

World Cup arts initiatives flounder

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Johannesburg news website *The Daily Maverick*. "But the new, the innovative and the daring will be locked out yet again."

Without the pledged resources, Naidoo scrapped original plans to host a football-related art show and instead turned his attention towards a South African art retrospective, "From Pierneef to Gugulective" (until mid September), which includes artists such as Marlene Dumas and William Kentridge.

Similar issues plagued the Johannesburg Art Gallery, said chief curator Antoinette Murdoch: "No one returned our requests for funding. There simply was no budget for the World

scarce funding on the government's poor timing. "The fundamental issue is that the planning for it was hopelessly late," said Gaylard. "The national department recruited a senior manager to take on the responsibility in July of last year, when they should have been recruiting them two years ago."

According to Steven Sack, the City of Johannesburg's director of arts, culture and heritage, two art shows have benefited from government funding. "Space: Currencies in Contemporary African Art", at Johannesburg's Museum Africa until 11 July, features work from 25 artists of African descent. Despite receiving R5m (\$650,000) from the

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Cup. Our budget has stayed the same for the past five years." Yet the publicly funded institutions' woes extend far beyond this summer. According to Murdoch, there are currently 33 staff vacancies. "When people resigned we were not allowed to rehire," she said. "We are functioning on a skeleton staff with a lot of passion, but we need to fundraise for everything we do." The gallery has also decided against a football-related show and will instead feature contemporary Afro-Cuban art.

Joseph Gaylard, the director of the Johannesburg office of the Visual Arts Network, blames

city, according to Theminkosi Goniwe, the co-curator of "Space", funding had to be supplemented with sponsorship.

"In Context", a collaboration between the Goodman Gallery, the British Council and other cultural organisations (until 17 July), was also, said Sack, one of the only commercial entities to receive any subsidy from the government. Although the show received an additional R200,000 (\$26,500) from the city of Johannesburg, it "would have happened with or without that money", said a Goodman spokeswoman.

Marisa Mazria Katz

Porcelain robberies

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which leads Ellis to suspect that many have gone abroad, primarily to Europe, where Meissen and Sèvres is highly collectable. Items may well be sold at large antiques fairs in England, usually within a few days of the theft, and then passed to unsuspecting Continental dealers.

Crime specialists are surprised that porcelain is being targeted, since it is extremely fragile, making it difficult to remove safely during a raid. "Few burglars carry bubble-wrap," notes Ellis. The

legitimate porcelain market is relatively stable, so the rising thefts are not the result of a booming market and the reason for the spate of incidents remains something of a mystery.

There have been very few arrests for the recent thefts. "British police forces are run on a county basis," says Ellis. "No force has an overview of similar crimes occurring elsewhere, so investigations are limited and local. Little progress has been made in tackling this surge in porcelain thefts."

Martin Bailey

Australia

Should this Keith Haring mural be saved?

Melbourne work is last surviving wall painting by the late artist's own hand



Haring's 1984 mural

LONDON. "It's the only permanent thing that I did while I was in Australia," said the late US artist Keith Haring, after completing a large-scale mural in a Melbourne suburb in 1984. Now the city's cultural community is banding together to preserve the country's last surviving large-scale mural by the artist—and the last in the world painted entirely by his hand. Representatives from the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), the city of Yarra (the inner Melbourne municipality where the mural is located) and the University of Melbourne recently organised a public forum to garner support for its restoration.

Haring painted the mural on the wall of the former Collingwood Technical College at the instigation of John Buckley, then director of ACCA. He invited Haring to Australia and co-ordinated "temporary", large-scale mural projects at the National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and Haring undertook several smaller mural projects. The Collingwood mural, which features a series of Haring's characteristic dancing figures as well as a massive caterpillar-like monster, was the first of his murals created using a cherry-picker. This device

allowed him to work on a far larger scale and its success led the artist to seek other equipment such as cranes and window-washing scaffolding in the execution of other murals.

According to ACCA curator Hannah Mathews, when the mural was last stabilised in 1996, it was estimated that a tiny sum of A\$200 (\$178) was needed annually to maintain the work. A

combination of factors including pollution and time has left the mural in its current degraded state. Some estimate that it could cost around A\$25,000 (\$22,000) to stabilise, with an additional A\$1,000 (\$900) a year for maintenance. Although the issue of whether to re-paint the mural is up for debate, all parties agree that the work needs stabilisation as soon as possible to prevent

further surface lifting and cracking of the paint.

In 2004, Yarra successfully lobbied to have the mural added to the heritage registry. Noting that the building is owned by the Victorian State Government and that the mural is listed, Mathews said: "It is our own government who has lapsed in its duty of care."

NGV curator Ted Gott said that the murals Haring created during his trip "were important testing grounds for his subsequent and famous works on equivalent or larger scales worldwide; and as such, are seminal to both artistic development and future global fame".

Yarra mayor Jane Garrett said: "The mural is a part of Yarra and inner-Melbourne's cultural and physical landscape—and we want to ensure it stays that way." She added: "Following the forum, [the] Council [is setting up] a working group, which will seek to include representatives from Skills Victoria, Heritage Victoria, the arts community and other stakeholders, to discuss the mural's future and come to a consensus on the most appropriate way to preserve it."

Emily Sharpe

Bye bye to Banksy's rat...



When the residents of a Melbourne street complained to the council about vermin, they didn't mean Banksy's rat. In 2003, the British street artist visited Hosier Lane and stencilled a small parachuting rodent onto a wall. In late April the City of Melbourne sent in the cleaners, getting rid of the rats that had been scavenging through the residents' rubbish bins as well as painting over Banksy's work of art. Much of Hosier Lane is council-approved for street art, and

tourists flock to see the regularly changing images, but Banksy happened to choose a piece of non-approved wall, which led to what Lord Mayor Robert Doyle called an "honest mistake" by council workers. Doyle said he wasn't sure whether to invite Banksy back to re-stencil the wall, or even how to get in touch with him. "We are at that interface between established artist and anonymous subculture, which is quite a weird place to be," he said, but "I don't think we should be comparing it, as some people have today, to the *Mona Lisa*". E.F.

A Voyage through Cavafy's Alexandria
Watercolours by Anna Boghiguan

14 May - 19 September 2010



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