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## Industry insights: Anais Lellouche, curatorial director

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*By Annette Wagner*

As I continue my Industry Insight quest to explore, discuss and spotlight the many diverse creative industries women are leading and making their mark in, I wanted to feature a career that has been on the my list of 'what I want to be when I grow up' for a long, long time: a curator.

Before speaking with Anais Lellouche, curatorial director at Anna Schwartz Gallery, I knew there was much more to being a curator than what Charlotte on *Sex in the City* alluded to.

Read on to share her insightful feedback on how Anais become a curator, what the role actually involves and five tips for how an artist finds gallery representation.

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## **What lead you to become a curator?**

I was very fortunate to have had a passion for art from a very young age and I started gaining experience in the field at the age of 16 years. I knew I would work in the arts but was not exactly certain in what capacity, whether as an artist, gallerist, in a museum, or auction house. So I tried them all! This is how I found my way; I kept moving ahead with experiences in the field until it felt right.

## **In a contemporary art environment, a curator is a person who selects and often interprets works of art. In addition to selecting works, the curator is often responsible for many other aspects, and it is by nature a multi-tasking role. What does your role as a curator at Anna Schwartz Gallery involve?**

Anna Schwartz Gallery is a very special place, which has been the home for leading contemporary art in Australia for over 30 years. My role is to support artists in the presentation of their works, whether at the gallery, in museums or with other projects and commissions. The best part of my role is working closely with artists and external parties and to develop opportunities for them to create and exhibit their work. I am fortunate to work closely with the founder, Anna Schwartz, and to draw from her relentless enthusiasm and experience supporting artists to achieve their visions, with no compromise.

## **You recently collaborated with Chiharu Shiota, for her inaugural exhibition at Anna Schwartz Gallery and Public Art Commission of the Melbourne Festival. How did this collaboration come about, what was your role and do you have any recommendations for managing a creative collaborative process?**

Jonathan Holloway, the Artistic Director of the Festival had been interested in Chiharu Shiota's work for many years and since the gallery represents her, it was a natural collaboration. The articulation of gallery space and public space offered the possibility for the artist to

showcase different parts of her practice and thereby reach a wide audience. Shiota's projects were a real collaborative effort from the early stages, working with engineers to ensure that the 7 metre tall mobile home the artist wanted to create was achievable, all the way through to the students and volunteers who worked with the artist to create the installations.

My recommendation for managing a collaborative process applies to any other profession: trust your instincts, pay attention to detail and approach this role, not as a job, but as if it were your very own project.



*Pictured, curatorial director, Anais Lellouche and artist, Chiharu Shiota. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery. Photo by Zan Wimberley.*

**Temporary exhibitions increase in cultural importance, just as the traditional role of galleries and museums with well known and established collections follow the call for ever changing exhibitions as well. What are the challenges of curatorial strategies when planning future exhibition programs?**

Galleries support artists in the long term and our exhibition programs are more consistent as a reflection of this commitment. That being said, I am also animated by developing new relationships and dialogues for the artists we represent alongside other leading international artists; to exhibit artists for the first

time in Australia and to support and expand the local cultural scene.

### **Can you provide 5 tips for how an artist finds gallery representation?**

1. My first tip would be to develop a unique voice. To gain experiences in different cultural contexts, through travelling, but also through research, stepping beyond the local field of expertise and interest, to nurture an original approach.
2. Another tip would be to socialise and develop a networks of peers; to show your work; to discuss ideas, and to share a cultural life together.
3. Don't be too eager to be represented by a gallery, it is preferable to be ready and to align the right match; this often takes time.
4. Believe in yourself wholeheartedly; because if you don't, no one will.
5. And lastly, be resilient, and never, ever let go.

*Annette Wagner is a designer, marketer, creative consultant, artist and writer. She is also on the board of the Creative Women's Circle. Obsessively passionate about the arts and the creative process, she is determined to not talk art-speak and instead focus on supporting and sharing concepts and insights most creative types crave to know.*

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