

## Queensland Art Gallery

Address Stanley Place, South Bank, Brisbane , Qld

Practice Robin Gibson & Partners

Designed 1973 Completed 1982

History & Description Located southwest of the Brisbane CBD, overlooking Queen Elizabeth II Park to the northeast & the Brisbane River beyond, the Queensland Art Gallery was the first building designed in the extensive Queensland Cultural Centre. The gallery originated from a limited competition in 1973. Soon after, in 1975, the state government resolved to construct the much larger integrated Queensland Cultural Centre & to include a performing arts centre, museum & library. The site, adjacent to the busy Grey Street & railway line to the south west, was extended along the river bank. The complex of three buildings was designed by Robin Gibson in conjunction with the Queensland Department of Works.

The gallery, constructed externally & internally in bush-hammered off-white insitu concrete, has a stepped horizontal form opening out to the river & the view of the city to the north east while turning its back to Grey Street. The horizontal theme is enhanced with extended planting along the 'terraces' & the longitudinal water feature, the Water Mall, which crosses the site, extending through & beyond the building. Water is introduced as a series of audible & kinetic elements externally, which contrasts with the more placid setting of the three-level high central interior space of the Water Mall. This impressive three-dimensional central space separates the galleries from the administration, education & library areas & is naturally lit through a glazed roof supported by 'pergola like' pre-cast concrete beams. The galleries overlook the garden terraces on three sides, some with permanent sculptures, through frameless glazing. The design of the gallery was all inclusive with the architects responsible for the interior design, including furniture. The palette of materials is limited to concrete components, frameless glass, travertine & parquet floors, & bronze metal work.

Gibson's work is not of the monumental scale, which so often characterises this typology & its more intimate spaces are softly lit & egalitarian in their intimacy. Gibson has stated that: 'The concept to create this vibrant working relationship between public & artist emerges as an architecture of spaces contained between walls, floors & ceilings of minimal colour content which flow & interlock internally & externally to create an environment for people which is fresh, original and vital.' The Queensland Art Gallery was awarded the Sir Zelman Cowen Award in 1982 & the Queensland Chapter 25 Year Award in 2010. A new glass entry was opened in 2006, designed by Robin Gibson & Partners. Robin Gibson was awarded the RAIA Gold Medal in 1989.

Statement of Significance The Queensland Art Gallery is an excellent example of a building that demonstrates a theme of modern architecture with planning of cubic forms of large areas of blank plain wall surfaces of insitu-concrete & extensive glazing complemented by ordered landscaping by one of Australia's notable architects. The impressive setting & the architecture, which includes a play of three-dimensional interior space, combine to produce a building of integrity, illustrative of modern architecture. The place has added significance in that it was the first component of the Queensland Cultural Centre & was designed as its showpiece.

Criteria Applicable **N1** – Significant heritage value in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class or period of design.  
**N2.** Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics  
**N5.** Having a special association with the life or works of an architect of significant importance in our history



South east view towards entry.



South view along Water Mall.  
Source: R. Riddel.



Central interior Water Mall & glazed roof. Source: Gibson Architects.



Model of Queensland Cultural Centre, 1985.  
Source: Richard Stringer, QPAC.



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