

DR CRAIG DOUGLAS

Griffith University, Brisbane,
c.douglas@griffith.edu.au

For a number of years, I have taught an introductory course on curatorship to visual arts students completing their undergraduate degrees at Griffith University. Every year, and as part of my introductory lecture, I pose two questions to the assembled student body: How can the (art) museum meaningfully contribute to this new century? And what philosophies must this institution embrace or acknowledge in its quest for ongoing relevance? The second question is a logical extension of the first. Visual artists in training, like established artists in the field, need to answer these and similar questions about the public (art) museum in order to understand the symbiotic relationship this cultural institution has with the various publics it serves.

Over the last ten years, numerous theoreticians have asked similar questions. Three writers in particular—David Carr ('The Need for the Museum', in *Museum News*, March/April 1999); Michael Kimmelman ('Museums in a Quandary: Where are the Ideals?' *New York Times*, 26 August 2001) and Timothy Luke (*Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition*, University of Minnesota Press, 2002)—have presented particular perspectives worthy of further debate. This paper, in acknowledging the scholarship of these and other writers, will consider the underlying philosophies and missions contemporary art museums must employ to be relevant.

Craig Douglas teaches art theory and curatorship at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane. His doctoral research focused on regional art museums and galleries in Australia. He has curated and toured a number of exhibitions throughout Australia and internationally. Currently, he is working with two regional Queensland art museums to curate a two-site exhibition project on a significant Brisbane-based private art collection.