

AbaF

Corporate art collections

Why corporations invest in art?

- Corporate collections are no longer seen simply as a way of decorating a company's foyer, boardroom or offices. Instead, they are seen as a marketing tool that assists in defining a corporation's brand or reputation. In turn, this assists in the retention and attraction of high calibre staff and clients to the organisation.
- Companies that invest in contemporary art seek artworks which symbolise their brand, reputation and profile.
- Many of the organisations that focus on collecting contemporary art are in competitive industries where it is necessary to project an image of being a forward thinking, dynamic and progressive market leader in order to attract the best staff and clients.

How corporate collections are created?

- Most corporate art collections are curated and managed by either an art consultant or collection manager. The way in which the collection is selected and acquired varies from company to company. Some corporate collections receive advice from a committee. Committees often include company executives. Some take advice from public gallery curators and other art experts.
- Corporate collections are more dynamic than in the past. Often corporate collections are being toured nationally, published in catalogues and art magazines, and included in public gallery exhibitions. In an effort to engage with staff and clients, corporations will often organise artist talks and information sessions.
- Corporations select their collection art works from a range of sources. These include commercial galleries, Artist-run Spaces and collectives. In some instances, the collection committee commissions an artist to create a work specifically for a particular site or purpose.

How to approach a corporate collection?

- Before approaching a corporate collection curator or art consultant it is important to research the company and understand its brand, marketing and reputation needs.
- You then need to approach the collection curator or art consultant in much the same way that you would approach a commercial gallery for representation.
- It is vital to have a clear understanding of why your work would fit in to a particular corporate collection. Be clear about how the inclusion of your work would benefit both the company and its collection.
- Prepare your approach and proposal well. Include a clear and up to date C.V. and good documentation of your work. It is useful to include copies of reviews of your work that have been published in art magazines and newspapers, as well as any exhibition catalogues.

Other considerations

- What does the company do – what are its values? What is its community profile?
- What are the company's objectives and future plans? What is its mission?
- What is its brand profile – public perceptions of the organisation and their products?
- Who are the corporation's clients and how will your work appeal to them?
- How is the company managed and who is on its board and management team?

- Who is the collection curator and what is their background?
- What artists are represented in the collection at present?
- Do they have a collection policy or statement?
- How do they select work? Is there a selection committee and what is the process?
- What do they need from you in order to consider your work?
- Some companies are not focused on building collections and choose to engage with contemporary visual artists in other ways. This could be through developing exhibition spaces, art awards and prizes, and hosting temporary exhibitions. It is worthwhile investigating and becoming involved in these avenues as they can raise your profile and may bring your work to the attention of the corporate curator. Awards, prizes and temporary exhibitions can also introduce your work to new audiences.

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