

# **Embracing Diversity:** **The Hospital as a Cultural Site**



**Marily Cintra**

Health and Arts Research Centre, Inc.

World Congress of Design and Health Singapore 2009



# This presentation will

- Explore the Hospital as a cultural site
- Use Auburn Hospital Redevelopment present a methodology for arts and cultural planning
- Illustrate how the findings and strategies of the arts and cultural plan is interpreted in the public art

# Place

*Place is experienced through our senses, memories, and stories.*

In this relationship (between place and ourselves) we are not of mere spectators but actors in the creation of places.



Moments of Tenderness  
Photograph by Gaven Lin,  
Auburn Hospital 2008

*Designed environments encode, give expression to and, in turn influence social, cognitive, and other environments*

Rapoport 1990



2009, Bathurst Hospital



1154, Nur al-Din bimaristan

# *Islamic hospitals (bimaritans)*

*Pioneering, from the 6<sup>th</sup> century:*

- *Written records*
- *Clear air*
- *Easily accessible water*
- *Separation of wards*
- *Outpatient services*
- *Clean clothes*
- *Money on leaving the bimaristan*
- *Free medicaments*
- *Music, storytelling*



Bimaristan, commissioned by Sultan Nur al-Din in 1154, Syria

For 1000 years, until late 16<sup>th</sup> century the bimaristan highlighted the interrelations that characterized Islamic Medicine.



They attracted scholars and doctors from different places and faith establishing centers for learning and sharing.

This intercultural dialogue is an example of fruitful collaboration.

**Culture is our learned sense of plural,  
promoting the development of a personal  
identity that is connected to the collective.**

**It is an inseparable aspect of human life that  
influences our system of beliefs, meaning  
and interpretation of the world.**

“When a baby enters the world..  
This place is also in our way, the celebration of  
death, where we go back to the breathing  
earth.  
The hospital sees it all.”

Visitor interview, Auburn Hospital 2007



Auburn Hospital Ceiling Birthing Room By Annette Barlow 2009



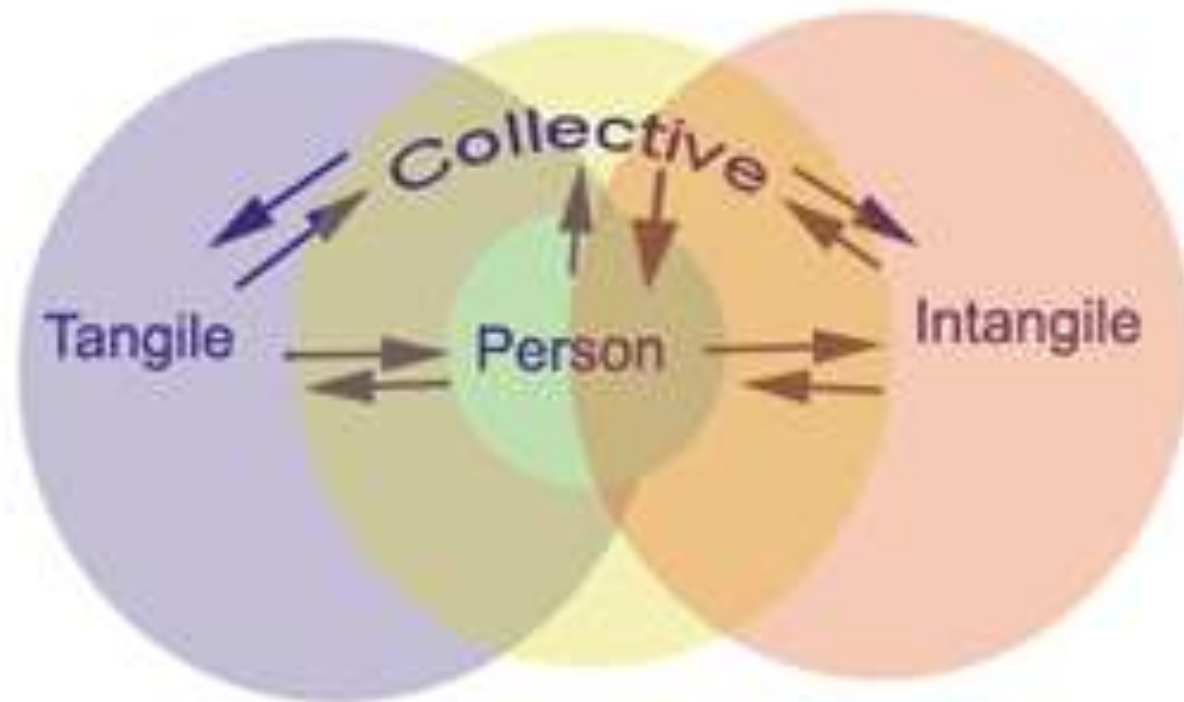
Auburn Hospital Ceiling Birthing Room By Annette Barlow 2009

The arts is a facilitator of energy flow that can affect our own personal lives and our collective body.

It modifies tangible, collective, intangible and personal. Values are questioned, articulated. Ideas emotions and possibilities are made visible.

**The Arts can be a salutary factor in our society**

The arts is a facilitator of energy flow



Connections and lines of energy

# + Methodologies

































## ■ Environmental Research<sup>1</sup>:

- Observation of physical traces and environmental behavior
- Questionnaires
- Focused interviews
- Creative Activities

## ■ Cultural Development Strategies

- Supporting and promoting the development of asset based cultural development

1. 2006 Zeisel, J *Inquiry by Design: Environment/Behavior/Neuroscience in Architecture, Interiors, Landscape, and Planning*

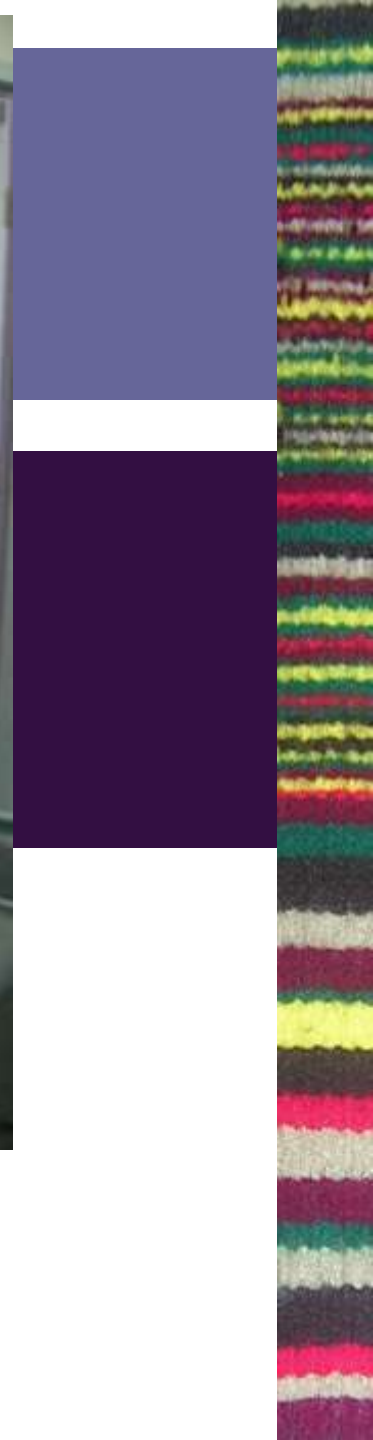
Hospital	Themes for the arts (in response to open ended question)			
	Local community	Nature	Diversity of services	Quality of services
Canberra				
Liverpool				
Bankstown-Lidcombe				
Sydney Children's				
Braeside				
Nepean				
John Hunter				
Fairfield				
Camden and Campbelltown				
Wyong				
Gosford				
Royal Newcastle Centre	 + links to Royal Newcastle Hospital			
Auburn				

# Auburn Hospital Redevelopment

- A\$ 145 million
- 184 beds
- Most culturally diverse region in Australia
- 78% residents speak other language than English at home
- +100 languages spoken locally
- Low socio-economical status
- Sydney West Area Health Service
- Brookfield Multiplex Ltd
- Hassell Architects
- Health and Arts Research Centre, Inc.



Auburn Hospital Arts and Cultural Plan  
Observation 2007



# Creative Activities



# Place

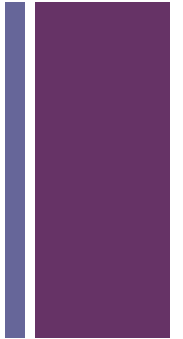


Auburn Hospital Arts and Cultural Plan  
Wishing Tree,  
Auburn Botanical Garden 2007



Creative Activities for Planning  
Children's view of what a hospital should be like  
Public School

# + Participation in the Arts Planning



- 356 people participated in the planning, including staff, patient, visitors and the local community

234 responded to questionnaires

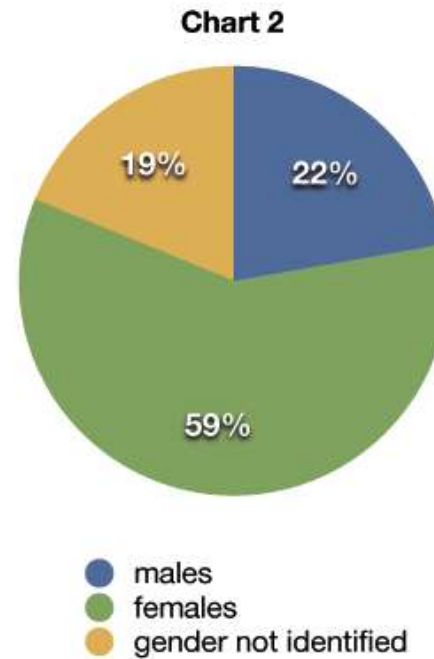
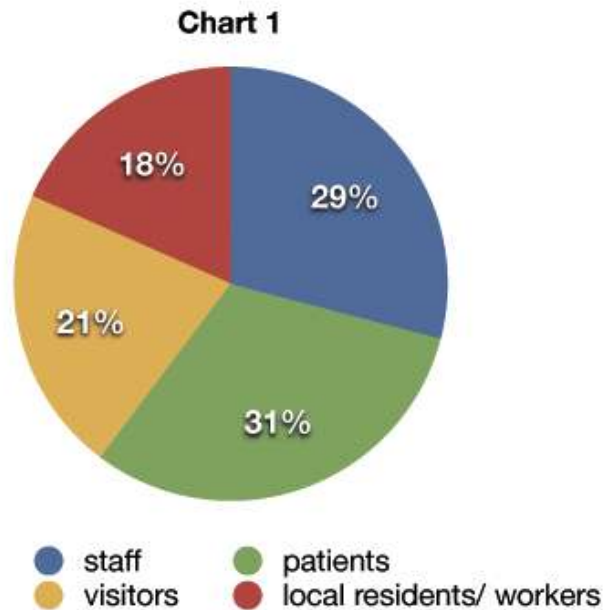
122 participated in focused interviews and creative activities

- 1 of 356 participants mentioned that money should not be spent on the arts.

# + Participation



- 234 questionnaire responses





**Preferred themes  
for the arts  
Auburn Hospital:**

- The local communities' rich cultural diversity
- Nature
- Reflect what happens in place

# Values

Values important to self	Respect Family Caring Love
Values important to the hospital	Caring Respect Equality Safety
Values important to the community	Respect Equality Generosity Peace

“the value I think is important to Auburn Hospital is equality. Every patient, staff member and visitor should be treated equally. Bias and prejudice attitude should be clear from the hospital area”

Questionnaire survey, community participant under 15 year old. 2007

## Issues raised during planning

- Friendly environment
- Reflect cultural diversity without focus on specific community
- Clean
- Extended families
- More information

- Major work, universal stories
- Intangible Heritage collected by local residents:
  - Lullabies sang in Auburn
  - Poets corner
  - Creation of Auburn Hospital Living Library
    - Living Books: Stories by local residents
    - Short Stories: Stories by staff and volunteers
    - Heritage of Auburn Hospital
    - Poets Corner
    - Lullabies





Feature work on glass

## “The Universal Journey”

Artwork by Bronwyn Bancroft

Dupont SentryGlas Espressions







## The Universal Journey

Detail of the painting which will be transferred to glass.

Moon (level 4) - "moon and the beginning of the universe"

Bronwyn Bancroft





Universal Journey, by  
Bronwyn Bancroft  
Detail, Level 5



# Collecting Lullabies for Auburn Hospital

Chinese and Turkish





Afghani women collecting Lullabies in Dari

## ■ Singalese and Burmese Lullabies





# Auburn Hospital Living Library



# Intangible

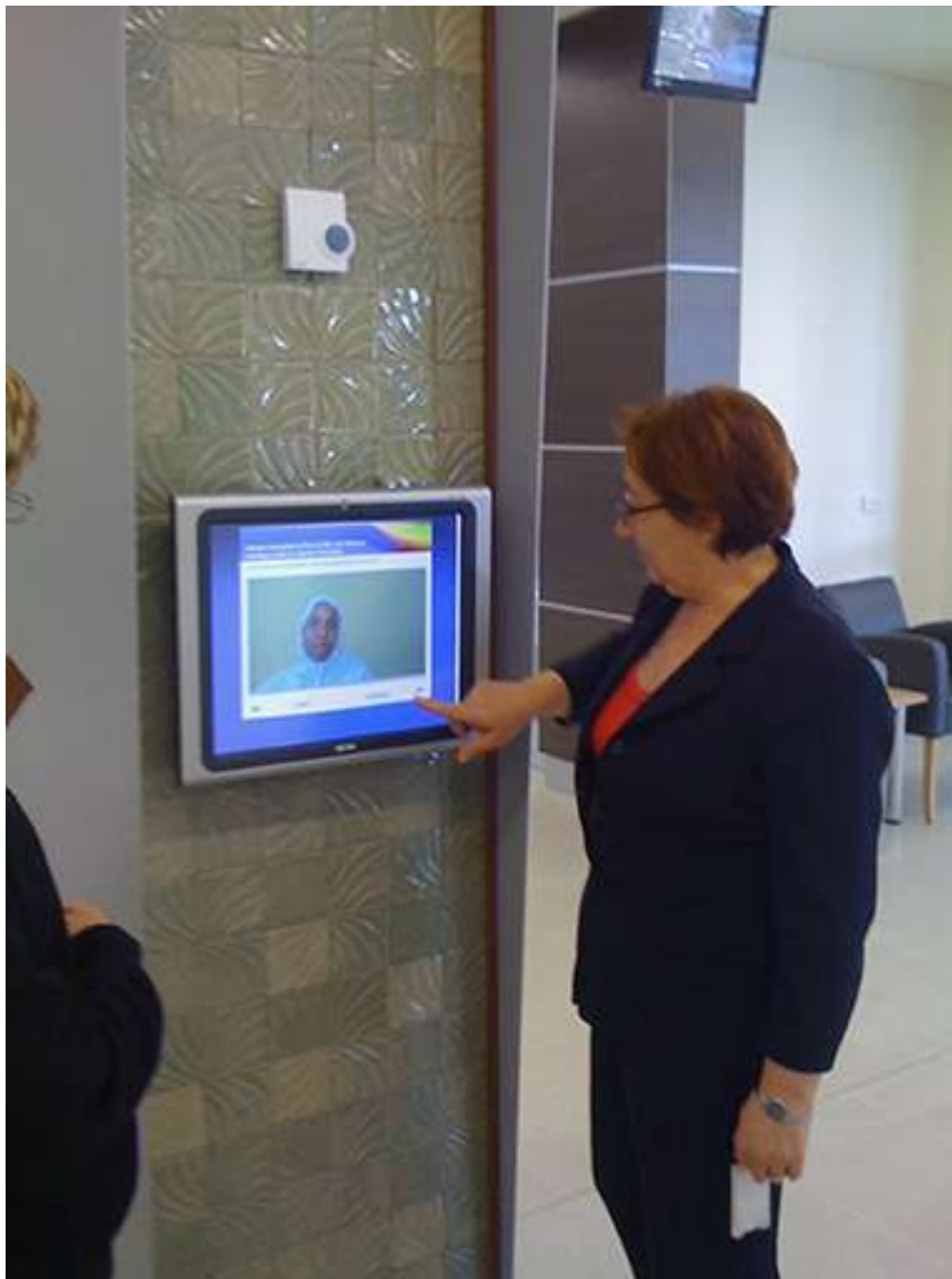
Auburn Hospital Living Library 2008

# Intangible



Auburn Hospital Living Library 2008





# *“ A Builder of Dreams”*

*By Nur J Alam 2008*

“I look out my window and see only dust that blinds my eyes but not my soul.

It thins, then settles soon and I see a worker atop a pole.

He hangs on with his feet and uses his hands to build dreams.”

Building the New Auburn Hospital Auburn Poets 2008



Living Book:  
Auburn Hospital Is Part Of My Life



Living Book:  
Auburn Hospital Is Part Of My Life (in Somali)



**Short Story:**

*Being a Mandarin and Cantonese Interpreter  
at Auburn Hospital*



# The Reality of Emergency Nursing: No its not like ER!



Living Book

# **The Reality of Emergency Nursing: No, it it not like ER!**



**Living Book**

# Poets' Corner: Healing by Richard Jenner



# Team effort



HARC planning team Auburn Hospital

Collaboration with Sydney West Area Health Service Multicultural Health

Health and Arts Research Centre, Inc  
Marily.Cintra@placemaking.com.au