

25 November 2013

Open Letter from Stefano Carboni - MoMA/AGWA series concludes

In June 2012, the Art Gallery of Western Australia embarked on an exciting six-exhibition series in partnership with The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA). Since the series launch, the exhibitions have been enjoyed by a large number of Western Australians and have positively reinforced the Gallery's international standing and cultural reputation.

While support from the State Government, sponsors and the community has been significant, I am disappointed to announce that the MoMA series will finish at the end of this current exhibition because it is no longer financially viable.

This decision is based on a combination of increased insurance costs and reduced revenue from ticket sales, which although strong, is lower than the levels forecast at the project's outset.

I am proud that these exhibitions have enjoyed excellent visitor numbers and outstanding visitor satisfaction. When the third exhibition *Van Gogh, Dalí and Beyond: The World Reimagined* concludes, the MoMA series will have attracted nearly a quarter of a million people since its launch.

Our partnership with MoMA was ground-breaking, both in terms of the quality of works and the engagement by the Western Australian public. The three exhibitions have elevated the AGWA brand and enticed many Western Australians through the Gallery's doors for the first time – an achievement we are all very proud of.

It cannot be overlooked that the MoMA series has transformed the way the Gallery interacts with the community. We have come of age through engaging late night openings and new types of tours and interpretative programs. This has turned the Gallery into a lively and entertaining destination and a key element in the city's exciting rejuvenation.

Concluding the series early was an extremely difficult decision to make, but one we feel was best to take when considering the long term interests of the Gallery and the cultural life of the State. We are firmly focussed on the future and working with our supporters to make the Gallery even more captivating, exciting and relevant.

Patrons who have purchased series tickets will be contacted by Ticketek or can visit the Gallery's Box Office for appropriate refunds.

I would like to thank all those who have been incredibly supportive of this initiative, and encourage everyone to take advantage of this last opportunity to view splendid works from The Museum of Modern Art, New York before the current exhibition *Van Gogh, Dalí and Beyond* closes on Monday 2 December 2013.



Stefano Carboni
Director, Art Gallery of Western Australia

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Key facts about the MoMA series:

- By today, a week before closing, more than 230,000 people have visited the exhibitions since June 2012.
- Of those, 20% were interstate and international visitors. 60% have been new visitors to the Gallery, or had not visited for more than three years.
- More than 400 works were displayed during the series, 95% of which have never been displayed in Perth before.
- 91% of Western Australians agreed that it enhances Perth's culture and 87% of people agreed that it creates excitement and entertainment in Perth.
- Both *Picasso to Warhol* and *Van Gogh, Dalí and Beyond* individually attracted more visitors than any paid exhibition in WA since the Gallery's 2007 exhibition *Egyptian Antiquities from the Louvre*.