931,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925-1936).

¹²⁶ William Rupert Dean and Harold Jolly, *Handwork for Schools*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1934); Dean and Jolly, *Drawing with Pastels* (1933).

¹²⁷ VED, PP no. 20 (1939), 35.

A brief biography highlights his artistic contribution to the many commissions undertaken while at BTAS.¹²⁸

Thirty years prior to replacing Dean, Donald Johnston had assisted Art Inspector, Carew-Smyth, having completed a BTAS Industrial Art course and a brief period teaching.¹²⁹ In 1916, aged almost 22, Johnston enlisted in the Australian Infantry Forces (AIF) and travelled to France. He returned to Australia a Lieutenant, aboard the aptly named *Ceramic*, with a gunshot wound and a Military Cross for gallantry and devotion.¹³⁰ Johnston returned to BTAS, where he taught while completing a short course alongside Harold Brown. During the following years, he undertook exams toward the Art Teachers' Certificate, including Honours level General Design, Principles of Decorative Design, Historic Ornament, and Architecture.¹³¹

When Herbert H. Smith retired in 1940, Johnston presided over the reunion farewell before taking up the mantle as headmaster. One student prank indicates Johnston was perhaps a hard taskmaster. At the official opening of a new SMB building in 1940, the curtain was lifted not to reveal a shiny plaque, but a “spirited pen and ink sketch of Hitler,” bearing the false signature, ‘Drawn by Don Johnston.’ Not without a sense of humour, he suggested it be kept for the *SMB Magazine*.¹³² Johnston maintained strong links with the Ballarat Art Gallery and the Ballarat City Free Library, acting as president at each for a time. Speaking at a Ballarat Legacy meeting, he emphasised the importance of teaching design and modelling to primary school children, as these skills would be vital post-war.¹³³ Becoming art inspector in January 1948 gave Johnston the opportunity to implement his vision across primary, secondary and tertiary art education. During Jolly’s brief grasp of the reins he had broadened the Intermediate Technical and high school Certificates. Johnston went further, immediately appointing a committee to review and revise the senior technical art curriculum. Harold Brown was central to these investigations and reforms which reflected the “portents of change” initiated by Tompkins and Greenhalgh.¹³⁴ Presumably, in his role at the MTTC, so

¹²⁸ Lloyd L. Cropper, “Book 12: Educational Personnel,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 1429.

¹²⁹ SMB, *Annual Report* (1914), 3; Victoria, Public Service, *Public Service Commissioner: Report for the Year 1916*. Parliamentary Paper (Victoria. Parliament); edited by Commissioner Victoria. Public Service and George Cowie Morrison. (Melbourne: Albert J. Mullett, Government Printer, 1917), 4.

¹³⁰ NAA, B2455, *First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; National Archives of Australia; Canberra, Australia; Citizen Military Forces Personnel Dossiers, 1939-1947; Series: B884*.

¹³¹ *SMB Magazine* (1919), 18. “Courier, 2 March 1921,” “Star, 28 March 1924,” SMB Cuttings (1921–1924); “Courier, 6 March 1925,” “Courier, 9 February 1927,” SMB Cuttings (1925–1936),

¹³² “Courier, 19 April 1940,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹³³ “Courier, 19 June 1944,” SMB Cuttings (1936–1948).

¹³⁴ Docherty, “The Technical Division,” in *Vision and Realisation*, 643.

was Charles Mellow. Johnston was apparently still working as Art Inspector when he died suddenly in December 1956.¹³⁵

While certain BTAS graduate teachers are visible in the historical record by virtue of their positions and obvious reforms, dozens more affected their influence in classrooms across Australia. For some, teaching was a calling, a vocation until retirement. Others taught until marriage, changed circumstances or an alternative career called them elsewhere. Among them, many first taught at their alma mater, the Ballarat Technical Art School.

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSION

As Victoria's State education system expanded to include secondary high, junior technical schools and senior technical institutions, changing philosophies elevated the importance of art at all levels; each requiring suitably skilled teachers. When drawing became requisite for all teaching certificates, the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) helped facilitate in-service teacher training. When State secondary schools opened in 1910, BTAS was primed to deliver Carew-Smyth's new Drawing Teachers' Primary and Secondary certificates. In the 16 years following, BTAS qualified more than four times the number of Secondary Certificate candidates than the Working Men's College (WMC).

Also, in 1910, BTAS received its first cohort of the Education Department's carefully curated Manual Arts candidates for an intensive and demanding program. Minor concerns around split-campus delivery notwithstanding, over the next 15 years BTAS produced dozens of highly sought-after teachers, yet from the mid-1920s the Department applied sustained pressure to move all Manual Arts trainees to Melbourne. Despite push-back from Ballarat, the goal was achieved within a few years.

Parallel to the three-year Manual Arts program, five-year Government Technical Teacher Scholarships offered a blended program of art or trade training, on-the-job experience, and teacher placement. Meanwhile, ambitious and dedicated teachers, particularly those seeking senior and administrative positions, put their nose to the grindstone for decades to attain the Art Teachers' Certificate or Diploma. A handful of BTAS alumni were the first to achieve them. The long-winded and arduous nature of these qualifications compared with those from

¹³⁵ Listed as a 'public servant' in the 1954 electoral roll, Johnston's probate record describes him as 'Art Inspector'. Ancestry.com, *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980*; Public Record Office Victoria; North Melbourne, Victoria; *Victorian Wills, Probate and Administration Records 1841-1925*; Series: VPRS 7591.

the Royal College of Art, London, might explain the dominance of South Kensington-trained senior teachers in Victoria.

BTAS regularly claimed its teacher graduates could be found throughout Victoria and beyond, and this is demonstrably true. The large number of students undertaking the Drawing Teacher's Secondary Certificate and Manual Arts certificates were destined for upper elementary, secondary high and junior technical schools. Significantly, many alumni went on to teach at senior technical art schools and teachers' colleges where their influence over future artists and teachers was more profound. It is beyond question that BTAS graduates were at the forefront of art education reform, particularly those in positions of power from the 1930s through the 1960s.

The layers of BTAS graduate teacher influence are immeasurable. Their ubiquity in Victorian institutions, many holding senior positions, demonstrates that Education Department arguments for art teacher centralisation never really stacked up.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Inspired by samples of student work, this thesis makes visible some of the history of the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS). Framed by the principalship of Herbert Henry Smith between 1907 and 1940, this thesis has explored the aims, outputs and impacts of applied art and design education at BTAS contextualised by a web of expectation and influences.

A micro-historical case study of a regional Australian technical art institution, this thesis challenges traditionally centrist, and occasionally hagiographic, historiographical approaches, while providing insight into the rigorous disciplines of Victorian art and design education. It diverts attention from hero-designer narratives toward the lesser-examined student experience, invoking an inclusive definition of design to do so.

This study of BTAS, including its parent institution, the School of Mines, Ballarat (SMB), produces something like a metallurgic core sample, revealing layers of social, cultural, economic and administrative influence. It offers fellow researchers the opportunity to identify similarities and challenge distinctions. Importantly, it also tells us where to dig further.

FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE

Australian designers and their history have been underrepresented in the global canon. Given its regional Victorian location, the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) and its students are even further removed from the traditional, carefully curated, Euro/American-centric canon which tends to conceal alternatives and failures. Yet, BTAS student and alumni experiences are litmus markers for discussion of broader issues during the period of investigation. These were discussed thematically in relation to the literature, including the motivations for technical art training; globalisation and reactionary responses of national identity and competitiveness; and changing definitions of taste within an evolving Australian modernity.

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of significant social, political and economic upheaval, and technical education was thought a tonic for many of Australia's challenges. It positioned individuals as elements within a wider social and economic organism, each serving their purpose within culture, class, gender, labour and educational divisions. Leading up to, and during, World War I, Australians were prompted to fear subordination to advanced

industrial nations and urged to become more competitive. Art and design were key to technical education's remit to expand secondary industries and stimulate economic growth.

Globalisation, technological advances and trade rivalries triggered protectionist and nationalistic responses from many countries, some of whom mined their historical clichés and mythologies to build a national style and reaffirm a selective national identity. Australians also craved markers of uniqueness, particularly to endorse vigorous 'buy local' campaigns. BTAS students utilised local plant and animal forms but they were not solely employed to encourage patriotic purchasing. Readily available, indigenous plant specimens were requisite for drawing, designing and moulding practice. Competitions and Education Department examinations often specified use of Australian motifs, thus elevating their visibility and familiarising students with their forms. The decontextualized application of extracted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art elements, employed by some modernist Australian designers to inject authenticity, is less evident in Victorian examination questions.

The British South Kensington system colonised Australian art education during the nineteenth century. The practise of copy prioritised Renaissance and classical aesthetics while its requisite 'like-with-like' assessment encouraged homogeneity. The use of Australian flora when drawing plants, however, provides some differentiation. Art Inspector Carew-Smyth expanded and diversified the Victorian curricula. Perhaps most critically, he encouraged the integration of design and manufacture through material practice. Many subjects favoured technical skill, yet design subjects also encouraged creativity. Importantly, students were not limited to Departmentally examined subjects, and schools could offer richer, more diverse experiences. During Art Inspector Dean's tenure, examinations were adjusted in line with industry requirements. A broadening curriculum, and recession of strict conventions, provided greater scope for modernist themes and styles, particularly within design examinations.

Unlike some European nations where it was forged in the fire of radicalism, modernism was experienced differently in Australia, where it developed from a cross-pollination of philosophies and a tension between tradition and origination. Where modernism was resisted by a reluctant art elite, consumers of popular culture were more prepared to accept it, subverting cultural capital paradigms. In art schools, new ideas were encouraged but not at the expense of the lessons of history. As abstraction, subjectivity and expression became increasingly acceptable, Australian designers primarily extracted modernism's visual language to express modernity.

In addition to the influence of popular culture, BTAS art students accessed books and contemporary journals through their well-stocked library. Like other Australian designers, they actively accepted, rejected, mediated and transformed imported cultural elements, while also originating ideas. Such practises created a multi-verse of modernism, and varying levels of acceptability. In general, students identified as modern citizens and aimed to create ‘modern’ work, whether it would today be termed modernist or not.

The bulk of BTAS teaching was directed at the application of art and design toward industry. Problematically, history has a propensity to devalue applied or commercial art relative to so-called fine art. Yet attempts to delineate fine, applied, industrial and commercial art are fraught, and some present-day demarcations assume a prerequisite of mass-production which excludes conceptual, unfinished or prototyped student work, others conflict with historical definitions. As modernity progressed, design became the language of industry and craft was increasingly associated with personal expression. This led to the privileging of masculine-centric industrial arts over domestic, and therefore supposed feminine, disciplines. Consequently, an inclusive definition of design is crucial to reposition and revalue the work of students, particularly women, who often outnumbered male students at BTAS.

In fact, art education was crucial to female workforce participation. Excepting the Melbourne College of Domestic Economy, in 1915 the only State-aided technical instruction for women was delivered by technical art schools.¹ BTAS principal Smith impressed the importance of technical education for girls, introducing junior classes to match those offered to boys and streamlining female transition into the senior art school. In this, BTAS was ahead of the curve.

Vocational training was often promoted as a panacea to elevate entire social classes, engage people within society, and distract idle hands from mischief. Student wellbeing was a priority for SMB and BTAS, which offered vocational guidance, mustered scholarships and made fee considerations to alleviate financial stress during times of economic hardship, including depressions and war. Smith encouraged industry and other stakeholder interaction to advantage the school and its students. Staff also facilitated numerous student associations, sporting activities and social opportunities.

The overriding social and economic aims of art education have occasionally trod rough-shod over individuals. Yet the autonomy of people to choose indicates individual motivating factors were at play—whether for financial gain, cultural capital, or creative pleasure.

¹ VED, “Report of P.M. Carew-Smyth, Art Inspector,” PP no. 49 (1915), 79.

THE THEORY

Pierre Bourdieu's cultural theory, including its extracted 'thinking tools', assisted interrogation of various distinctions and hierarchies identified throughout this research, for example, centrality versus periphery, regional versus metropolitan. Where twentieth century discussion of technical education pivoted to issues of class, Bourdieu's definition of socio-economic *constellations* in social space better suits the Australian context.

Bourdieu's theories frame individual motivations and interactions within shifting societal structures. They explain a person's habitus informs their familiarity with the doxa of a certain field, affecting their individual comfort, and prospect of success, within it.

The concept of fields expounds ongoing attempts to delineate art and design practises through classification and terminology, despite their fraught and fuzzy boundaries across the spectrum of cultural production. The work of BTAS students and alumni weighed toward large-scale, popular and consumer-driven production, but included objects of restricted production; spanning fine and applied art. BTAS also trained many art teachers, whose legitimacy was affected not only by their institution and qualifications, but by the habitus, and sometimes bias, of senior educators and administrators, including the Education Department.

Situated within overlapping fields of art, education and industry, members of the BTAS community were not mere passive receptors, they were also gatekeepers, consecrators and producers of cultural capital and its perceived value, symbolic capital, as variously discussed by Bourdieu. The experience of studying within BTAS contributed to students' habitus and helped define their position in social space. They were, however, free to accept or reject elements of its cultural milieu and could choose to reveal the extent of its influence upon them. Students themselves were active agents, both the products and producers of culture.

Finally, cultural theory reminds the researcher that while they might recognise, and even relate to, historical fields, actors and events, they must remain cognisant of potential bias embedded in their own habitus and cultural milieu.

OPPORTUNITY FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Locating the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) within an interconnected network enables other researchers to draw parallels and divergences with its contemporaries. In addition, this research identified several areas which warrant further study.

Many individuals identified within this research justify greater biographical examination than their online summaries or this thesis can deliver. In addition, Federation University Australia's art and historical collections offer a wealth of material culture for deeper investigation. The School of Mines, Ballarat, (SMB) museum awaits an extensively researched history, as do the value and influence of the MacRobertson and Pinkerton scholarships. At the intersection of art, politics, nationalism and memorialisation, the Villers-Bretonneux Australia School carvings could yield reward. The implications of student processions, rags, fancy-dress nights, balls and other gatherings offer an opportunity for further research, particularly their representation of peoples and cultures through costume, satire and social commentary.

Education Department art examinations have contributed heavily to this thesis and, as annual snapshots of Victorian zeitgeist, there is scope for discipline-based researchers to mine this rich source. Similarly, alternative presentation forms (beyond traditional, fine art exhibitions) might trigger interesting findings; for example, in-store and window presentations of student craft, overlooked regional art and craft displays, exhibitions of 'women's work' and Royal Agricultural Show competitions.

A comparative analysis of Victoria's Art Teachers' Certificate and Diploma with Royal College of Art, London, (RCA) teacher training between 1916 and 1940 could highlight divergences and provide insight into local preference for British-trained alumni. Similarly, Herbert Smith's principalship at BTAS coincided with those of James W. R. Linton (1869-1947) in Perth and Lucien Dechaineaux (1869-1957) in Hobart. Comparison of their tenures would make interesting reading. The unique nature, and considerable influence of Victoria's Art Inspectors could also be more deeply examined, if not compared with other states. That said, more could be done to highlight Victoria's female art educationalists and administrators, who are often overlooked because patriarchal constructs passively and actively denied them the senior positions recorded by many histories.

CONCLUSION

This research affirms the claim that the Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) was a highly regarded art education institution during the early twentieth century. Its success in attracting, retaining and qualifying students, alongside student accomplishment at exhibitions, commissions and employment, suggest contemporary commendation was justified. For much of the early twentieth century, it *was* the pre-eminent technical art training institution in Victoria.

In 1915, the opening of a new art building provided opportunity to reflect on eight years of the amalgamated school. The tone was congratulatory and celebratory, despite the war. For the next decade, SMB administrators claimed a leading position and unique reputation for its art school. Some students also felt they were attending one of the best art institutions in Australia, particularly under the guidance of Principal Smith. There is evidence for the school's claims beyond its own propaganda. It is the only regional Australian art school mentioned in William Moore's *The Story of Australian Art*.² Michael Bogle also highlighted BTAS in his 1998, *Design in Australia, 1880-1970*.³ In 1914, the ANA described BTAS as "the best of its kind in the State."⁴ Almost 25 years later it was still identified as "one of the finest in Australia."⁵

The BTAS advantage

The Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) was instituted from a position of relative advantage. Amalgamated in 1907, it built on the established infrastructure and reputation of its predecessor institutions; 37 years in the cases of Ballarat's School of Mines (SMB) and East Technical and Art School, and the 16-year history of the Ballarat West Technical School of Art. BTAS leveraged their legacy power and the "world-wide record" of its now parent institution, SMB.⁶ For decades, Ballarat had been the beneficiary of individual and collective, civic-minded effort and the wealth extracted from its municipalities. This positioned technical education in Ballarat ahead of other parts of Victoria.

As gold mining waned, schools of mines found the addition of art and trade subjects necessary for survival. Art departments were sometimes subordinate to their science colleagues; however, SMB council had the foresight to install an art co-principal;

² Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, (1980, 1934), 228.

³ Bogle, *Design in Australia*, 33.

⁴ ANA, *Exhibition of Education, Arts and Crafts, 1914*, 65.

⁵ "Your Daughter's Career: no. 2: Occupational Art," *The West Australian*, 17 June 1938, 8.

⁶ SMB, *Annual Report* (1920), 1.

experienced artist and educator, Herbert Henry Smith, ensuring art's status. The stability of Smith's oversight anchors examination of variable factors.

Governance, administration and staff

Since its establishment in 1870, SMB (and subsequently, BTAS) had been administrated by a council of local stakeholders and representatives who heartily deflected persistent Victorian government efforts to assume control. The State valued schools in relation to their measurable effect upon its wider social and political goals, and their accountability to the public purse. Despite raising funds locally through donations and student fees, SMB was answerable to the Education Department for its annual infrastructure and maintenance grants. Following the 1911 inquiry into the Melbourne Working Men's College (WMC), the Department ramped up efforts to assume control of senior technical schools. Most relinquished their authority, thus giving up their elected council. SMB considered, then rejected the proposal. Thus, the SMB council maintained relative autonomy, governing to suit local interests and industries. This was particularly advantageous while the school had powerful Departmental allies like Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark.

From 1910, State-funded secondary high schools occupied the accommodations and sidelined the staff of many technical schools, devaluing their status. Crucially, SMB's relative independence in administrating its own junior technical sections spared it this fate, while expediting students' technical training and streamlining senior study pathways. An independent SMB was well placed to foster industry connections and harness expertise.

Importantly, the SMB council was supportive of BTAS and its principal, Smith, whose guidance bred loyalty among staff, despite low pay and Education Department machinations. Women were valued members of the teaching staff, regardless of pay disparity. Many BTAS teachers trained alongside or under Smith and were pre-prepared for his approach and the wider school culture. Smith himself had studied under Ponsonby Carew-Smyth who, as Art Inspector, maintained a good relationship with Smith and the art school, and acted as an intermediary with the Department. The value of this line of Departmental communication becomes most evident once it ceased to exist.

This research determines that Carew-Smyth's own approach has sometimes been misrepresented as overly formal and restrictive. In fact, he worked within the boundaries of his period to respond to the limitations of South Kensington methods: extending observation and memory drawing; promoting modelling practice; and encouraging material knowledge

and skills by advancing integrated design and making practice. He preferred the study of nature over mimetic copy and favoured student process over outcomes.

Material advantage

The amalgamated BTAS initially operated across scattered sites, but in 1915 a new, bespoke art building, designed by Principal Smith himself, drew its cohorts together. Although initially without heating, such a building was the aspiration of many regional art schools, which laboured within appalling accommodations. The state-of-the-art space housed a wide range of subjects, as well as the school's cast and library collections; themselves valuable assets unavailable at most Victorian schools. BTAS students also had access to SMB museum examples, the SMB botanic garden and were just a short walk from the Ballarat Fine Art Public Gallery.

The comparative wealth of civic governments, the strength of district industries, and the power of local unions and industry groups contributed to financial disparity between institutions. BTAS was afforded a distinct advantage, at least initially, by the efforts of local stakeholders and a (mostly) supportive State government. A lag in the upgrade of other regional Victorian technical schools likely benefited BTAS. However, when new art schools were established in the Eastern suburbs (Swinburne) and Prahran, and the concept of a 'central' art school was floated at the WMC, Melbourne made up ground. With the appointment of metropolitan based Art Inspector William Dean in 1926, and retirement of Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, Donald Clark, BTAS fought to maintain its standing.

Student cohort

BTAS demonstrated good student attraction, attendance and retention, particularly of full-course students. For the most part, it supported a critical mass of students to maintain quality operations. Of note were the number of female students, who often outnumbered men, particularly in design subjects.

In 1915, as they settled into their new building, art students reinvigorated the SMB campus, and the influx of female students diversified the types of activities available. Students orchestrated new sporting clubs, literary and dramatic societies, and many social gatherings, as well as lending new colour to SMB's annual processions. Despite inter-disciplinary (or perhaps gender-based) rivalry, science, trade and art students were collegial; perhaps following the example set by their administrators. Re-established in 1916, the annual *SMB Magazine* also helped forge a common school identity. The BTAS community demonstrated

a notable esprit-de-corps that extended beyond their school years and was maintained by an active Past Students' Association. Ongoing alumni involvement, particularly notable at reunions and celebrations, reinforced a spirit of kinship with, and support for, BTAS.

BTAS success

Acknowledging that markers of success are consecrated by agents of varying legitimacy, there are several areas in which BTAS claimed success to endorse its reputation, not least of which was its alumni network. A string of visitors also provided anecdotal praise for the school and its students.

As we have seen, BTAS supplied Victoria with the bulk of its art teachers; several among the first to complete the arduous Art Master's Certificate and Diploma. The school also noted consistent placement of its industry-destined graduates. SMB and BTAS students were awarded a generous proportion of government scholarships. Further, Herbert Smith attained local scholarship funds through community contributions and individual philanthropy. Students exhibited often and regularly took home competition prizes; their participation and success incentivised students and promoted the school. The quantity and quality of student commission work also evoked school pride; while Carew-Smyth was Art Inspector the Education Department directed many requests for sports shields, honour boards, books, certificates, illustrations and designs to BTAS. Private commissions were also undertaken.

Changing fortunes

The school maintained a position of relative advantage for its first twenty years, but in the late 1920s, social, administrative and legislative changes affected BTAS' profile and operations. Significantly, some of regional education's most sympathetic administrators retired from the Department; Art Inspector Ponsonby Carew-Smyth (December 1925), Frank Tate (July 1928) and Donald Clark (1930). This watershed period was overarched by a global economic depression, which created its own challenges; and divides two relatively distinct periods that coincide with the tenure of Art Inspectors, Ponsonby Carew-Smyth and William Dean.

Having failed to overtly take over council-controlled institutions like SMB, the State Government of Victoria surreptitiously pursued greater authority through funding and legislative modifications, including the reclassification of most technical teachers as secondary school teachers. The *Apprenticeship Act 1927* wrought further changes, giving the Apprenticeship Commission oversight of art-trade apprentices.

Regional institutions were rarely mentioned by name in Art Inspector William Dean’s reports to the Minister for Public Instruction, and BTAS lost some visibility. Adding insult to injury, in 1926, Carew-Smyth joined the WMC charged with establishing an art teachers’ training college, and his allegiances altered. After a few strongly resisted attempts, the Education Department succeeded in redirecting all Ballarat Manual Arts teacher places to Melbourne. Significantly, in 1927, BTAS abruptly stops reporting much commission activity. The changing fortunes of BTAS likely contributed to the loss of key teachers, some who were attracted to WMC by Carew-Smyth to undertake advanced study or to teach within the art department.

BTAS appeared to yield ground to metropolitan interests, yet it maintained a strong network of local stakeholders and past students who helped it endure change. By this stage, many graduates were working in industry, and occupied senior positions at other technical art schools or within the Department itself. Importantly, Smith’s own reputation remained unblemished. Galvanised by Smith’s innovation, initiative and efficiency, the school endeavoured to remain at the forefront of art education.

Following a 1930 BTAS reunion, the *Courier* suggested Ballarat locals were largely unaware of, or underappreciated, the significance of the school’s impact on Victorian education.⁷ The school no longer self-described as ‘first’ but as “in the front rank” of technical art schools.⁸ After 1930, BTAS successes are less explicitly stated, instead the school promoted enrolments, competition success and student employment outcomes. Upon his retirement in 1940, Smith was warmly farewelled and roundly praised.

BTAS objectives and outcomes

This investigation demonstrates BTAS met its varied aims to produce industry-ready designers, skilful art practitioners, and capable, qualified art educators. Tangentially, it produced several fine artists of note. Offering a broader curriculum than schools of painting and drawing, BTAS trained multiple cohorts and facilitated skill overlaps which were transferable between art teaching and commercial practice. As industrial and commercial arts became increasingly specialist, technical art courses provided the requisite skills that fine art schools did not.

⁷ “*Courier*, 27 August 1930,” *SMB Cuttings* (1925–1936).

⁸ *SMB Magazine* (1930), 35.

BTAS delivered scaffolded training for a range of art-based occupations as full courses, supplementary subjects, and adjunct apprenticeship training. Foundational subjects included drawing and modelling from objects, botanical forms, copies of antique statuary, and life. Underpinned by history and theory, design and material practice best articulate the key objective of technical art schools.

At BTAS, design was taught through a range of analytic, reflective and productive practises. Applied design subjects in material integrated design and execution, each providing its own techniques, technologies and learning opportunities. Some examinations tested conceptualisation alone. Allied subjects, such as artistic anatomy and historic ornament, diversified student knowledge and skill. Commissioned briefs and work placement provided valuable real-world experience.

BTAS serviced the requirements of designers, crafts and trades people while catering for other occupations ranging from engineers to retail personnel; this research identified some of the key areas of graduate placement. However, the proliferation of BTAS trained art teachers and educationalists is arguably its most significant legacy. The bulk of evidence suggests that, despite some hiccoughs, BTAS furnished Victorian primary, secondary, junior and technical schools with much of their art teaching staff. Many graduates became senior art educators and authoritative educationalists within schools, government and other art institutions throughout Australia, including as chief and assistant art inspectors. Their influence should not be underestimated.

As a relatively prosperous regional centre with strong cultural institutions, Ballarat was well positioned to help disseminate Victoria's learning-by-doing, drawing and manual art education reforms to primary school teachers. When State secondary schools opened in 1910, BTAS was primed to deliver new certificates. By 1926 it had reportedly produced 65 Drawing Teachers' Secondary Certificates compared with just 15 at WMC.⁹ BTAS also delivered the intensive and demanding Trained Teacher's Certificate (Manual Arts) to Education Department candidates in relatively equal numbers to WMC, until 1928. Many BTAS students undertook a five-year Government Senior Technical Studentship which incorporated advanced craft skill and teacher training for qualification to teach at senior technical schools. Significantly, the Technical Art Teacher's Certificates (TATC) were not available at teachers' colleges.

⁹ "Courier, 31 July 1926," SMB Cuttings (1925–1936).

Several BTAS alumni were among the first to achieve the Art Teachers' Certificate and Diploma, introduced in 1916. Crucially, this research has highlighted Victorian teachers' disadvantage in undertaking these arduous qualifications over decades, compared to those who could study at London's Royal College of Art (RCA) within a much shorter period. This contributed to the practise of appointing RCA graduates to fill senior Australian art education ranks during the early twentieth century, preserving a strong English influence on local art training.

Many BTAS teachers-in-training practised within the school itself, including the junior schools, or took positions within it upon qualification. This reinforced practises and pedagogies within the school and, subsequently, among its graduate teacher diaspora.

Meeting the overarching aims of technical art education

BTAS also facilitated the widespread aims of technical art training to promote and add value to raw local materials; foster national identity; build visual literacy; and inculcate good taste.

Visual literacy was embedded into BTAS education, initially informed by an inherited Western tradition of 'good taste' and lingering elements of the outmoded South Kensington system, which limited innovation. Incrementally, Art Inspectors expanded opportunity for students to employ creativity, expression and intuition, even as discipline and draughtsmanship remained important. Students regularly incorporated local motifs into their design and utilised Australian materials in practise. While certain approaches were requisite for success at examination, technical art schools were not limited to them and BTAS encouraged staff and students to practise and experiment, within and beyond Education Department boundaries. Examinations exhibit the zeitgeist and indicate pedagogies within which students worked. Early briefs were preoccupied with social welfare concerns, and war and its aftermath. Post-war exams reflect a more relaxed atmosphere of entertainment, sport, recreation and travel. Private businesses were also well represented, many of them Victorian. Gradually, an extracted code of modernist features permeated student consciousness and work, producing a conglomerate of influences.

BTAS catered broadly to district industries, partly necessitated by its regional location, but specialist efforts emerge. Staff attempted to stimulate a local art pottery industry through research and development, nearby textile manufacturers readily employed graduates, and a class of repatriated soldiers established a successful art metal company. Employment outcomes indicate many graduates worked as commercial artists and illustrators or established their own studios.

As a social and cultural institution, BTAS supported student development and welfare beyond economic motivations. The school engendered student responsibility and stability and facilitated a strong sense of community, building pride through promotion of student activities and success. Through competition and exhibition, BTAS broadcast successive student milieus of taste and identity, promoting quality design and production while recruiting its next cohort. The school supported, and drew upon, its network of alumni who were employed throughout Australia and travelled internationally. Graduates contributed to educational, industrial and creative practice and discourse, and helped frame public taste.

BTAS was built on well-established foundations and strengthened by regional champions, a healthy esprit-de-corps, and supportive government agents. It enjoyed an advantaged position during its first two decades, leading it to be identified as Victoria's preeminent art school. Despite notable changes in the late 1920s, followed by diminishing attention from the Education Department, the school delivered successful outcomes and maintained a strong reputation into the 1940s. For this, it owed much to its long-serving principal, Henry Herbert Smith. At the nexus of art, industry and education, Ballarat Technical Art School alumni undertook diverse arts-based careers and wielded wide-spread influence as educators. This thesis demonstrates the strength of its legacy, which echoed through its antecedent institutions, the University of Ballarat and, today, Federation University Australia.

Appendix

VICTORIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ENROLMENTS

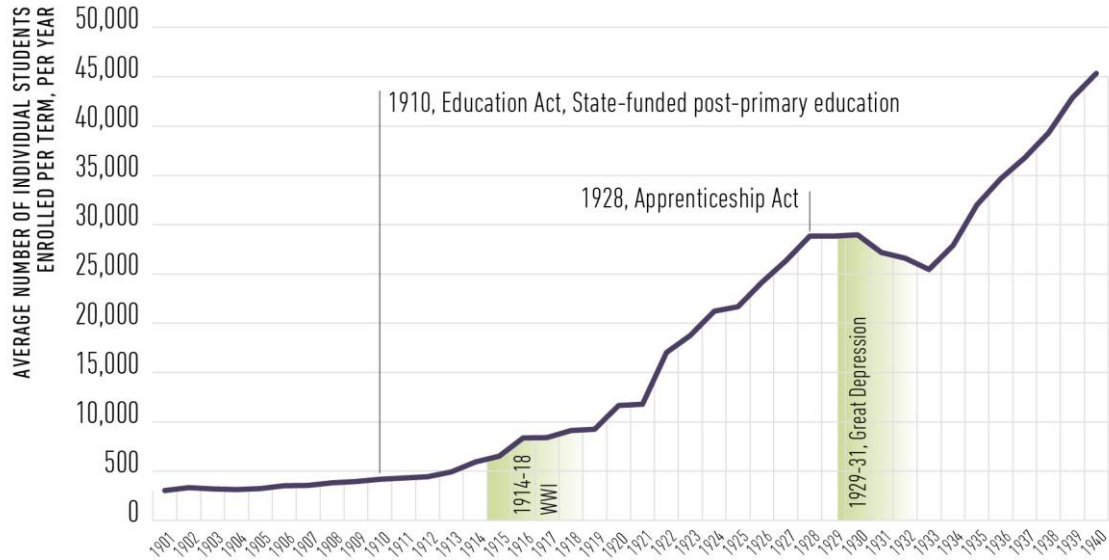


Figure A.1 **Victorian Senior and Junior Technical School enrolments, 1901-1940.**
Data sourced from VED, *Reports of the Minister of Public Instruction*.

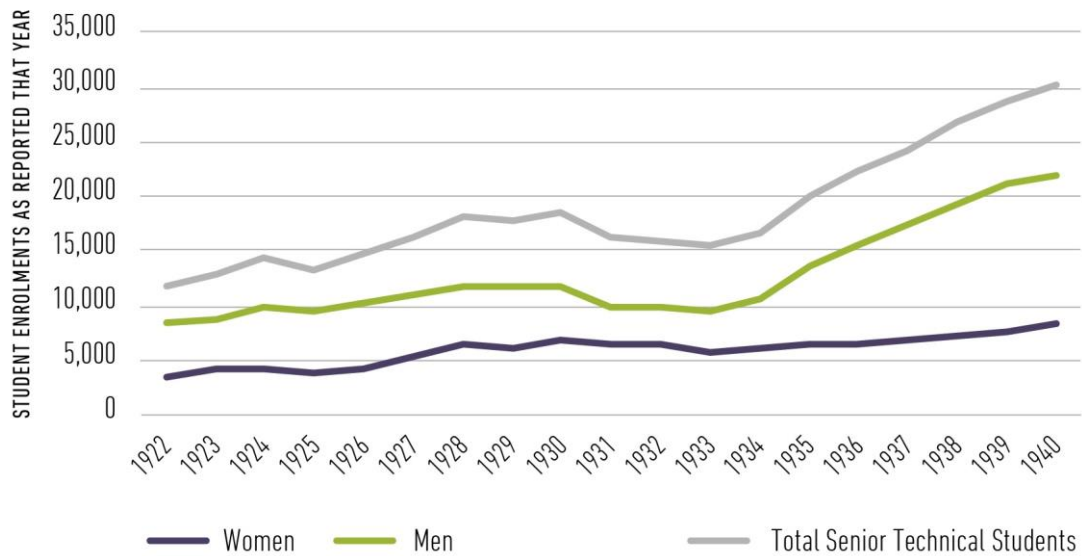


Figure A.2 **Gross senior enrolments per year, all Victorian Senior Technical Schools, 1922-1940.**
Data sourced from VED, *Reports of the Minister of Public Instruction*.

TIMELINE OF SOME KEY INSTITUTIONS

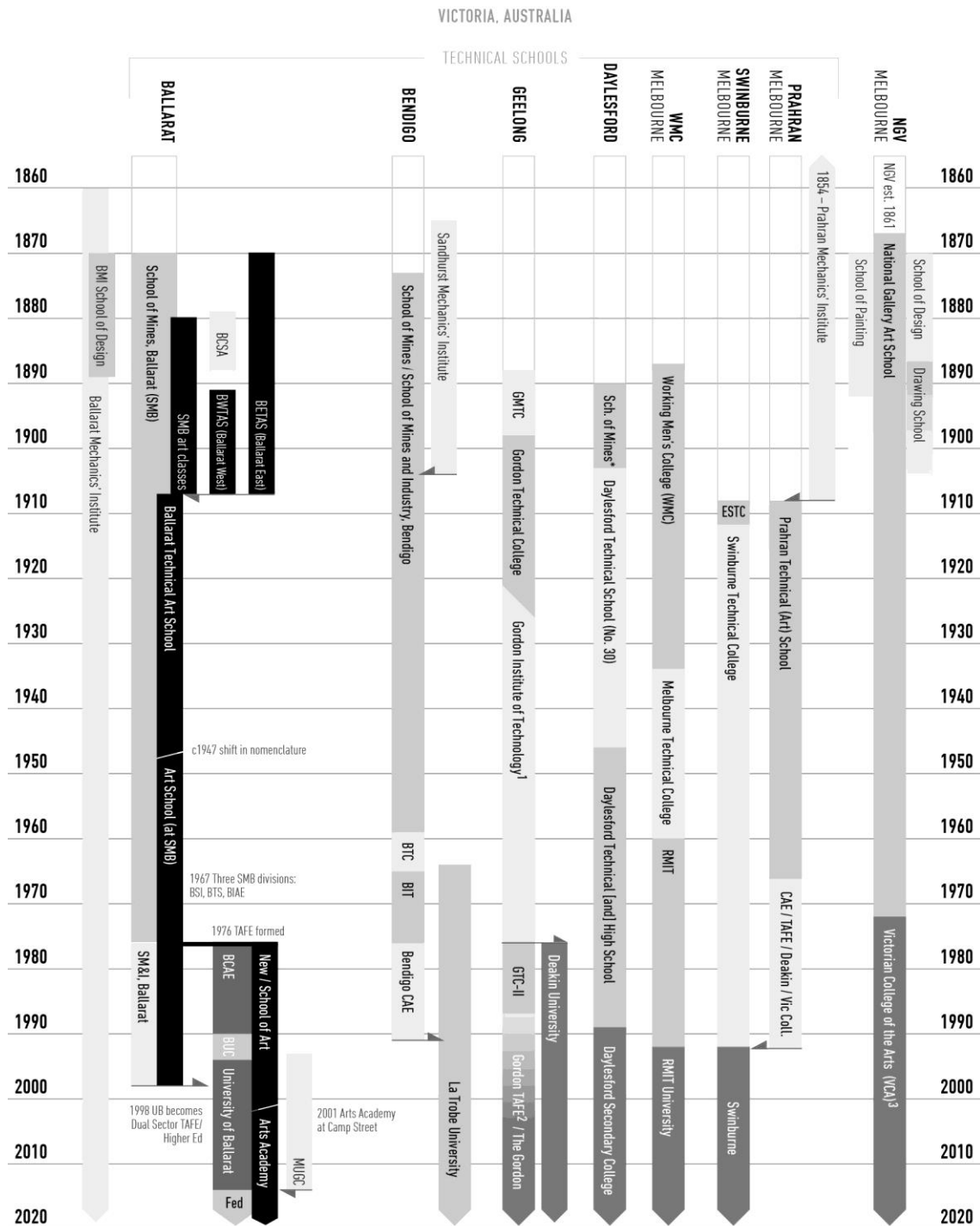


Figure A.3 Elise Whetter. *Institutional timeline (part 1)*. (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

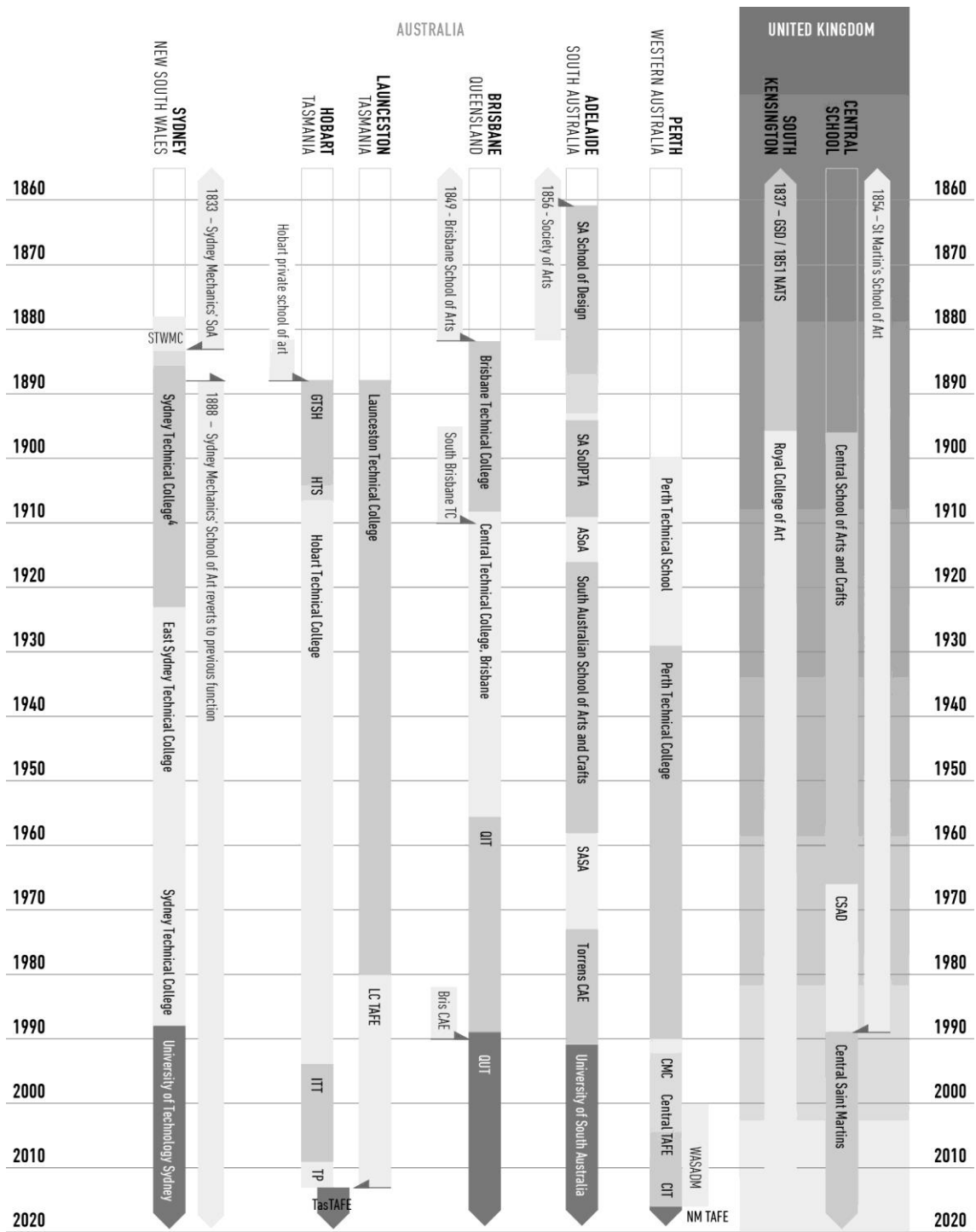


Figure A.4 Elise Whetter. *Institutional timeline (part 2)*. (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0)

INSITUTIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAE = College of Advanced Education

TAFE = Technical and Further Education

BALLARAT

Ballarat Mechanics' Institute (BMI)

Ballarat City School of Arts (Arts Academy) (BCSA)

Ballarat West Technical School of Art (No. 15) (BWTAS)

(Managed by the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery), sometimes referred to as the City Art School

Ballarat East Technical School of Art (No. 11) (BETAS)

(Managed by the Ballarat Public Library. Sometimes referred to as a School of Design/Art School)

School of Mines, Ballarat (No. 10) (SMB)

Also known as School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat

- ↓ Ballarat College of Advanced Education (BCAE)
- ↓ Ballarat University College (BUC)
- ↓ University of Ballarat (UB) / Monash University, Gippsland Campus (MUGC)

Federation University Australia (Fed)

BENDIGO

School of Mines (No. 161) (SoMB)

Also known as School of Mines and Industries, Bendigo

- ↓ Bendigo Technical College (BTC)
- ↓ Bendigo Institute of Technology (BIT)
- ↓ Bendigo CAE

La Trobe University

DAYLESFORD

Daylesford School of Mines

- ↓ Daylesford Technical School (No. 30)
- ↓ Daylesford Technical [and] High School

Daylesford Secondary College

GEE LONG

Gordon Memorial Technical College (GMTC)

- ↓ Gordon Technical College I / Gordon College (No. 60) (GTC-I)
- ↓ Gordon Institute of Technology (GIT)
Note 1 GIT name adopted by institute in 1921, but not by Education Dept. until the 1930s.
- ↓ Gordon Technical College II (GTC-II)
Note 2 Around 1986 also referred to as Gordon TAFE

Gordon Institute of TAFE trading as 'The Gordon'

MELBOURNE

Working Mens' College (No. 191) (WMC)

- ↓ Melbourne Technical College (MTC)
Including Melbourne Junior Technical School from 1921)
- ↓ Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)

RMIT University

Eastern Suburbs Technical College (ESTC)

- ↓ Swinburne Technical College

Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburne)

Prahran Technical Art School

- ↓ Prahran College of Technology / Prahran College of Advanced Education /
Prahran TAFE / Deakin University / Victoria College

Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburne)

National Gallery [of Victoria, NGV] Art School

School of Design then Drawing School (NGSoD)

- ↓ Victorian College of the Arts (VCA)

University of Melbourne

Note 3 2007: VCA became an official faculty of the University of Melbourne

SYDNEY

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts (SMSA)

Sydney Technical or Working Mens' College (STWMC)

- ↓ Sydney Technical College (STC)
(1888 under the Board of Technical Education)
- ↓ East Sydney Technical College (ESTC)
(following relocation of Art Dept. to Darlinghurst in 1922-1923)
- ↓ Sydney Technical College
Reversion to previous name at some point

University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

Note 4 Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts and National School of Art present competing dates for some events.

HOBART

Government Technical School, Hobart (GTSH)

- ↓ Hobart Technical School (HTS)
- ↓ Hobart Technical College (HTC)
- ↓ Institute of TAFE, Tasmania (ITT)

TasTAFE

LAUNCESTON

Launceston Technical College

- ↓ Launceston College of TAFE (LC TAFE)

TasTAFE

BRISBANE

Central Technical College, Brisbane

- ↓ Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT)
- ↓ Brisbane College of Advanced Education (BrisCAE)

Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

ADELAIDE

Adelaide Society of Arts' School of Design

South Australian School of Design

- ↓ School of Design, Painting and Technical Art (SA SoDPTA)
- ↓ Adelaide School of Art
- ↓ South Australian School of Arts and Crafts
- ↓ South Australian School of Art (SASA)
- ↓ Torrens College of Advanced Education (Torrens CAE)

University of South Australia (UniSA)

PERTH

Perth Technical School

- ↓ Perth Technical College
- ↓ Central Metropolitan College of TAFE (CMC)
- ↓ Central TAFE
- ↓ Central Institute of Technology (CIT)
including The Western Australian School of Art, Design and Media (WASADM)

North Metropolitan TAFE (NM TAFE)

NOT SHOWN

Bairnsdale School of Mines (No. 12); Beechworth School of Mines (No. 13); Box Hill Technical School, Brighton Technical School; Brunswick Technical College (No. 17); Castlemaine School of Mines (No. 20); Caulfield Technical School, College of Domestic Economy (No. 200), Collingwood Technical School (No. 22); Echuca Technical School of Art (No. 40); Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy; Essendon Technical School, Footscray Technical School (No. 50); Horsham Working Men's College (No. 71); Kyneton Technical School (No. 91); Maryborough School of Mines (No. 110); Nhill Technical School of Art (No. 121); Preston Technical School; Richmond Technical School; Sale Technical School (No. 160); South Melbourne Technical School; St Arnaud Technical (No. 163); Stawell Technical School (No. 162) including a branch at Ararat (No. 1); Sunshine Technical School (No. 165); Wangaratta Technical School; West Melbourne Technical School; Warrnambool Technical School of Art (No. 192); Wonthaggi Technical School; Yallourn Technical School.

In 1903 Castlemaine, Daylesford, Kyneton, Sale, St. Arnaud and Maryborough changed their names from Schools of Mines to Technical Schools.

UNITED KINGDOM

South Kensington, London

↓ Government School of Design (GSD)

↓ National Art Training School (NATS)

Royal College of Art (RCA)

Central School, London

↓ Central School of Arts and Crafts (CSAC)

↓ Central School of Art and Design (CSAD)

↓ St Martins School of Art

Central Saint Martins (CSM)

VICTORIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURE

Table A-1 Victorian Education Department expenditure, 1907-1940.
Available on Federation.figshare.com

DOI: 10.25955/604d8d314b8e0

Institution	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940		
Ballarat School of Mines and Industries (SMB) (No 10) including Ballarat Technical Art School (BTAS) from 1907 onward	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,400	4,400	4,475	8,218	10,848	8,392	8,383	10,800	11,868	13,923	18,243	18,463	17,882	18,181	20,358	19,421	20,398	24,245	22,283	24,970	26,133	18,215	14,801	13,723	14,075	14,967	18,209	18,877	17,452	26,350		
Barnesdale School of Mines (No 12)	750	750	750	750	750	750	914	2,019	1,380	1,276	1,378	1,796	2,717	2,561	4,750	4,237	3,246	3,376	3,806	3,742	4,304	4,099	4,000	4,104	5,545	2,502	2,184	2,458	2,324	2,778	2,979	3,374	3,478	3,854		
Bendigo School of Mines (No 161)	1,775	1,775	2,300	2,500	2,500	2,500	5,447	7,805	5,061	5,033	5,396	6,813	7,442	7,137	9,882	11,217	11,398	12,222	11,973	16,466	27,454	14,308	11,489	13,802	11,001	10,942	9,666	10,311	10,318	10,804	11,004	12,121	12,609	13,484		
Box Hill Technical School																																				
Brighton Technical School																																				
Brunswick (No. 17)																																				
Cardlemaine Technical School (No 29)	550	550	550	550	550	550	818	3,187	1,428	1,750	2,038	5,305	3,239	3,240	4,803	4,803	5,050	5,754	5,865	10,339	11,123	7,880	7,882	6,854	6,817	6,000	4,111	4,662	4,647	4,936	5,440	6,057	6,885	7,114		
Castfield Technical School																																				
College of Domestic Economy (No 290)																																				
Collingwood Technical School (No 22)																																				
Collingwood Technical School (No 22)																																				
Geelong Technical School (No 30)	350	350	350	350	350	350	418	900	2,338	850	127	900	1,322	1,549	1,987	2,041	2,083	2,645	1,990	2,218	2,428	2,889	3,128	3,118	3,146	2,562	2,462	2,436	2,480	2,506	2,718	3,035	3,054	3,431	3,408	
Geelong Technical School of Art (No 40)	200	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	
Fairly McPherson College of Domestic Economy																																				
Escondido																																				
Fitzroy Technical School (No 50)																																				
Geelong Technical College, Geelong (No 49)	750	750	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,895	5,865	3,953	3,958	4,261	5,585	6,306	5,136	7,259	11,133	8,725	10,020	12,458	24,570	20,659	15,061	17,685	14,857	15,389	12,400	10,563	11,056	11,340	12,080	15,878	16,124	23,150	17,584		
Geelong Working Men's College (No 71) Technical School	350	350	350	350	350	350	418	900	2,338	850	127	900	1,322	1,549	1,987	2,041	2,083	2,645	1,990	2,218	2,428	2,889	3,128	3,118	3,146	2,562	2,462	2,436	2,480	2,506	2,718	3,035	3,054	3,431	3,408	
Geelong Working Men's College (No 71) Technical School	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	
Geelong Working Men's College (No 71) Technical School	575	750	750	750	750	750	1,076	1,053	1,189	1,385	1,415	1,735	2,264	2,275	4,939	5,233	5,604	5,439	6,728	12,422	15,691	8,319	8,256	8,096	6,638	6,108	5,993	6,234	7,108	7,996	8,956	9,492	9,059			
Geelong Working Men's College (No 71) Technical School	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	
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Geelong Working Men's College (No 71) Technical School		</																																		

Annual Victorian Education Department expenditure (1901-1940).

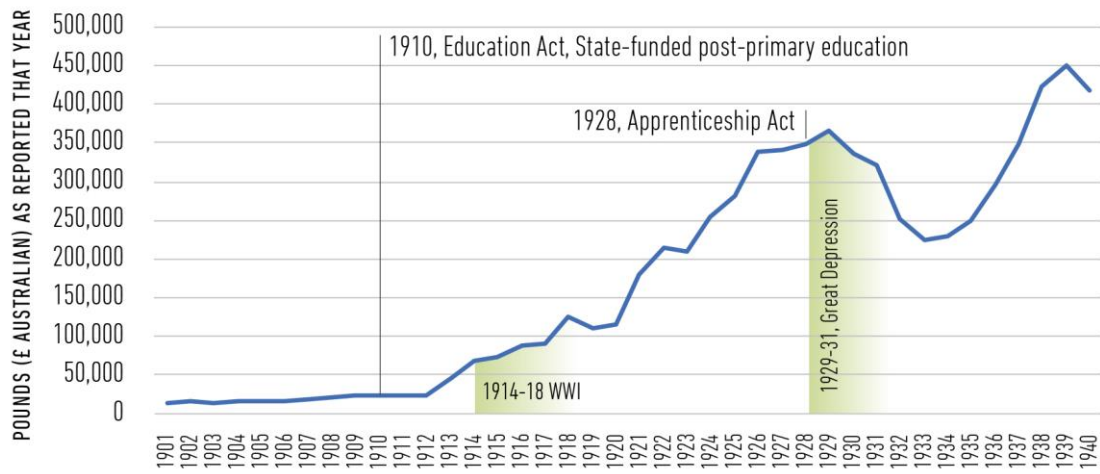


Figure A.5 Rounded to nearest pound (£ Australian). Data gathered from: Victorian Education Department, *Education: Report of the Minister of Public Instruction* (Parliamentary Papers, 1908-1941).

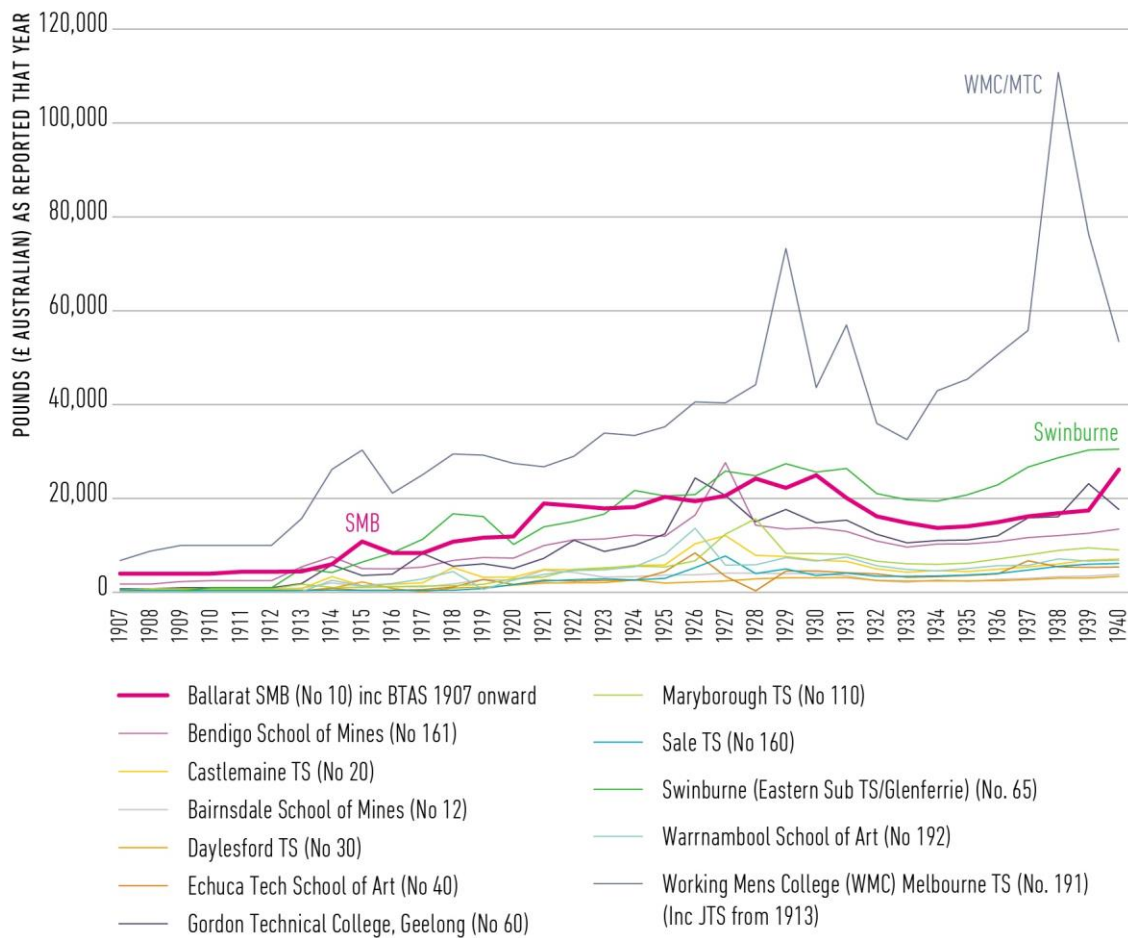


Figure A.6 **Victorian Education Department expenditure. A sample of senior technical schools, 1907-1940.** Annual Maintenance Grant to 1912, all Department expenditure 1913 onward. Rounded to nearest pound (£ Australian). Data gathered from: Victorian Education Department, *Education: Report of the Minister of Public Instruction* (Parliamentary Papers, 1908-1941).

Ballarat Technical Art School

STUDENT AND STAFF DATABASE

Table A-2 Excel database of students and staff identified through historical record between 1907 and 1940. Available at Federation.figshare.com

DOI: 10.25955/604d8c6d9c78a

As part of this research, a Microsoft Excel database of Ballarat Technical Art School students and staff (1907 and 1940) has been developed. More than 2600 individuals have been identified to date. Many listings indicate student studies or examinations, scholarships, and subsequent occupations, with occasional bibliographic notes. Federation University curates a separate student listing, which has partially informed this table.

Names and information have primarily been manually transcribed from historical documentation. Significant effort has been made to avoid duplication of individuals caused by naming variations or misspellings.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ART EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table A-3 Victorian Education Department Art Examination results for the Ballarat Technical Art School, School of Mines, Ballarat, as published in local and metropolitan newspapers, 1908 to 1935. Available at Federation.figshare.com

DOI: 10.25955/604d8cb4017ee

Names are transcribed manually from historical newspaper reports. An empty field simply indicates no passes appear to have been published; it does not indicate zero candidates or passes. Data likely includes the results of junior technical students as well as senior students. From 1936, student numbers are published rather than names.

TABLE OF COMMISSIONED WORK

Table A-4 Simplified table of commission work undertaken by students and staff at the Ballarat Technical Art School between 1915 and 1940. ¹

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0057	1916	Memorial tablet, Peacock Hall, Ballarat Agricultural High School	Memorial Tablet	Agricultural High School	Ballarat, Vic	Metal	"Designs and estimates for a metal Memorial Tablet to be placed in Peacock Hall."	SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1916.
JobID -0179	1916	Series of stained-glass windows for Peacock Hall, Ballarat Agricultural High School	Stained glass Window	Agricultural High School	Ballarat, Vic	Design, Stained Glass	"Students"	Principals' Monthly Report to SMB Council: August 1916.
JobID -0058	1916	Minister of Lands, Tourists' Guide Book of the Ballarat and Creswick districts (cover design)	Design	Minister of Lands	Creswick, Vic	Design	Amalie Field. "designs have been supplied and accepted for the cover of a Tourists' Guide Book of the Ballarat and Creswick districts."	Principals' Monthly Report to SMB Council: August 1916. SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1916.
JobID -0055	1916	Noorinbee State School, Honour book and case	Honour Embossed Leather Honour Book and Case	Noorinbee State School	Noorinbee, Vic	Leather, wood	Near Cann River, Gippsland	SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1916.
JobID -0070	1916	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, Picture of SMB Lydiard Street campus including the intended new Junior Technical School	Print Illustration	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat	Ballarat, Vic	Design and print	Leslie Coburn. SMB council commissioned "Coburn to prepare a large colored picture of the same block [as in prospectus] to hang in the Council chamber. The picture is a fine piece of work and will be an ornament to the chamber and the sooner it ceases to be prophetic and becomes merely illustrative the better."	"Ballarat Courier, 15 January 1916," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0059	1916	State School Decoration Society for Unnamed State School, Memorial tablet	Memorial Tablet	State School Decoration Society	Vic	Metal,		SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1916.
JobID -0069	1916	State School Decoration Society for Unnamed State School, Memorial tablet	Memorial Tablet	State School Decoration Society	Vic	Metal,		Principals' Monthly Report to SMB Council: October 1916.
JobID -0071	1916	State School Decoration Society for Unnamed State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	State School Decoration Society	Vic	Design and lettering?, Wood		Principals' Monthly Report to SMB Council: October 1916.
JobID -0056	1916	Wangaratta State School, Memorial tablet	Memorial Tablet	Wangaratta State School	Wangaratta, Vic	Metal (Repousse)		SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1916.
JobID -0072	1917	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, SMB Sport Club Room furniture	Design	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat	Ballarat, Vic	Design	Sport Club Room furniture: Being designed by the Art School on donation of £5 from Prof Smith.	SMB Magazine, 1917.
JobID -0042	1917	Sydney Sports Club, Honour board	Honour Board	Sydney Sports' Club	Sydney, NSW	Metal (Oxidised), Wood (Fiddleback blackwood)		Principals' Monthly Report to Council, 26 October 1917. Principals' Monthly Report to Council, February 1918 SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.

¹ Federation University Australia also has a list of commissions on their website available for cross referencing: https://bih.federation.edu.au/index.php/Ballarat_Technical_Art_School

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0049	1918	"The Hansen Shield" for sporting competition among North Eastern District Secondary Schools	Sport Shield	"The Hansen Shield" for competition among North Eastern District Secondary Schools.	Wangaratta, Vic	Metal (Nickel silver), Wood (Blackwood)	The 'Hansen' Shield for competition among the Northern District High Schools. "a hand-wrought shield in nickel silver mounted on Blackwood" Ordered by M Hansen, Chief Inspector of Technical School for Northern District High Schools Association	SMB Annual Report, 28 October 1918. Smith, "31 May 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Smith, "30 August 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0046	1918	Queensland Maple Honour Board for the Ballarat Old Colonists' Club	Honour Board	Ballarat Old Colonists' Club	Ballarat, Vic	Wood (Queensland Maple)		Principals' Report to Council, 26 October 1917. SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0044	1918	Birregurra State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Birregurra State School	Birregurra, Vic	Wood	Honour board and case	SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0050	1918	Castlemaine High School, Tablet	Tablet	Castlemaine High School	Castlemaine, Vic	Metal		SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0122	1918	Euroa School, Honour book	Book Honour	Euroa School	Euroa, Vic			Smith, "31 May 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0052	1918	Grampians Secondary Schools Association, Design, Sport Certificate	Sport Certificate	Grampians Secondary Schools Association	Horsham, Vic	Design, lithograph	Sport Certificate Design, Grampians Secondary Schools Assoc, 100 copies ordered. Designed in school, lithographed "by a local firm".	Smith, "30 August 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0119	1918	Lucas & Co. Ballarat, Painted dolls heads and faces	Doll heads	Lucas & Co.	Ballarat, Vic		Experimenting with painting dolls heads and faces, in preparation for employment. Students.	Smith, "31 May 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0120	1918	Lucas & Co. Ballarat, Stencilled fabric designs	Textiles Designs	Lucas & Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Textile stencils	Students	Smith, "31 May 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0124	1918	Lucas & Co. Ballarat, Designs for the Arch of Victory at the entrance to the Ballarat Avenue of Honour	Memorial Arch of Victory	Lucas & Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Designs, clay	Smith and students initially commissioned to design and model concepts for Ballarat's Arch of Victory at the entrance to the Avenue of Honour. Then a competition was suggested, Smith's concept eventually won.	Smith, "30 November 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0117	1918	Messrs Downer & Co., Modelled busts figurines and statuettes	Decorative Modelled figurines, statuettes, busts	Messrs Downer & Co.	Sebastopol, Ballarat, Vic	Pottery	Downer & Co. plan to work with Eureka Pottery and Tile co., students produced modelled busts, figurines and statuettes etc. for reproduction.	Smith, "31 May 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0053	1918	Honour boards	Honour Boards	multiple: not listed				SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0054	1918	Mural cases	Mural Cases	multiple: not listed				SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0043	1918	St Arnaud High School, Honour board	Honour Board	St Arnaud High School	St Arnaud, Vic	Wood		SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0048	1918	"The Herald" Shield for perpetual competition at Metropolitan Technical completing shield	Sport Shield	The Herald Shield for perpetual competition at Technical Schools' athletics	Melbourne, Vic	Metal	"Herald" Shield for perpetual competition at Metropolitan Technical Schools' athletic meetings. On completing the shield, SMB won it.	SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918. Smith, "31 May 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Smith, "25 October 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0118	1918	Waratah Stamped Metal Co., Designs or samples, metal work	Metal	Waratah Stamped Metal Co.	Ballarat?, Vic	Metal	Unclear whether students producing designs or metal work	Smith, "31 May 1918," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0045	1918	Wendouree State School, Honour Board	Honour Board	Wendouree State School	Ballarat, Vic	Wood		SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0047	1918	Young Workers' Patriotic Guild Certificate	Certificate	Young Workers' Patriotic Guild	Melbourne, Vic	Design	Harold Herbert	SMB Annual Report, 25 October 1918.
JobID -0085	1919	Premier Lawson, Northern District High Schools competitive "Challenge Shield"	Competitive Shield	"Challenge Shield" for Northern District High Schools	Wangaratta, Vic	Metal (Nickel Silver), Wood (Blackwood)	Challenge Shield, to the order of the Premier (Mr. H. S. W. Lawson), for competition among	Smith, "30 May 1919," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 31 October 1919.

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
							Northern District High Schools.	
JobID -0033	1919	Education Department, War Service Book designs and illustrations.	Illustration Design	Education Department	Melbourne, Vic	Design	Supply designs for the title page, and most of the chapter headings, tail pieces and initial letters for the War Service book. "students" plural.	Smith, "29 August 1919," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 29 October 1920
JobID -0125	1919	Stawell (State?) School, Memorial tablet	Memorial Tablet	Stawell School	Stawell, Vic	Metal	Hand wrought metal memorial tablet	Smith, "27 June 1919," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0126	1919	Stawell (State?) School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Stawell School	Stawell, Vic	Wood	Honour book and case	Smith, "27 June 1919," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0127	1919	Paterson & Co. Catalogue, 300 Illustrations	Fashion and catalogue Illustrations	Wm. Paterson's "Snows"	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	300 fashion and other drawings for illustrated catalogue. Distributed £41-16-0 among 15 students as payment; 10% went to the School Library Fund.	Smith, "27 June 1919," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Smith, "29 August 1919," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0140	1920	Ararat and District High School Sporting Shield	Sports Shield	Ararat and District High Schools	Ararat, Vic	Metal		Smith, "30 April 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0133	1920	Arnold State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Arnold State School	Arnold, Vic	Wood	Designed and supervised by BTAS. Near Bendigo	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0135	1920	Avoca State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Avoca State School	Avoca, Vic	Wood		Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0131	1920	Ballarat Masonic Lodge No. 114, Honour board	Honour Board	Ballarat Lodge No. 114	Ballarat, Vic	Designs		Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0136	1920	Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Dunbulbalane	Dunbulbalane, Vic	Wood	North of Shepparton	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0130	1920	Elsternwick State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Elsternwick State School	Elsternwick, Melbourne, Vic	Wood?	"Elsternwick State School committee unanimously accepted from (competitive design) BTAS design for an Honour Board, to be executed locally."	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0128	1920	Harry Davies & Co., Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harry Davies	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations		Smith, "30 January 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0141	1920	Inglewood State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Inglewood State School	Ballarat, Vic			Smith, "30 April 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0037	1920	Lydiard Street Methodist Church, Four stained glass memorial windows	Window	Lydiard Street Methodist Church trustees	Ballarat, Vic	Designs	Likely Amalie Feild. "produce cartoons for 4 windows in memory of members of the congregation who fell "in the Great War". Also to supervise production. "designing and supervising of a large four-light stained glass window for the Lydiard Street Methodist Church"	Smith, "30 January 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 29 October 1920.
JobID -0129	1920	Mr Noorat State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Mr Noorat State School	Noorat, Vic	Wood	Near Terang.	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0139	1920	Mt Mercer Soldiers Memorial, Four metal panels	4 Metal Panels	Mt Mercer Soldiers Memorial.	Mt Mercer, Vic	Metal	4 x metal panels for Mt Mercer Soldiers Memorial.	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0040	1920	Honour boards	Honour Board	multiple: not listed			"supplying numerous Honour books, Honour boards, etc., for public institutions and leading schools in Ballarat and district"	SMB Annual Report, 29 October 1920.
JobID -0035	1920	Ballarat Municipal Council, Welcome and Casket for presentation to Prince of Wales (Casket)	Casket	Municipal Council	Ballarat, Vic	Design, Wood	"designing and supplying of the Municipal Council's Address of Welcome and Casket for presentation to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales". Woodwork undertaken by "local firms"	Smith, "28 May 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 29 October 1920.

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0036	1920	Ballarat Municipal Council, Welcome and Casket for presentation Prince of Wales (illuminated scroll)	Illustration and lettering Illuminated Scroll	Municipal Council	Ballarat, Vic	Design, Illumination	Illumination & "enprosing" (Smith seems to be using the term to mean the written component, ie lettering/calligraphy) of the school done by Leaut. D Johnston.	Smith, "28 May 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 29 October 1920.
JobID -0137	1920	Ponsonby Carew-Smyth, Embossed leather bags	Embossed leather bags	Ponsonby Carew Smyth	Melbourne, Vic	Leather	Embossed leather bags ordered & supplied to Carew-Smyth.	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0138	1920	Skipton Soldiers Memorial, Two metal panels	2 Metal Panels	Skipton Soldiers Memorial	Skipton, Vic	Metal	2 x metal panels for Skipton Soldiers Memorial	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0134	1920	Skipton State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Skipton State School	Skipton, Vic	Wood		Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0132	1920	Urquhart Street State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Urquhart Street State School	Ballarat, Vic	Wood	Designed and supervised by BTAS	Smith, "26 March 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0142	1920	Wallington State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Wallington State School	Wallington, Vic			Smith, "30 April 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0038	1920	Paterson & Co.(Autumn) Catalogue, 200 Illustrations	Illustration Catalogue	Wm. Paterson and Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Designs	200 student drawings for the next catalogue.	Smith, "30 January 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0039	1920	Paterson & Co.(Spring) Catalogue Illustrations	Illustration Catalogue	Wm. Paterson and Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Designs	Spring Catalogue	Smith, "25 June 1920," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0041	1920	Honour books	Honour Book					SMB Annual Report, 29 October 1920.
JobID -0030	1921	Designs for "The Gap Magazine", Bairnsdale Inspectorate District Schools	Magazine Designs	'The Gap' Magazine, Bairnsdale Inspectorate District Schools	Bairnsdale, Vic	Design,	Designs & blocks for cover, title page and chapter headings for "The Gap Magazine" circulated in Bairnsdale and Gippsland Schools;	Smith, "26 August 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1921. "Star, 29 October 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0112	1921	Bendigo High School, Jenkin Swimming Shield	Sport Shield	Bendigo High School	Bendigo, Vic	Wood and Metal?	Jenkin Swimming Shield (Design submitted to BTAS, not named).	Smith, "1 April 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 23 March 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0111	1921	Castlemaine High School, The Lowry Shield for Athletics	Sport Shield	Castlemaine High School	Castlemaine, Vic	Wood and Metal?	The Lowry Shield for Athletics (Design submitted to BTAS, not named).	Smith, "1 April 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 23 March 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0026	1921	Collingwood Technical School, Ex-President's Certificate	Certificate	Collingwood Technical School	Collingwood, Vic	Design	Ex-President's Certificate	Smith, "1 April 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1921. "Star, 29 October 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0027	1921	Collingwood Technical School, W. D. Beazley Trade Scholarship Certificate	Scholarship Certificate	Collingwood Technical School	Collingwood, Vic	Design	W D Beazley Trade Scholarship Certificate	SMB Annual Report, 1921. "Star, 29 October 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0143	1921	Education Department, War Service Book, additional designs and illustrations.	Designs and Illustrations	Education Department War Book	Melbourne, Vic	Design, illustration	Carew-Smyth sought further designs and illustrations for the Education Department War Book	Smith, "1 April 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0029	1921	Grampians Secondary Schools Association Hockey Shield	Sport Shield	Grampians Secondary Schools Association	Horsham, Vic	Metal	Hockey Shield	Smith, "26 August 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1921. "Star, 29 October 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0151	1921	Horsham High School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Horsham High School	Horsham, Vic			Smith, "25 November 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0032	1921	Kerrie State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Kerrie State School	Kerrie, Vic		Near Macedon	SMB Annual Report, 1921.
JobID -0024	1921	Mildura High School Sporting Shield	Sport Shield	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic			SMB Annual Report, 1921. "Star, 29 October 1921", in SMB Cuttings (1921-24).
JobID -0025	1921	Mildura High School, Honour book	Honour Book	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic			SMB Annual Report, 1921.
JobID -0150	1921	Mildura High School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic			Smith, "25 November 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0145	1921	Moonambel State School, Honour book	Honour Book	Moonambel State School	Moonambel, Vic	Lettering	Appears to be enprosing, ie hand lettering. Near Avoca	Smith, "26 August 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0034	1921	Honour book	Honour Book	multiple: not listed			Other State Schools	Smith, "1 April 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1921.
JobID -0180	1921	Pine Lodge Honour Roll	Honour Roll	Pine Lodge	Shepparton, Vic			"Star, 11 May 1921", in SMB Cuttings (1921-24).

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0148	1921	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, Maurice O Copland Memorial Tablet	Memorial Tablet	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat	Ballarat, Vic	Metal (Oxidised Copper), Wood (polished blackwood)	H H Smith. Design presented to council on 26 August 1921. Estimated to cost 8 pound.	Smith, "26 August 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0149	1921	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat, SMB Certificates	Certificates Design	School of Mines and Industries, Ballarat	Ballarat, Vic	Designs	Design presented to council on 26 August 1921.	Smith, "26 August 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0031	1921	Springfield State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Springfield State School	Springfield, Vic		Near Kilmore	SMB Annual Report, 1921.
JobID -0023	1921	St Andrews Church, Stained glass Soldiers' Memorial Window	Memorial Window	St Andrews Church	Ballarat, Vic	Stained Glass	Amalie Field. Soldier's Memorial Window	SMB Annual Report, 1921.
JobID -0181	1921	St Andrews Church, Stained glass memorial window (private)	Memorial Window	St Andrews Church	Ballarat, Vic	Stained Glass	Private memorial window	"Star, 29 October 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0028	1921	Stawell High School, Memorial Tablet	Memorial Tablet	Stawell High School	Stawell, Vic	Metal (Wrought, Oxidised Copper)	Oxidised Copper "commemorates old students of the Stawell High School who served in the Great War."	Smith, "26 August 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1921. "Star, 29 October 1921," in SMB Cuttings (1921-24) "Courier, 28 November 1921," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0147	1921	Stoneyford State School, Honour book	Honour Book	Stoneyford State School	Stoneyford, Vic	Lettering	Appears to be enprosing, ie hand lettering; near colac	Smith, "26 August 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0115	1922	Ararat High School, Honour certificate	Honour Certificate	Ararat High School	Ararat, Vic	Design		Smith, "24 November 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 27 November 1922," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0060	1922	Ballarat Junior Technical School, Honour book	Honour Book	Ballarat Junior Technical School	Ballarat, Vic			SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.
JobID -0114	1922	Batchica State School, Honour book	Honour Book	Batchica State School	Warracknabeal, Vic	Lettering?		Smith, "24 November 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 27 November 1922," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0116	1922	Boort High School, Merit board	Merit Board	Boort High School	Boort, Vic			Smith, "24 November 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 27 November 1922," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0064	1922	Caulfield (Glenhuntly Road) School, Honour board	Honour Board	Caulfield (Glenhuntly Road) School	Kooyong, Vic		Caulfield. Designed by H H Smith, carving by Margaret Crombie Young, lettering by Thomas Edwin Raisbeck.	SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922. Courier 1.3.1922 "Courier, 5 June 1922," in SMB Cuttings (1921-24).
JobID -0155	1922	Echuca Shield	Shield	Echuca ?	Echuca, Vic			Smith, "27 October 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0062	1922	Echuca High School, Memorial tablet	Memorial Tablet	Echuca High School	Echuca, Vic	Metal (Oxidised Copper)		Smith, "28 July 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.
JobID -0156	1922	Grampians Secondary Schools Association Basketball Shield	Sport (Basketball) Shield	Grampians Secondary Schools Association	Horsham, Vic	Metal (Oxidised Copper), Wood (Silky Oak)	Shield "bears four metal panels, one for each of the competing schools — Hamilton, Horsham, Ararat and Stawell."	Smith, "27 October 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 24 February 1923," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0066	1922	Grenville State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Grenville State School	Grenville, Vic			Smith, "25 November 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.
JobID -0113	1922	Kenmare State School, Honour book	Honour Book	Kenmare State School	Kenmare, Vic	Lettering?		Smith, "24 November 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 27 November 1922," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0001	1922	Mildura High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Illustration	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Illustration and lettering	Mildura High School seeking six decorated books as prizes within the school. Prize books, frontispages inscribed and illustrated.	Smith, "27 October 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier 29 Nov 1922, Cuttings.
JobID -0065	1922	Mildura State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Mildura State School	Mildura, Vic			SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.
JobID -0067	1922	Ni Ni State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Ni Ni State School	Woorak, Vic			Smith, "25 November 1921," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0068	1922	Sale High School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Sale High School	Sale, Vic			SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.
JobID -0061	1922	Stawell High School, Memorial Tablet	Memorial Tablet	Stawell High School	Stawell, Vic			SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.
JobID -0063	1922	Northern Districts Junior Technical Schools competitive Football Shield	Sport Shield	Thompson & Co Castlemaine for Northern Districts Junior Technical Schools	Castlemaine, Vic		Competitive Football Shield.	SMB Annual Report, 27 October 1922.
JobID -0154	1922	Paterson & Co.(Spring) Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Wm. Paterson & Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	BTAS students produced more than 300 illustrations for the Paterson's spring/summer catalogue. Student work then reproduced as blocks by Campbell, Wilson, Prop., and printed by Berry, Anderson and Co	Smith, "28 July 1922," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 9 September 1922," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0156	1923	Amherst State School, Honour book	Honour Book	Amherst State School	Amherst, Vic	Lettering?		Smith, "23 February 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0087	1923	Amherst State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Amherst State School	Amherst, Vic	wood?		Courier, 26 Feb 1923, Cuttings.
JobID -0014	1923	Ararat High School, Honour certificate	Honour Certificate	Ararat High School	Ararat, Vic	Design		SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0020	1923	Ascot State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Ascot State School	Ascot, Vic	Wood, Lettering?		Smith, "29 June 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0019	1923	Avoca (Forest) State School (Primary School No. 4), Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Avoca (Forest) State School (Primary School No. 4)	Avoca, Vic	Wood, Lettering?		Smith, "27 April 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0081	1923	Ballarat Benevolent Asylum Committee, Memorial tablet	Memorial Tablet	Ballarat Benevolent Asylum Committee	Ballarat, Vic	Metal	Design prepared July 1923.	Smith, "27 July 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1923.; Star, 30 July 1923 SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0009	1923	Batchica State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Batchica State School	Warracknabeal, Vic	Wood and metal?		SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0012	1923	Boort Higher Elementary School, Merit board (Dux)	Dux Board	Boort Higher Elementary School	Boort, Vic	wood		SMB Annual Report, 1923.; Star, 30 July 1923
JobID -0011	1923	Castlemaine High School Competitive Sport Shield	Sport Shield	Castlemaine High School	Castlemaine, Vic	Metal	"Competitive Shield"	SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0089	1923	Castlemaine High School 'Form' Competitive Shield	Competitive Shield	Castlemaine High School	Castlemaine, Vic	Wood and Metal?	For the form which does the best school work. Mr Jolly	Smith, "29 June 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 10 November 1923," SMB Cuttings.147.
JobID -0010	1923	Echuca High School, Honour board	Honour Board	Echuca High School	Echuca, Vic	Wood and Metal?		SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0006	1923	Grampians Secondary Schools Association Tennis Shield	Sport (Tennis) Shield	Grampians Secondary Schools Association	Horsham, Vic	Wood, Metal	Tennis Shield. Oxidised copper & silky oak. Four panels, one for each of the competing schools—Hamilton, Horsham, Ararat and Stawell.	SMB Annual Report, 1923.; Courier, 24 February 1923
JobID -0008	1923	Kenmare State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Kenmare State School	Kenmare, Vic	Wood, Metal		SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0018	1923	Lorne State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Lorne State School	Lorne, Vic	Wood and lettering?		Smith, "27 April 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0017	1923	Mildura High School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Wood and lettering?		SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0090	1923	Mildura High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Illustration and lettering	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Illustration and lettering	Select, bind and inscribe prize books for distribution	Smith, "30 November 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 3 December 1923. Cuttings, 150.

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0158 JobID -0022	1923	"The Family Circle" magazine, Designs and illustrations	Publication Designs and Illustrations	The Family Circle	Ballarat, Vic	Design and illustration	Title headings & illustrations for "the local publication 'The Family Circle'." This was a Periodical Journal between 1917 and 1923. Later titled "Social Mirror"	Smith, "27 April 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 30 April 1923, Cuttings.
JobID -0091	1923	Unknown drawings	Drawing	Unknown	Ballarat, Vic	Drawing		SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0074	1923	Warragul High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Illustration and lettering	Warragul High School	Warragul, Vic	Illustration and lettering	Select, bind and inscribe prize books for distribution	Smith, "30 November 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 3 December 1923. Cuttings, 150.
JobID -0016	1923	Wimmera State School Athletic Association, Designs submitted for 4 metal competitive shields	Sport Shield	Wimmera State School Athletic Association	Horsham, Vic	Metal	Designs submitted for 4 metal competitive shields July 1923.Underway November 1923.	Smith, "27 July 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0088	1923	Wimmera State Schools Athletic Association Sport Shield	Sport Shield	Wimmera State Schools Athletic Association	Horsham, Vic	Metal?		Smith, "27 April 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1923.; Courier, 30 April 1923
JobID -0157	1923	Paterson & Co.(Spring) Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Wm Patterson & Tylers	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	Spring Catalogue	Smith, "27 July 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0015	1923	Paterson & Co.(Autumn) Catalogue, Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Wm. Patterson & Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	Senior students	Smith, "23 February 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0007	1923	Yarram High School Sport shield	Sport Shield	Yarram High School	Yarram, Vic	Wood and metal?		Smith, "27 April 1923," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, 1923.; Courier, 30 April 1923
JobID -0002	1923	Yulecart State School, Honour board	Honour Board	Yulecart State School	Yulecart, Vic	Wood and metal?	Near Hamilton	SMB Annual Report, 1923.
JobID -0096	1924	Empire Exhibition display (part)	Unknown				The Ballarat Technical Art School has been commissioned to prepare portion of the display which is to be made at the Empire Exhibition.	"Country News, Ballarat and District." <i>The Argus</i> , September 8, 1923
JobID -0098	1924	Bangerang State School, Honour book	Honour Book	Bangerang State School	Bangerang, Vic	Lettering	Honour book with photos and inscriptions	Smith, "19 November 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 22 November 1924, SMB Cuttings
JobID -0080	1924	Beverin Competitive Shield, Echuca	Competitive Shield	Beverin Shield	Echuca, Vic	Metal	Band contest conducted on Boxing Day	Courier, 28 November 1924, SMB Cuttings
JobID -0097	1924	Buninyong Masonic Lodge, Memorial tablet	Memorial Tablet	Buninyong Masonic Lodge	Ballarat, Vic	Metal		Smith, "27 August 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0083	1924	Church of England Grammar School, "Old Boys" Shield	Old Boys Shield	Church of England Grammar School	Ballarat?, Vic	Metal		Smith, "19 November 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 22 November 1924, SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0160	1924	Harris, Powell & Sandford, Catalogue Illustrations	Newspaper Illustrations	Harris, Powell and Sandford	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations		Smith, "27 August 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0161	1924	Harris, Powell & Sandford, Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harris, Powell and Sandford (Spring/Summer catalogue)	Ballarat, Vic	Illustration	Students producing "a very large number" of drawings for Spring and Summer Catalogue "These drawings are being made direct from the articles supplied & afford the students remunerative & very valuable practical experience."	Smith, "27 August 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0094	1924	Kyabram School, Honour board	Honour Board	Kyabram School	Kyabrum, Vic			Smith, "27 August 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 22 November 1924, SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0075	1924	Mildura High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Illustration and lettering	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Illustration and lettering	procure, inscribe and decorate prize books	Smith, "19 November 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0094	1924	Mildura High School Sport Shield	Sport Shield	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Metal		SMB Annual Report, October 1924

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0077	1924	Mildura High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Prize Book	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Lettering	"All Prize Books selected, bound and inscribed"	SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0078	1924	Mt Pleasant Church, Stained glass memorial window	Memorial Window	Mt Pleasant Church	Ballarat, Vic	Stained Glass		SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0082	1924	Newry State School, Honour book and case	Honour Book and Case	Newry State School	Newry, Vic	Wood and lettering?		Smith, "27 February 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, October 1924. "Courier, 1 March 1924," SMB Cuttings:174.
JobID -0079	1924	Stained glass memorial window	Memorial Window	St Andrews Church	Ballarat, Vic	Stained Glass		SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0073	1924	Commonwealth Committee responsible for the visit of the British Squadron, Official program cover for the visit of the British Squadron / British Fleet to Melbourne. Three colour litho.	Design	Tate & Commonwealth Committee responsible for the visit of the British Squadron, recommended by Carew-Smyth	Melbourne, Vic	Design	Carew-Smyth recommended the combined State & Commonwealth Committee responsible for program of entertainment ask BTAS to design the official cover. (AR 1924 says)"Execution of a three colour design for the cover of programme of visit for the British Fleet to Melbourne". Request came from PCS. Designed by D I Johnston, supervised by Smith	Smith, "27 February 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. SMB Annual Report, October 1924; Star 12 Feb 1924, 169.
JobID -0084	1924	Vic Education Department, Wood carvings for The Australia School, Villers-Bretonneux	Design	The Australian School	Villers-Bretonneux, France	Wood		SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0095	1924	Warragul High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Illustration and lettering	Warragul High School	Warragul, Vic	Illustration and lettering	procure, inscribe and decorate prize books	Courier, 22 November 1924, SMB Cuttings. Smith, "19 November 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0076	1924	Warragul High School Sport Shield	Sport Shield	Warragul High School	Warragul, Vic	Metal		SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0093	1924	Wimmera State School Athletic Association, two shields	Sport Shield	Wimmera State Schools' Sports Association	Horsham, Vic	Metal	Two shields.	
JobID -0159	1924	Illustrations for Paterson & Co.(Autumn) Catalogue	Catalogue Illustrations	Wm. Pattersons (Autumn/Winter Catalogue)	Ballarat, Vic	Illustration	Paterson's Catalogue and Mail-order guide	Smith, "27 February 1924," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Star, 27 March 1924," SMB Cuttings. SMB Annual Report, October 1924
JobID -0099	1925	Ballarat Bowling Association, Enamel badge	Enamel Badge	Ballarat Bowling Association	Ballarat, Vic	Metal, enamel	"Student". Ballarat Bowling Association, features City of Ballarat's coat of arms.	"Courier, 27 September 1925," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0163	1925	Girls' Grammar School, Sport (tennis) Shield	Sport (Tennis) Shield	Dr. E. Champion for Girls' Grammar School	Ballarat, Vic			Smith, "22 April 1925," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0165	1925	Ed Dept. War Relief Trust Fund, Brass plaque for Returned Soliders Kiosk	Returned Soliders Kiosk Plaque	Ed Dept. War Relief Trust Fund.	Ballarat, Vic	Metal (Brass), Wood (Blackwood)	Ed Dept. War Relief Trust Fund, seeks a brass plate inscription panel mounted on Blackwood, to be placed on the Returned Soliders Kiosk in Lydiard St.	Smith, "17 June 1925," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0162	1925	Harris, Powell & Sandford, Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustration	Harris, Powell and Sandford	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	Autumn & Winter Catalogue. Cheque for 40 pound distributed among students.	Smith, "18 March 1925," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0100	1925	Mildura High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Inscription	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Illustrations		
JobID -0164	1925	Grampians Secondary Schools Association, Sport (Football) shield	Sport (Football) Shield	Mr Hill, Ballarat High School for Grampians Secondary Schools Association	Ballarat, Vic	Wood and metal?		Smith, "22 April 1925," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0166	1925	Northern District High Schools Association, Sport (Swimming) shield	Sport (Swimming) Shield	Northern District High Schools Association	Horsham, Vic	Design	Design and prices sought, October 1925.	Smith, "21 October 1925," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0101	1925	Warragul High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Inscription	Warragul High School	Warragul, Vic	Paper		
JobID -0004	1925	Paterson & Co. Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustration	Wm. Patersons, Sturt Street	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	More than hundred illustrations. Annual request over several years.	SMB Annual Report 1925. "Courier, 1 March 1924", SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0170	1926	Education Service Federation, Menu Cover	Menu Design	Education Service Federation	Melbourne, Vic	Design	Education Service Federation commissioned Menu Cover for their Inaugural Dinner, to be held Melb on 13 August.	Smith, "28 July 1926," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0167	1926	Harris, Powell & Sandford, Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harris, Powell and Sandford	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations		Smith, "21 April 1926," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0104	1926	Harris, Powell & Sandford, Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harris, Powell, and Sandford.	Ballarat, Vic	Paper	Students, Spring/Summer catalogue	Smith, "15 September 1926," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 26 August 1926," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0168	1926	Harry Davies & Co., Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harry Davies & Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations		Smith, "21 April 1926," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0103	1926	Harry Davies & Co., Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harry Davies and Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Paper	Students, Spring/Summer catalogue	Smith, "15 September 1926," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 26 August 1926," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0105	1926	Mildura High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Lettering	Mildura High School	Mildura, Vic	Lettering	selection, binding & inscribing of their school/ prizes	Smith, "18 November 1925," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 20 November 1926," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0102	1926	Decorative shoe designs	Shoes Designs	R Graham and Sons (Graham Bros Shoes)	Ballarat?, Vic	Paper	Students, designs and 'decorative patterns' for ladies shoes.	Smith, "15 September 1926," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 26 August 1926," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0169	1926	Tyler & Co., Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Tyler & Co.	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations		Smith, "21 April 1926," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0106	1926	Warragul High School, Decorated and inscribed prize books.	Book Lettering	Warragul High School	Warragul, Vic	Lettering	selection, binding & inscribing of their school/ prizes	Smith, "18 November 1925," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. "Courier, 20 November 1926," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0108	1927	Echuca High School, Tablet	Tablet	Echuca High School	Echuca, Vic	Metal		
JobID -0171	1927	Harris, Powell & Sandford, Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harris, Powell & Sandford	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	"Advanced Students"	Smith, "23 March 1927," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0172	1927	Harris, Powell & Sandford, Catalogue Illustrations	Catalogue Illustrations	Harris, Powell & Sandford	Ballarat, Vic	Illustrations	also offered a 2 pound prize to design the cover, 7 competitors.	Smith, "28 September 1927," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0109	1927	Mayor Solomon, Geelong, Metal cup	Metal Cup	Mayor Solomon, Geelong	Geelong, Vic	Metal		"Courier, 8 October 1927," SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0107	1927	Murumbeena District Schools Association Sport Shield	Sport Shield	Murumbeena District Schools Association	Murumbeena, Vic	Metal		Smith, "28 September 1927," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929. Courier, 1 October 1927, SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0110	1927	Oakley District School Sport Shield	Sport Shield	Oakleigh District School Sports	Oakleigh, Vic	Metal		Courier, 8 October 1927, SMB Cuttings.
JobID -0173	1927	"Mural" tablet	"Mural" Tablet	Unknown			Enquiries for two art metal Mural tablets.	Smith, "28 September 1927," Art Principal's Reports 1918-1929.
JobID -0174	1931	Designs and illustrations for Vic Education Department "school papers".	"School papers" Designs and Illustrations	Education Department	Melbourne, Vic	Designs	Possibly Education gazettes? Students were given the illustrative printing blocks so they could make their own reproductions if they wanted to.	Smith, "18 November 1931," Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940.

ID	Year	Commission	Object/s	Client Name	Client Location	Material	NOTES	REFERENCE
JobID -0175	1932	Ballarat City Council, Tourist Bureau and Publicity Committee, Poster designs (pitch)	Posters Designs	Ballarat City Council, Tourist Bureau and Publicity Committee	Ballarat, Vic	Designs,	Competitive design comp. Senior students producing a set of "Poster Stamp" designs for Tulloch & Kings for advertising Ballarat. Remunerated if successful. Designs being submitted via the Tourist Bureau and Publicity Committee to the City Council.	Smith, "19 October 1932," Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940.
JobID -0176	1934	City of Ballarat, Parade float designs	Parade Floats Designs	City of Ballarat, Clerk	Ballarat, Vic	Designs	Designs for a couple of 'floats' to represent Ballarat in the Centenary Procession. To be made by Ballarat residents in Melbourne.	Smith, "16 August 1934," Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940.
JobID -0177	1935	"Table Talk", Magazine illustrations	Magazine Illustrations	"Table Talk"	Melbourne, Vic	Illustrations	Mona Rogerson, employed to create illustrations for a significant publication while still a student,	Smith, "28 August 1935," Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940. "The Silent Father." Table Talk (Melbourne, Vic.). 29 August 1935.
JobID -0086	1936	King George V Memorial sculpture	Memorial Sculpture	King George V Memorial Committee	Ballarat, Vic	Designs, modelled clay, Bronze	King George Memorial. Four proposals (at large scale) presented to a meeting of citizens, who selected one. Victor Greenhalgh, Coburn and Johnston.	Smith, "15 July 1936," Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940. Smith, "16 September 1936," Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940. SMB Annual Report 1936, 17 February 1937.
JobID -0178	1938	"Back to Charleton" Logo design	Logo Design	"Back to Charleton" committee.	Charlton, Vic	Design	Seeking a "badge" (identifier, logo mark).	Smith, "20 July 1938," Art Principal's Reports 1929-1940.

Also available Federation.figshare.com

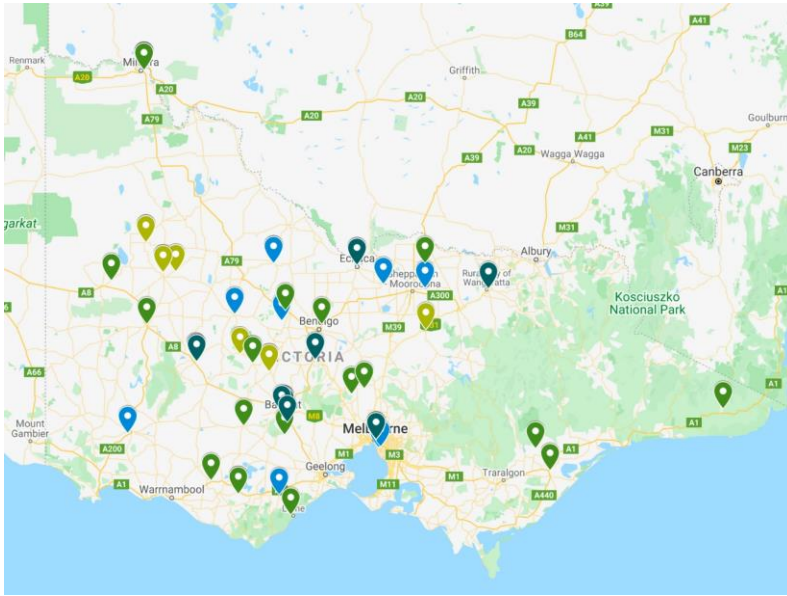
DOI: 10.25955/604d8db29db13

Location maps indicating Ballarat Technical Art School commissions

The following maps can be accessed live via

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1W0NTm69kC0qleU_xV0sUshAWU6Yeygsg&usp=sharing

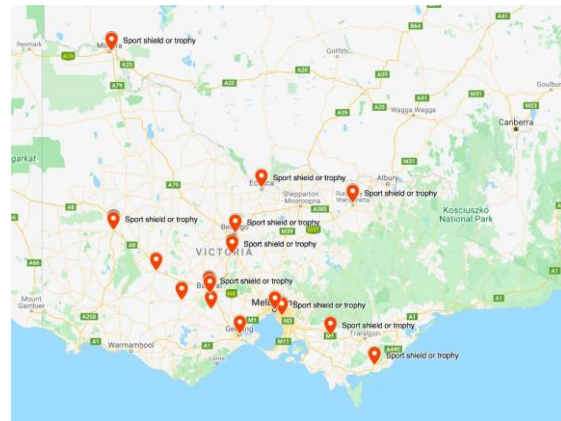
Honour books and cases, honour boards and tablets



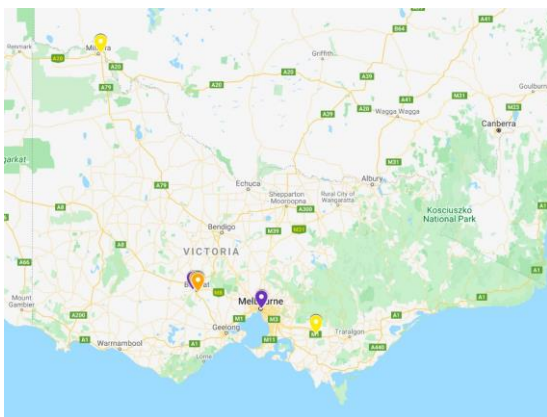
Designs and illustrations



Sporting shields and trophies



Other commissions, including lettering, inscriptions and stained glass



BTAS Commissions
 Victorian commissions undertaken by students and staff of the Ballarat Technical Art School between 1907 and 1940.

- 📍 Sport shields and trophies
- 📍 Honour book and case (22)
- 📍 Honour board (18)
- 📍 Tablet (12)
- 📍 Honour book (10)
- 📍 Design and illustrations (19)
- 📍 Lettering or inscription (8)
- 📍 Other commission (7)
- 📍 Stained glass window (6)

Figure A.7 Maps indicating approximate locations of BTAS commissions.

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Amendment Approval

Human Research Ethics Committee



Principal Researcher:	Dr Carole Wilson
Other/Student Researcher/s:	Elise Whetter
School/Section:	FEA
Project Number:	C15-012
Project Title:	Applied art and design at the Ballarat Technical Art School in the early twentieth century (TBC).
For the period:	13/10/2015 to 30/03/2021

Quote the Project No: C15-012 in all correspondence regarding this application.

Amendment Summary: N/A
Extension: The project has been extended to 30 March 2021
Personnel: Dr Jennifer Jones-O'Neill has been removed from the project and Dr Carole Wilson has been added to the project as the Principal Researcher

Please note: Approval has been granted to undertake this project in accordance with the proposal and amendments submitted for the period listed above. Ongoing ethics approval is contingent upon adherence to the Standard Conditions of Approval on Page 2 of this notification.

COMPLIANCE REPORTING TO HREC:

Annual report/s due:

13 October 2018

13 October 2019

13 October 2020

Final report due:

30 April 2021

The combined Annual/Final report template can be found at:

<http://federation.edu.au/research-and-innovation/research-support/ethics/human-ethics/human-ethics3>

Fiona Koop
Ethics Officer
24 April 2018

Please note the standard conditions of approval on Page 2:

STANDARD CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC.
2. Advise (email: research.ethics@federation.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project.
3. Where approval has been given subject to the submission of copies of documents such as letters of support or approvals from third parties, these are to be provided to the Ethics Office prior to research commencing at each relevant location.
4. Make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes. A combined Amendment request template is available for the following:
 - Request for Amendments
 - Request for Extension. Note: Extensions cannot be granted retrospectively.
 - Changes to Personnel
5. Annual Progress reports on the anniversary of the approval date and a Final report within a month of completion of the project are to be submitted to the Ethics Officer by the due date each year for the project to have continuing approval.
6. If, for any reason, the project does not proceed or is discontinued, advise the committee by completing a Final report form.
7. Notify the Ethics Office of any changes in contact details including address, phone number and email address for any member of the research team.
8. The HREC may conduct random audits and / or require additional reports concerning the research project.

Failure to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and with the conditions of approval can result in suspension or withdrawal of approval.

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