

ART ADVISORY E-BULLETIN

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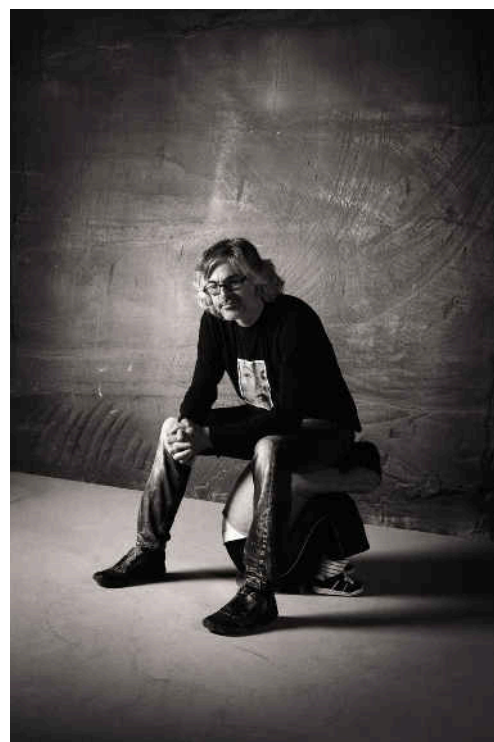


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MONA Special Edition

The Collector



Founded by Tasmanian philanthropist and art collector David Walsh, MONA is Australia's largest private museum. Opened in January 2011, MONA has rocked the established view of traditional museums. In fact, MONA isn't just a museum, it is a lifestyle and experience like no other, leaving visitors wanting more. Visitors can eat, sleep, drink, wear, see, feel, pray and even be laid to rest at MONA (There is already at least one person who has secured their place for eternity here). This extraordinary achievement is the fulfillment of David Walsh's desire to build something that was unlike other museums, something unrecognisable – the anti-museum. While wandering through MONA one cannot help but feel in awe of one's surroundings. The architectural feat and carefully curated \$100m art collection hidden on this small island with a population of only 500,000 is extraordinary.

David Walsh takes fulfilling one's dreams to another level altogether. While also

living at the museum, having built an apartment within the main building, it is not uncommon to see him walking around the galleries telling visitors not to use their flash.

With over 1,000,000 visitors, his vision has made him almost singlehandedly responsible for a major cultural regeneration, saving the Tasmanian economy and the world is taking notice. Lonely Planet chose Hobart as one of the ten best cities to visit in the world. They cited MONA as the reason. The Sunday Times in London described MONA as the "most exciting addition to the Australian cultural landscape since the Sydney Opera House" (built in 1958) and the recent BBC documentary on Australian art finished with MONA as the vanguard of Australian art internationally.

The Collection

Walsh is the first to admit that his collecting strategy is not very cohesive. In general though, his collection can be divided into three fairly loose categories: antiquities, Australian modernist painting and contemporary conceptual art. The name of the museum he has built to house his collection sums it up well though.

The Australian Modernist paintings include the works of artists Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Brett Whiteley and John Brack amongst others, whilst in the contemporary conceptual art category you'll find the works of Paul McCarthy, Erwin Wurm, Damien Hirst and Jenny Saville amongst others. This last category is by far the most controversial and includes works such as Chris Ofili's infamous *The Holy Virgin Mary*, made in part using elephant dung. Another is Wim Delvoye's *Cloaca Professional*, a large machine which imitates the human digestive system and even excretes on a daily basis in front of bemused visitors - another reminder that visitors should expect the unexpected when visiting MONA.

The Museum

Sitting on an 8 acre peninsula on the Derwent River, 12km north of central Hobart, The Museum of Old and New Art is an award winning architectural feat. It was designed by Melbourne architect Nonda Katsalidis, although Walsh was integral to its design. His brief made clear that the art was to be "discovered rather than showed off, so that the connection (or not) with the viewer is built from personal experience rather than something imposed."

This goal is in part responsible for the museum being built under as opposed to above ground. 35,000 cubic metres of material were removed from the site to make way for a three-tier underground gallery that takes visitors 17m below ground level. Far from turning the 6,000 square metre gallery space into a white cube, the final result includes living sandstone walls that still flow with water when it rains and a massive 65 tonne three-storey Corten steel stairway running down the centre. It also has two bars, a water-covered gallery floor, a waterfall installation and a crimson velvet-lined gallery with gilded walls. From the outside, MONA is striking, using many of the same materials to create a strong link between the interior and exterior. Mostly made up of Corten steel and concrete waffle forms (approximately 2100 were used in total), there is even a rooftop tennis court. It is true that David is an avid tennis player but the court is there as a means to distract visitors before entering in an attempt to wipe their perceived notion of a museum as clear from their mind as possible.

From early in his collecting days, Walsh has enjoyed sharing and displaying his collection. But he was adamant to create an environment that was free of any expectations and certainly unconventional when it came to traditional museum design. He wanted his visitors to go on their own personal adventures, not be led by arrows in one direction or another. One way of ensuring this was to not put any labels on the walls. Instead visitors walk around with an adapted iPhone to determine your location within the museum and give you information accordingly. The device also allows for visitors to "like" or "hate" an artwork - Walsh is adamant that each visitor should be allowed his opinion.



Upcoming Auction Highlights

The Archive of Augustin and Narcisse Dupré Bonham's, New York, 2nd April 2014



The archive of Augustin Dupré, which has been kept most secretively up until now, is coming up for sale this April. The artist's son, Narcisse inherited the archive and subsequently passed it on to his son, who lacking any descendents gifted it to the family of the current rightful owners. The collection is made up of pictures, drawings and sketches; manuscripts and documentation; medallions, coins and numismatic material; books and folio and a series of miscellaneous items including a lock of Dupré's hair and his Knight of the Legion of Honour medal. Of huge historical importance, it is anticipated that this collection will have wide appeal and of particular interest to British, French and American collectors, as well as institutions and museums worldwide.

Dupré (1748-1833) was a student of the celebrated sculptor David, under whom he engraved his first medals. The need for monetary reform following the French Revolution

saw him become the 'Graveur General des Monnaies' at the Paris Mint in 1791 and some of his designs were still recognisable on French Franc coins up until the introduction of the Euro in 2000. In addition to Napoleon, Dupré was also working for the New America where the likes of, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin commissioned him to design medals. In fact, it is Dupré who designed the American diplomatic medal, for which the stunning drawings can be found in this archive.

Although a niche one, the coin market is strong and often undervalued. The Knight Frank Wealth Report 2014 showed that its value is increasing 10% year on year and over the last ten years coins have proved more successful than other collectibles such as wine, jewellery and even art. After London and Paris, where the works were on show at the Grand Palais, the archive, a true piece of numismatic heritage, will be shown in New York prior to the sale, where it is estimated to sell for \$300,000 - \$500,000.

For further information: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/21635/>

The Gustav Leonhardt Collection, Property from the Bartolotti House, Amsterdam Sotheby's, London, 29th April 2014



Another rare collection to be sold in April is that of the celebrated musician and conductor Gustav Leonhardt (1928-2012). Taken from his magnificent canal house in Amsterdam the works, including some Old Masters, created a perfect 18th Century backdrop for his music.



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Images, in the order in which they appear, courtesy of:
all images related to David Walsh and Mona courtesy of Mona
Museum; www.bonhams.com; www.sothebys.com; 'The
Annointment of David', Paolo Veronese,
www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Art Calendar Highlights

Art Basel Hong Kong

Hong Kong

15th - 18th May

www.artbasel.com/en/hong-kong

Veronese: Magnificence in Renaissance Venice

National Gallery, London

19th March - 15th June

www.nationalgallery.org.uk

The Red Queen

MONA, Hobart

Until 21st April

www.mona.net.au

Paris Photo Los Angeles

Los Angeles

25th - 27th April

www.parisphoto.com

Artist Textiles: Picasso to Warhol

Fashion and Textile Museum, London

Until 17th May

www.ftmlondon.org

Odilon Redon

Beyeler Foundation, Basel

Until 18th May

www.fondationbeyeler.ch

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