

Art gallery acquisition

One of the Art Gallery of Western Australia's greatest acquisitions isn't a painting or an installation or a piece of sculpture. It's a real guy. *Smart Start* reports.



Chad Creighton took an interesting road to working in the arts. But the recipient of the Art Gallery of Western Australia's Indigenous Curatorial Internship has always been interested in fine arts. At high school he won first prize in Chisholm Catholic College's Angelico Art Exhibition.

So was it a simple path into a fine arts degree? No – *Smart Start* doesn't bring you the simple path stories.

Chad did the University of Western Australia's pre-law program and then studied law for two years before he realised it wasn't for him.

"I couldn't see myself as a lawyer," says Chad, who is originally from Broome, and is a member of the Nyullnyull and Bardi people.

So it was back to the future: art. And as Chad worked his way through a UWA fine arts degree, he became more certain that this was where he wanted to focus his career. However, he still found time to join UWA's Western Waagyls, who recently won the National Indigenous Games, and the WA Student Aboriginal Corporation. That all gave him the chance to visit other parts of Australia.

During his degree, Chad explored print-making, electronic art, web-based art and film-making. He also heard about the art gallery's three-year internship from a good friend at UWA and applied. It was very competitive but he was successful.

As well as learning the ropes at the gallery, with installation, conservation and curatorial duties, he completed a graduate diploma in cultural heritage studies and has helped prepare exhibitions including Year 12 Perspectives, Western Desert Satellites, Egyptian Antiquities from the Louvre — Journey to the Afterlife, and Paddy Bedford.

His final internship project, in 2009, will be Yirrkala Everywhen: Bark Paintings from the State Art Collection.

"I'm looking forward to curating a (Yirrkala) bark painting exhibition. My research for this show has allowed me the opportunity to obtain in-depth knowledge of the gallery's bark collection. With a background in new media work, it's great to look into other mediums and see recent innovations in bark painting."

Cousin careers

If you're interested in a career like Chad's, you may also like to check out:

- Art gallery technician
- Artist
- Arts administrator
- Community worker
- Conservator
- Cultural heritage officer
- Historian
- Museum attendant
- Museum curator
- Museum officer

Chad's Key Career Steps

- Keen on art at school.
- Decided on a career in law but heart wasn't in it.
- Studying law at uni helped in focus on art as a career and he changed degrees, knuckled down and loved it.
- Got involved in Indigenous organisations and used experience to fine-tune career.
- Kept options open and applied for internship and got it!