



The artists first day of their residency, 2011

Taronga AIR (Artist in Residence Program)

The 2010 and 2011 Taronga Foundation Artists in Residence Program followed on from the inaugural Zoo AiR which took place at Taronga Zoo in 2009. The residencies ran from February until April with artists donating an artwork at the end of the residency period. Works were then auctioned by Sotheby's Australia, with all proceeds supporting the Taronga Foundation.

The residency aim was to raise money for the Taronga Foundation while at the same time offering unique experiences and inspiring surroundings to some of our most highly regarded painters, sculptors and photographers. It was trialled for the first time in 2009 and the response from participating artists was immediate and exciting. Many had not visited the Zoo since childhood and were delighted at the changes that had taken place; the conservation focus, world class exhibits and education endeavours.

Artists began the residency with an overnight stay at the Zoo's Roar and Snore campsite, meeting the Keepers and their charges, exploring the Zoo after dark, sleeping in luxury tents and feeding the animals in the morning. Artists were provided with a special pass to visit and work as much as they wish over a three-month period, including access before opening hours. Each artist agreed to donate a work. Each year artworks were auctioned at Sotheby's Australia with more than 50 works, including studies and sketches going under the hammer. All monies raised supported the Taronga Foundation and scientific research.

Background and development

- Foundation fund-raiser - annual charity auction and exhibition
- 22 leading artists invited to dinner and a sleepover at the Zoo
- Each artist is offered three months residency and provided with open access to the zoo plus special behind the scenes access (up close and personal) with the animal of your choice. The participants were given total artistic freedom
- Development more community awareness of the scientific research done by Taronga Zoo (i.e. Tasmanian Devil and Black Rhino)
Engage with the Zoo Foundation's high net-worth individuals
- Enhance and develop comprehensive media strategy

Historic connections

Taronga Zoo has historic connections with the arts community, being adjacent to the site of one of the artists' camps that sprung up around the Mosman foreshores in the late 19th century.

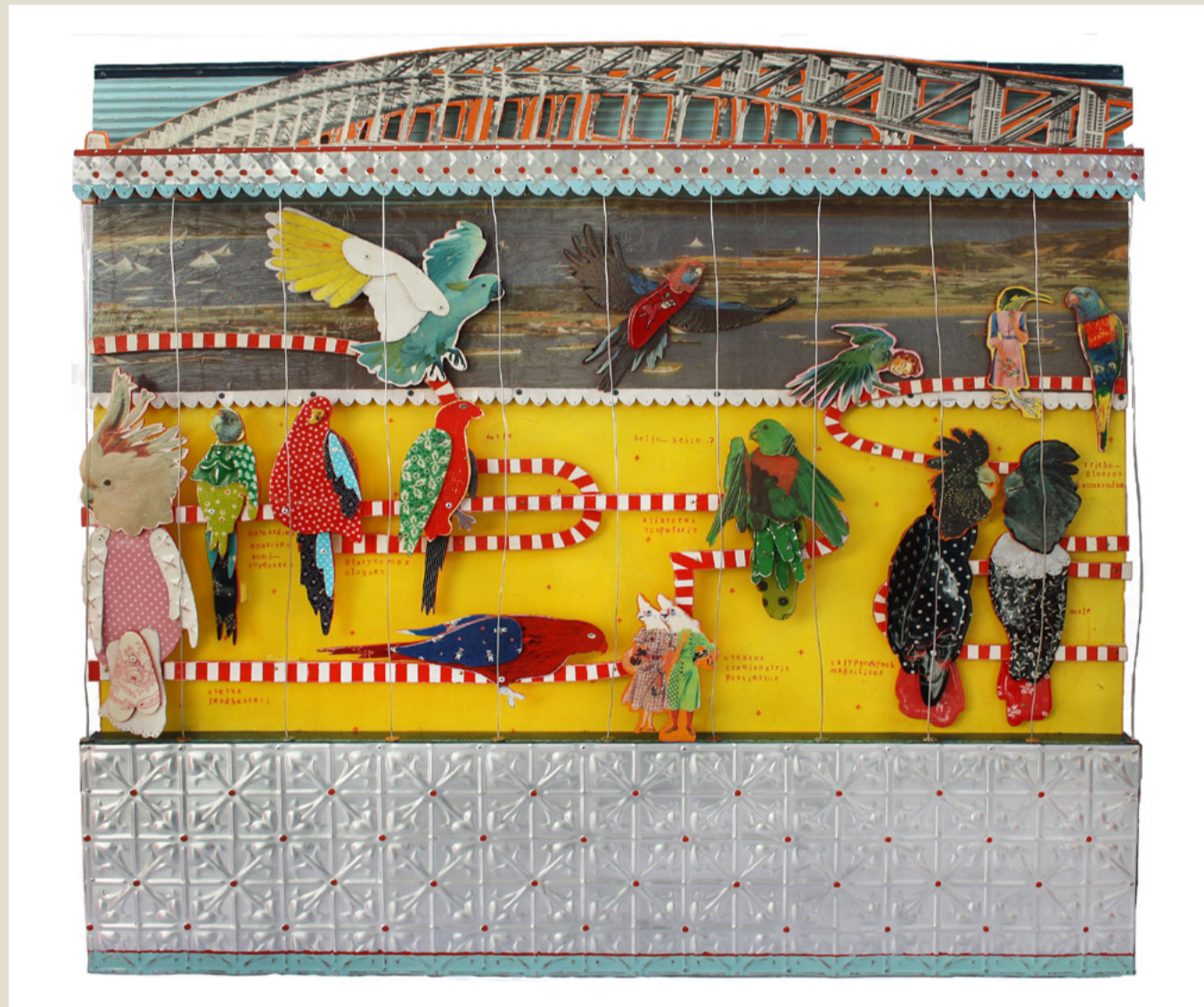
"En plein air" (outdoor) painters Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts established a significant camp at Curlw Cove in the 1880s, next to what is now Taronga Zoo. Their paintings of the harbour and its surrounds are now cultural icons.



Michael Herron in action



Song Ling



The Strutt Sister's relief sculpture



Reg on the hunt for images

Deliverables: My role

- Choose the artists - negotiate the gift of as major work at the end of the residence. Although, in the end there was no binding or legal obligation attached to the residence ... run on good will.
- Work with the publicist and Head of the Foundation to maximise media coverage e.g radio, television and print. Liaise between the media and key artists.
- Help organise the exhibition and charity auction (Sothebys)
- Brief artists on what to expect and how to get special access to particular animals.

Project Outcomes

- Over the three years of the project we raised (after costs) approx \$330,000 for research.
- Significantly raised the profile of Taronga Foundation and its role in supporting scientific research.
- Reestablished historic artistic links with artists and the art community.

- Highlighted the contribution modern Zoos make to support endangered species and biodiversity
- The media exposure generated by the project had an estimated value of \$1.5m.



Rew Hanks



Peter Kingston making some new friends

Wendy Sharpe
Gouache on paper
Represented by
King Street Gallery
on William