



# The Impact of Establishing Professional Art and Cultural Institutions on Australian Art Companies

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## Abstract

This paper mainly investigates whether Australia requires a professional traditional art and cultural institution to enhance its cultural diplomacy. And the benefits and risks of establishing such an institution for Australian art companies. This article mainly utilizes qualitative research methods. From the necessity of establishing professional traditional art and cultural institutions in Australia to the benefits and risks for Australian art companies after the establishment of these art institutions, these three aspects have been systematically analyzed and studied. Through the analysis and research of the relevant literature. This article argues that Australia needs to establish a professional art and cultural institution to enhance its cultural diplomacy. The establishment of professional art and cultural diplomacy institutions means that they need to face more competition from similar art companies in Australia and other countries. Simultaneously, they also have more opportunities for development. The risks and opportunities for Australian art companies occur simultaneously.

## Keywords

Art company, cultural institution, Australia, cultural policy

## 1. Introduction

Evolving and progressive world of art and culture. Cultural soft power has increasingly become an important part of the cultural diplomacy of various countries today. For example, Britain, France, Japan, China, and other countries have established special cultural diplomacy institutions to promote and support their own traditional culture and art. And to increase the popularity of domestic traditional culture and art on the international stage. "Almost all governments today support some funding towards promoting their international political and economic agendas through cultural activities overseas: commonly referred to as part of 'cultural diplomacy' or 'soft power'" (Alison, 2022). As Alison said, "We have never had an international cultural agency, and the Federal government avenues we do have for supporting international artistic projects, the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australia Council, have shrinking funds."

Now, the government usually supports some funds for overseas art activities. These art activities can not only promote international political and economic exchanges but also show the cultural heritage of the country. Although there are some measures taken in Australia to support and promote traditional Australian art and culture. But until now, Australia has never had a professional international cultural institution. Federal government support for international arts programs is also declining. I believe that Australia should establish a professional cultural diplomacy institution. This can help Australia to achieve cultural promotion, international cooperation, economic growth, and the promotion of cultural diplomacy with other countries. On the other hand, for Australian local art companies, establishing such a professional cultural diplomacy institution undoubtedly has a lot of benefits.

One of the most obvious benefits is that it can help art companies to better promote their art products. They can

work with professional art and cultural institutions, and provide them with unique art products. In addition, professional art and cultural diplomacy institutions can help Australian art companies communicate and cooperate with other art companies from all over the world. Through these activities, Australian art companies can get more and more development space and opportunities. However, as well as there are opportunities, it may also make some Australian art companies face more risks and challenges. Fierce competition has a great potential to lead to difficulties in resource allocation and selection. The government may increase the financial burden due to the support of professional art and cultural diplomacy institutions. Thus, reducing the funding for Australian art companies. Moreover, the political impact may also bring risks to local Australian art companies. The purity of art may also be affected because of it.

## **2. The Necessity of Establishing a Professional Cultural Diplomacy Institution in Australia**

Culture, writes David Throsby, refers to beliefs and values that bind us together. The traditional culture and art of a country is a symbol of this country. To some extent, it also represents the mental outlook of a country and its image on the international stage (David Throsby, 2006). As Ang said: “The semantic field of the term cultural diplomacy has broadened considerably over the years. It now applies to pretty much any practice that is related to purposeful cultural cooperation between nations or groups of nations” (Ang, 2015). In this day and age, the competition between countries is not just reflected in politics and economics. Internationally, the status of culture and art become more and more important. Nowadays, cultural soft power has become one of the most important criteria to judge a country’s comprehensive national strength. For example, China’s Confucius Institute, began with the first Confucius Institute in Seoul, South Korea, in 2004. Until May 2020, China has established 561 Confucius Institutes and 1170 Confucius Classrooms in 162 countries or regions worldwide. The purpose of Confucius Institutes is to enhance the understanding of the Chinese language and culture among people around the world, develop friendly relations between China and foreign countries, promote the development of diverse cultures in the world, and contribute to building the construction of a harmonious world. Through the establishment of professional art and cultural diplomacy institutions, China has successfully promoted excellent traditional culture all over the world. This has largely built up a positive international reputation for China. It also promotes the promotion of the national image. It can be seen that the establishment of a professional art and cultural diplomacy institution can greatly and effectively promote the culture of the country.

Secombe mentioned, that under the impact of globalization, Australian multiculturalism can provide a model for cross-cultural dialogue. Australian culture has diversity, with the rise of indigenous and ethnic minorities, as well as the influx of immigrants. This allows Australia to have cultural traditions and rich cultural heritage from different communities and ethnicities (Secombe, 2021). Through such institutions, Australia can not only promote its own culture and protect its cultural diversity but also help to attract international attention and improve its international reputation and status. In addition, the professional art and cultural diplomacy institution can better promote cultural exchanges and cooperation between Australia and other countries. It will allow other countries and regions to better understand Australia’s culture and art. It can also promote international academic and educational cooperation. To enrich Australian educational resources and promote international academic cooperation. As a diplomatic tool, culture and art can help Australia deal with some problems that are difficult to solve through formal diplomacy approaches. Establishing contacts with other countries and regions through informal approaches could also enrich Australia’s diplomacy to some extent.

Finally, the influence of professional art and cultural diplomacy institutions at the economic level also cannot be ignored. Cultural industries have exerted a great influence on economic growth. Professional art and cultural diplomacy can create more job opportunities, and increase export revenue, it can also promote the prosperity of Australia’s cultural and creative industries and arts and cultural companies. Provide more opportunities and support for Australian local arts companies. Thus, contributing to the growth of Australia’s cultural economy.

## **3. The Benefits to Australian Art Companies of Establishing a Professional Cultural Diplomacy Institution**

Australia is a country with great cultural diversity. For countries, Australia has experienced waves of immigration from around the world. People from all over the world have settled in Australia. It makes Australia a country with diverse cultural landscapes. In addition, Australia’s indigenous population also has a rich and diverse cultural heritage.

This is also one of the basic elements that make up the Australian culture. Australia has also advocated a diversified cultural policy and encouraged people from different cultural backgrounds to live in harmony while retaining their unique cultural characteristics. This rich and diverse culture makes many Australian cultural companies themselves have their own unique artistic and cultural products, and have a certain competitiveness.

Allegra mentioned: “Cultural diplomacy is a resource deployed by governments to build relationships that support policy agendas” (Allegra, 2023). If the government can establish a professional cultural and art diplomacy institution. There is no doubt that it will better help Australia art companies promote their unique cultural and artistic products to the international market and increase their exposure. Australia’s art companies can have the opportunity to bring their artworks to the international stage attract more and more international audiences and expand their market. Besides, Australia’s art companies can also use the platform set up by the professional art and cultural diplomacy institution to seek more opportunities for international cooperation. To participate in the field of international culture through benign competition. On the other hand, for Australian art companies, the establishment of professional art and cultural diplomacy institutions means that they have the opportunity to get more support at the financial level. Australian arts companies work with foreign governments, foundations, and cultural and arts organizations. It can raise more money for its artists and art projects. It is also very helpful for Australian art companies to carry out art activities at home and abroad.

Mar has mentioned: “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) artists have provided a significant amount of the content of Australian cultural diplomacy programs, particularly in showcasing contexts such as focus country programs” (Mar, 2014). In the past 20 years, Australia’s Aboriginal art gradually entered the international art market and received the attention and love of many international artists and audiences. Among them, the indigenous artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye because of her abstract expressionist style and unique artistic language, is very popular in the international art world. Her paintings are exhibited in many international art exhibitions in the United States, Japan, France, and other countries. It attracted both audiences and artists from all over the world. In 2007, Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s painting *Earth's Creation I* (1994) sold for 1,056,000 US dollars. Ten years later, it was sold for twice the price at a Sydney auction. It set the record for the highest auction price for Australian Aboriginal art at the time.

This case is just a microcosm of the international success of Australian art companies and artists. However, it is loved by audiences and artists from all over the world, which undoubtedly shows that Australian art and culture are able to enter the international stage and occupy a place. If based on this basis, Australian art companies can have the opportunity to cooperate with the professional art and cultural diplomacy institution established by the Australian government. Australian art companies and artists will be more relaxed to promote their art products internationally. This not only can help them obtain more economic benefits but also can attract more and more audiences and artists from all over the world and join the team of Australian art companies. This can help Australian art companies grow themselves, and create more and more excellent works of art.

#### **4. The Risks to Australian Art Companies of Establishing a Professional Cultural Diplomacy Institution**

While the Australian government has brought many benefits to Australian art companies by establishing a professional art and cultural diplomacy institution, it may also bring some risks for Australian art companies. Alison mentioned, that in recent years, DFAT and the Australian Council have been shrinking funding for support of international arts projects. She also mentioned that “In 2021/22, in admittedly difficult COVID times, just one cultural project the Ubud Writers Festival was funded through the Australia Indonesia Institute’s tiny \$450,000 allocation for all people-to-people projects between us and our so-important neighbour” (Alison, 2022). This case illustrates the possible shrinking of current government funding for Australian art companies.

At the same time, if the Australian Government wants to maintain its newly established professional cultural and arts diplomacy institutions, it will need more funding. This is likely to add to the government's financial pressures. Other Australian arts companies are likely to face further reductions in government funding. In such a situation, a large number of Australian arts companies would be competing together for limited public funding. This could place an even greater financial burden on some Australian arts companies. Competition for support from specialized cultural diplomacy institutions, which is likely to lead to an imbalance in the distribution of resources, will also intensify amongst arts companies. There is a high risk that this competition will become vicious, causing dissatisfaction and disruption within the arts sector. This is highly detrimental to the development of Australian arts companies

On the other hand, as Radbourne said, the political values and objectives behind cultural policies are becoming an instrument for the implementation of strategic national goals. Arts and cultural organizations can contribute to national values. Culture and the arts will largely serve politics. Governments are likely to use professional arts and cultural diplomacy institutions as a tool for shaping the political image of the country (Radbourne, 1998). And the work of professional arts and cultural diplomacy institutions may be subject to government interference and influence. If Australian arts companies collaborate with the government-led cultural and art diplomacy institution. There is a high likelihood that the arts companies' artworks and artistic activities will be subject to government influence and political interference. This could potentially prevent arts companies from running their own arts organizations, developing their own arts activities, and creating their own works of art. This may result in art losing its original nature and becoming less pure. It may also inhibit art companies from making art, resulting in a loss of creativity and independence. To a certain extent, this is also not conducive to the healthy development of arts companies. As a matter of fact, professional government-led cultural and art diplomacy institutions will be affected by changes in policy, and therefore the objectives of professional cultural and art diplomacy institutions will also change in tandem with the policy. Once the direction of the policy changes, it is very likely that the Arts Corporation will lose the support of the government and the professional arts and cultural diplomacy institution. This will create a great deal of uncertainty and instability for arts companies.

## 5. Conclusion

At a time of globalization, cultural soft power has become an important component of a country's comprehensive national power. The countries of the world have begun to pay attention to and find ways to preserve and promote their traditional culture and arts. To a certain extent, this is conducive to the preservation of their traditional culture and arts and will enable them to continue to flourish. Therefore, the establishment of a professional cultural and art diplomacy institution, so that the country's art and culture can better enter the international field of vision, and deeper exchanges and cooperation with governments and cultural institutions around the world has gradually become the direction in which governments are striving. Australia is a culturally diverse country. The long history of Aboriginal culture and art and the waves of immigrants from all over the world in recent years together form the unique cultural soil of Australia. This has resulted in a rich artistic and cultural heritage in Australia. There is no doubt that the establishment of a professional cultural and art diplomacy institution will not only assist the Australian Government in promoting and exposing Australia's unique arts and culture to the international arena but will also have significant economic benefits. There are also economic benefits that cannot be ignored. It will contribute to the healthy development of Australia's cultural and arts industry. Therefore, there is a need to establish a professional cultural and art diplomacy institution in Australia.

On the other hand, the establishment of a professional cultural and art diplomacy institution can bring more opportunities to Australian local art companies. They can cooperate with the organization. Bring their art products and art ideas to the international stage. Expand their influence and attract more artists and audiences from all over the world. They can also use this platform to cooperate with governments and arts institution around the world. This brings economic benefits and more funds to Australian art companies, and at the same time, it will also encourage the art companies to continuously improve and develop their artworks. However, it is undeniable that this will also bring some risks to the art companies. It may increase competition among the arts companies and lead to uneven distribution of resources. It may also cause art companies to be influenced by the government and policies and lose the purity and creativity of art. For Australian arts companies, the government's establishment of a specialized cultural and arts agency is a double-edged sword. Not only will it bring a lot of benefits to local Australian arts companies, but it may also bring some risks to them. This requires arts companies to make continuous progress, improve themselves, enhance their risk management capability, avoid risks, and seek to obtain better development opportunities.

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