

**NAVIGATING THE INTERNAL LANDSCAPE:
AN ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF DISEASE
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AM
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
ACADEMY GALLERY, INVERESK, SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2016**

Good afternoon and thank you for your introduction Professor Gerahgty.

I would like to begin by making a number of acknowledgements – they're particularly important in the context of this unique exhibition.

The first is that "Navigating the Internal Landscape: an Artistic Interpretation of Disease" is a partnership between Cancer Council Tasmania and the University of Tasmania. I do know that the Council's CEO Penny Egan and her staff and clients have worked closely with the exhibition project leader Dr Bywaters in bringing this exhibition to life.

Secondly, the exhibition is part of the Academy Gallery's Active Research Program. This Program aims to exhibit the research undertaken by the University of Tasmania as a global educational provider. And this particular exhibition has been funded by an Art Business Law HUB Inter Disciplinary Grant. These grants are aimed at exploring the opportunities of combining the visual arts and sciences as a creative tool for academic research.

Thirdly, I offer my congratulations to the exhibition's Inter-Disciplinary Curatorial Team:

Dr Malcom Bywaters — Tasmanian College of the Arts;

Dr Raj Eri — School of Health Sciences;

Dr Tony Huang — School of Engineering;

Dr Kim Lehman — Tasmanian School of Business and Economics; and

Dr Frances Fan — Faculty of Education.

I also acknowledge the President of the Academy Gallery volunteer Club Georgie Parker, and the gallery volunteer Club, who have done such excellent work behind the scenes.

And I know that author Peter Timms is here and preparing the catalogue in time for the exhibition's public opening to the public on Monday. So well done in advance, Peter!

May I also say how much I enjoyed Dr Susan Collins's performance of Bach's 'Chaconne'. It is a special delight to have all the arts represented here today, visual, music and theatre. The wonderful power of music as a source of health and emotional well being has been superbly displayed by Susan performance.

As regards this fabulous and thought-provoking collection of art around us, how fitting it is that all 21 of the artists have a direct University of Tasmania link, either as staff, past staff, alumni, or in some other relationship. This tells me that we have many very fine practitioners working in the visual arts in Tasmania today. And it invokes their collective desire to want to be part of what you might call an academic exercise that is also highly practical, namely working with Cancer Council Tasmania, whose work saves lives.

Indeed I can do no better than quote from the Curatorial Team's rationale for the exhibition:

"Our exhibition will, by creative expression, explore and suggest new ways in which to understand cancer ... Themes investigated consider the beginnings of cancerous growth; diagnosis and biopsy; the invasion of malignant and benign tumours; the fear of pain and disease and how this can prevent early intervention such as having a mammogram; what is it like to live with an illness combined with the prohibitive effect of gaining access to expensive medication and the significant impact upon a person's life, family, friend's and loved ones. 'Navigating the Internal Landscape' will through artistic visualisation contribute toward the greater discussion, led by academic research, for the community to do more to understand cancer; increase the awareness and importance of preventative strategies and improve patient outcomes."¹

As the Patron of Cancer Council Tasmania I have associated with Penny and her colleagues on numerous occasions – not least when we put a giant blue teacup in the Government House front paddock to drum up support for the 2015 Big Morning Tea! It caused as much comment as when our agisted cows are nowhere to be seen! But my experience with the Council is that Tasmanians want to know about cancer and they also want to know how they can help those who are afflicted.

Which reinforces for me the hope that this exhibition will prove far-reaching in its aims of broadening discussion of the way we view the disease. And I congratulate every artist for participating, and with a subject matter that may even have proved somewhat confronting for some of you.

Of course, art is famous for pushing or ignoring boundaries, in the way that it comments upon the political, social, cultural and moral fabric of societies. But I should think that disease is not often tackled artistically. And as a result, as artists, you may with your work here have in some instances transcended your own artistic boundaries, as you have worked towards a clinical or medical or biological endpoint.

As we all know, you have a fearless predecessor in the great Leonardo da Vinci, whose obsession with human anatomy led to a great body of drawings described as arguably the most exhaustive and insightful campaign of anatomical investigation ever waged in the history of medical science.² That's a not bad rap for an artist – although he dissected more than 30 corpses, which you'd probably want to avoid emulating! And as Leonardo used the dissection of the human body for his scientific research you will see displayed in the exhibition tissue samples used by our University of Tasmania scientist and medical practitioners for research and educational purposes. A powerful reminder of the human cost of cancer and its impact on our community. But having said that, the art works here are intimately about the body and what cancer does.

As part of the Academy Gallery Community Outreach Program the gallery will be holding a special Art Forum afternoon of lectures and discussion next Thursday where artists, UTAS scientists, medical practitioners, Cancer

Council staff, cancer sufferers and carers will come together to discuss the impact of cancer in our community. I encourage you all to attend the afternoon of lectures and have your say on the impact of cancer and its effect on our health and well-being. I understand that the exhibition will tour to the UTAS Cradle coast campus and I thank Inspire Australia for funding the travel of this challenging exhibition.

By way of concluding, I would like to quote from just three of the Artist Statements to illustrate this —

From Lauren Black: “Lately I’ve been getting acquainted with a certain pathology specimen ... this section of body once resided in a woman. She was 37. Transferring her to my paper it’s as though I’m touching her.”

From Joanna Gair: “I’m not great at facing up to my Father’s disease; I find it difficult to watch his demise close up. Be that as it may, I have chosen to mark this space with the indelible fibres of his earliest being, and in doing so I bring him with me.”

From Kim Lehman: “Every day for 30 days Fiona would mark on a gridded paper diagram of a female figure those parts of her body where there is pain ... Those ‘maps’ would then be interpreted into 30 images that I would use to form the base of a video work ... I would like you to see the emotion in what I have done: romance, fear, optimism, and intimacy amongst others. And if you listen carefully you can hear Fiona’s heartbeat — at the end of the day, I am just happy she is alive.”

To the artists, the Academy Gallery, the University more broadly and to Cancer Council Tasmania, congratulations to you all and I have much pleasure in declaring open “Navigating the Internal Landscape: an Artistic Interpretation of Disease”.

Thank you.

¹ <http://www.events.utas.edu.au/2016/february/navigating-the-internal-landscape-an-artistic-interpretation-of-disease>, accessed 16 February 2016.

² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/leonardo-da-vinci/10202124/Leonardo-da-Vinci-Anatomy-of-an-artist.html>, accessed 16 February 2016.