



An Australian Government Initiative

art|bank[®]

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Two of Artbank's recent acquisitions include Callum Morton's 2003 digital prints from the series 'Interbau Wow Wow', *Holiday Inn* (top) and *Tropicana*, 94.5 x 169.5 cm. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery.

Artbank

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Victorian Representative: Meaghan Wilson-Anastasios

Western Australian Representative: Joy Legge

Finance Manager: Bob Brandon

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Established in 1980, the Artbank Collection has grown to encompass over 9,000 works by nearly 3,000 artists from across Australia.

As a self-supporting program within the Australian Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Artbank supports emerging and more established artists through the purchase of their work. While artists benefit from that direct support, clients have economical access to the latest in contemporary Australian art in the widest possible range of styles and media.

Artbank is one of the largest institutional purchasers of contemporary Australian art, acquiring quality works as they become available through commercial galleries, artists' studios and craft workshops throughout the country. Due to the size of the collection, Artbank is able to offer very reasonable rental rates and rental fees are usually tax deductible. Artbank has a regular delivery service for all capital cities and Artbank staff travel interstate to advise on all aspects of the display and installation of artworks.

Congratulations to Artbank staff member Edgar Borg on 20 years of dedicated service, from the Artbank Board, Director and staff.

Photographs by John Brash, Tom Dion, Rose Farrell and George Parkin, John Farrow, Neil Haddon, Brenton McGeachie, Martin van der Wal and Uwe Walter.

Cover: John Anderson's oil, *Big Day*, 1994 adds to the ambience of one of Sydney's top restaurants, Bilson's Radisson Plaza (see page 6).

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Minister's message

Artbank is one of our great cultural success stories – and one of Australia's largest institutional buyers of contemporary art. This financial year Artbank is spending over \$600,000, acquiring artworks to be added to its forward-looking and dynamic rental collection.

Artbank concentrates its attention on art in the here and now, buying recent works from young and emerging artists.

Victorian artist Callum Morton uses new technologies to make digital prints and architectural models, part of an exciting repertoire attracting international attention.

Dongwang Fan is one of a group of Chinese-Australian painters who are coming to the attention of the Australian art world.

This year works by Morton and Fan have been added to the Artbank collection, now conservatively valued at more than \$19 million. They'll be available for rent by a private company, overseas embassy or even a household in Australia.

I congratulate Artbank's staff. Besides doing such a great job building the collection, they manage it to the highest possible standard and fulfil Artbank's charter by keeping it out in the community, on display in the public eye.

Senator Rod Kemp

Minister for the Arts and Sport

Director's message

Artbank has enjoyed an exciting twelve months of growth with more than 200 new works entering the collection. Many of these are from artists under 30 and highlight the stimulating diversity of practice being undertaken in Australia today.

A number of newer works are displayed in public places via commercial and private work locations around the country. Many legal firms readily embrace the opportunity to access contemporary work through Artbank and several are featured in this issue.

At times works travel overseas where visitors to our embassies and consulates can share in an engagement with Australian art. The new Chancery in Berlin is one such location displaying a range of artworks by young artists from Western Australia to Tasmania.

Several new acquisitions have been presented here to demonstrate how contemporary art can stimulate the viewer, enhancing the workplace or living environment. That art can transform places, spaces and people is part of its evolving and exhilarating nature, which staff at Artbank are fortunate to witness daily when clients and the collection come together.

An exciting development for Artbank is our proposal to open a showroom in Melbourne in late 2004 or early 2005. We are delighted that this will enable improved access to our 9,000 strong collection, particularly for the southern states – Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

The Artbank Board, including new South Australian member The Hon Legh Davis, is very focused on increasing our investment in Australia's talented artists through this expansion. It is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our support to artists and to engage a wider audience for contemporary art.

Artbank has now developed into one of the most significant Australian contemporary art collections in the nation. It remains an active agent in promoting visual arts in contemporary society. That Australians have ready access to this collection by way of its availability through art rentals is what makes it a truly unique and egalitarian one.

I do hope you enjoy it.

Antonia Syme

Artbank Director

Artist's Profile

Dongwang Fan



Right top, Fan says of the computer-manipulated, hand-painted objects in *Descendants – Shout in the Dark #2*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 178 cm, 'they are the descendants of artistic imagination and technological manipulation'. The dynamic background flowers are traditional Chinese brocade patterns.

Right below, Fan sees *Descendants – Red Environment #3*, 2002, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm, as depicting the relationship between society and the environment, reflecting his concern for the future of an environment harmed by economic activities, war, and technological exploration.

Artist Dongwang Fan.

After long being interested in the work of Chinese-Australian artist Dongwang Fan, it was an absolute delight for Artbank Curator Jackie Dunn to finally visit him at his Sydney studio seeking pieces for the collection. Entering the home this award-winning artist shares with his wife and talented young son – remarkably James, at age 11, has been winning painting and drawing awards of his own for some years – she was overwhelmed by the accumulation of large bright canvases. Each one a cornucopia of dragons, emperors, computer modelled forms and robots, Fan's exuberant works sing out in a chorus of colour, wit and cross-cultural high drama.

Born in Shanghai, Fan came to Sydney to study in 1990. He completed a Master of Art from the University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts in 1995, then a Doctor of Creative Arts from Wollongong University in 1999. But it was not only a dramatic cultural relocation, but his early training under Yu Youhan in the 1980s that determined many of the approaches he would later take with his art practice.

From the first, his studies revealed multiple sources and cultures. In Shanghai, Fan had studied classical Chinese brush techniques and, intriguingly, the traditional art of ivory carving; his training covering the full spectrum of Chinese arts from so called high to so called low. Like many of his peers he also studied western oil painting techniques and, in the years before the

1989 Tiananmen Square protests, married the contemporary visual languages of the west with those of the east.

Once settled in Australia, having migrated as an Artist of Distinguished Talent, Fan began to depict the fragmentation that seems so much a part of his – and our – contemporary experience. Today, Fan regularly combines more than one traditional technique, be it Chinese or Western, in his densely layered, mythological paintings of robotic figures and body parts drawn from a variety of religious and cultural sources. Ultimately, what is important to him is the relationship between objects and background. He uses the same perspectival modelling techniques he employed in ivory carving, to model form as part of a tradition of visual illusionism. That said, he upsets that tradition by aiming to provide as many conflicting perspectives as possible in the one image. As he says, 'the manipulation of spatial structures becomes an aesthetic statement of my artwork'.

Dongwang Fan's space has been described as the space of science fiction or the space of the computer screen, and his bodies metaphors for identities reacting to a changing social and technological environment. Working precisely *within* the constantly shifting perspective borne of cultural difference, Fan is making his Chinese-Australian identity the very subject of his art.

