

Editorial

The second issue of *Queensland Review* for 2006 begins with three papers that explore the emergence of Brisbane as a site of modernity in the twentieth century. William Hatherell's 'The Brisbane Years of Laurence Collinson' looks at the *enfant terrible* who co-founded *Barjai* magazine while still a student at Brisbane State High School in 1943. What Hatherell dubs 'State High' modernism became a remarkably influential cultural movement in the mid- to late 1940s: Laurence Collinson and his co-editors transformed *Barjai* from a school magazine into a sophisticated national organ for youth culture, were associated also with the Miya group of visual artists, and had connections with the Meanjin group and southern avant-garde cultural groups. Collinson was a painter as well as a writer, and his watercolour, *How to Grow Cabbages — Buchenwald Style*, is reproduced on the cover of this issue of *Queensland Review*. Hatherell's re-evaluation of Collinson is part of a broader re-evaluation of Brisbane culture addressed in his forthcoming book, *The Third Metropolis: Imagining Brisbane Through Art and Literature*, which will be published by the University of Queensland Press in 2007.

Belinda McKay's paper, 'Finding Voice: Emily Coungeau and "Australia's National Hymn of Progress"', looks at an earlier — and more genteel — moment of modernity in Brisbane. The prolific and popular poet Emily Coungeau exemplifies a new, self-consciously public and female voice that emerged in Brisbane in the early twentieth century. In addition to contributing to the development of a female, cosmopolitan aesthetic in Australian women's writing, Coungeau — who together with her husband ran a wine saloon in Petrie Bight for 30 years — played a significant role in Brisbane's cultural life as a patron of the arts. The role of writers like Emily Coungeau in forming a distinctive literary culture in Queensland is explored in another book scheduled for publication by the University of Queensland Press in 2007: *By the Book: A History of Literature in Queensland*, edited by Patrick Buckridge and Belinda McKay.

Helen Bennett's paper, 'Being Modern: Living in Flats in Interwar Brisbane', continues the theme of Brisbane as a site of modernity by looking at the emergence of 'compact living, in the form of the purpose-designed, inner-suburban residential flat' in the 1920s and 1930s. Bennett sees Brisbane as a prominent participant in urban modernisation, noting that the creation of the Greater Brisbane in 1925 was a significant landmark for the city's urban fabric as well as its civic structure. She argues that the trends to suburbanisation and compact living were concurrent but antithetical, and that the minority choice of compact living initially met with some resistance but was accepted as a legitimate form of homemaking by the late 1940s.

In the remaining papers, the focus shifts from the state capital to regional areas. In 'The Search for Kalboori Youngi', Glenn R. Cooke unravels the mystery surrounding

the identity of an Aboriginal woman artist from the Bouliia area, known in white art circles as Kalboori Youngi, who produced a series of remarkable sculptures in the late 1930s but was otherwise untraceable. Cooke also scrutinises the role played by Sydney accountant and amateur anthropologist R.H. Goddard in ‘discovering’ Kalboori Youngi and presenting her work to the Australian public. Since Cooke’s paper is in part a detective story, it would be unfair to reveal his conclusions here, but suffice to say that he exposes the limitations of white ‘experts’ in Aboriginal culture as well as suggesting the identity of Kalboori Youngi.

Jonathan Richards’ paper, ‘Robert Baird of China Camp’, is a fascinating account of a white man who lived among Aboriginal people and was accepted by them. Robert Baird arrived in Cooktown in the 1870s and was elected Mayor in 1881, a position he quickly resigned in favour of mining. He is credited with the discovery of tin on the Bloomfield River, where he established the legendary ‘China Camp’. Baird fathered two Aboriginal sons, Norman and Charlie, whom he acknowledged, protected and educated — in stark contrast to the majority of colonists. Richards’ paper is based on a report he compiled for the Community and Personal History Unit of the Queensland Government’s Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and the Wujal Wujal Indigenous Learning Centre. Richards’ paper aims to correct some of the inaccuracies that have crept into the historical record, and establish as far as possible the facts of Baird’s life. The ‘gentle’ colonists, Richards argues, are too little known, and Baird’s life forms part of a ‘history of kindness, compassion and humanitarianism in Queensland [that] has yet to be written’.

The final paper in this issue returns to the theme of regional culture. In ‘Creating a Culture: Literary Events, Institutions and Communities in Central Queensland’, Denis Cryle surveys the emergence and consolidation of a literary infrastructure in central Queensland. In early colonial times, the press was the only outlet for writing. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, institutions such as the Schools of Art, Rockhampton Grammar School and various cultural societies performed a key role in expanding the appreciation of literature and encouraging writing. Later still, government initiatives, including the establishment of tertiary institutions and public libraries as well as the celebration of state anniversaries, provided catalysts for local writing. In recent decades, however, community initiatives such as writers’ clubs and local festivals have become the most significant contributors to a flourishing literary culture, along with new publication outlets — the largest being Central Queensland University Press.

In 2007, the first issue of *Queensland Review* will be produced in collaboration with curatorial staff from the Museum of Brisbane. Entitled ‘Taking to the Streets’, it will draw on research undertaken for the recent Museum of Brisbane exhibition about protest movements in Brisbane between 1965 and 1985. The issue will also look at the responses of various scholars to the exhibition itself.

— Belinda McKay