

Swinburne Commons

Transcript



Title: Interview with Allan Jordan (1960 Swinburne Jubilee Interviews 07 of 15)

Author(s): Allan Jordan, Bernard Hames

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Bernard Hames (Moderator)

And now and on the reverse edge of the tape, we turn to the Art School. Mr Jordan, could you tell me something of the history of the school of which you are head, the Swinburne Art School?

Mr. A. Jordan

Yes. It started off in fairly small way. If I remember there were three small studios and the art work was taken by the then Director, Mr [0:29] Prior. He was a modeller and most of the work started more in the nature of craftwork, modelling in other words, painting and wood carving.

Bernard Hames

So there are both boys and girls?

Mr. A. Jordan

Yes. We had classes for them. More girls and boys of an older age and we have our diploma student present.

Bernard Hames

How many are there now in your school?

Mr. A. Jordan

We have enrolment of just over the 100 mark in the full day diploma student and with part time students, the numbers vary considerably there, but I would say on average number around 300 at present.

Bernard Hames

Are there as many boys as girls among your students?

Mr. A. Jordan

At the present time in the diploma full day classes we have presently an equal number of boys and girls.

Bernard Hames

Do you feel that you get any particular type of student in the art school? Are they noticeably different from engineers for instance?

Mr. A. Jordan

But we always like to appeal to perfectly normal people leading a normal life and doing things in a similar way to other people, but I do feel that there is a difference. It may be explained in this way, that the artist generally I feel is an individual. I feel that he is creating something rather than following a general pattern.

Bernard Hames

And what do you think is the status of the art in the community in the middle of the twentieth century?

Mr. A. Jordan

Their status is very high at the moment. There is great demand and really great demand for well trained artists at the present time has enabled him to command positions that are really worthwhile and be looked upon now as a very more vital person in the general industrial development than say 20 years ago.

Bernard Hames

And do your students when they complete their training find ready employment?

Mr. A. Jordan

Yes. There's a definite shortage of artists at the present time. They've got as many avenues for the commercial advertising artist. Most of our students would find their employment in the advertising agencies where a great variety of work there is produced. They work with an agency handle at the present time, the general publicity in the form of newspaper, press work, brochures, catalogues and so forth. Then there are other avenues with semi government organisations such as the Railway, CSIRO, Post Office, State Electricity Commission. Apart from display firms which absorb quite a number of artists in the way of goods, windows displays and there are printers, publishers, engravers, photographers, industrial designers all requiring the services of specialists in this particular line.

Bernard Hames

Not many in fine arts?

Mr. A. Jordan

No. There will be very few artists that could claim to live solely by their art where you are thinking of course there of portrait paintings, easel pictures and so on. But there is a wider field now available to the artist of that type in the form of mural design and general restoration. Information has come about [5:02] you find [5:05] some of the new buildings collectively say that they've not displayed some form of sculptured panel or mosaic or panel of a different type. That does open up a little different field, but we still do not put them as [5:23] of the artists that are generally known as an artist who paints portraits or landscapes.

Bernard Hames

And what about teachers of art? Do you recruit artists or teachers to teach your students?

Mr. A. Jordan

Yes. We have quite a number of students there that are trying to be some art teachers and they go through a special training under the general supervision of the Education Department. Their course is run over the four years [6:03] general full day students but to that of course is added industrial experience of two years in the case of a boy and one year in the case of a girl. That is followed by 12 months training at the Teacher's College and then the student is sufficiently trained to accept [6:26] in a school.

Bernard Hames

I see. Do you feel that that is adequate in your own school for your own teachers to have people who have been claimed to be teachers of art? Or do you prefer to get a man who is himself a commercial artist to teach commercial?

Mr. A. Jordan

As far as the teaching of art is concerned?

Bernard Hames

Yes.

Mr. A. Jordan

Well in regard to recruiting staff we prefer a man who has had a typical experience outside in a specialised field. But for the more elementary students we look for the type of teacher who has had some or considerable teaching experience with industrial experience as well. But in the later years of it, the [7:22] the specialist teacher forms a very suitable type.

Bernard Hames

And what do you think is significant in the art work of 1960?

Mr. A. Jordan

Well there has been a bit change over the last 10 years from the traditional form of art, a more formal type to a more animated career and pressure approach to advertising. The idea of just displaying a product is not quite good enough. There is a difference between – so many will take power for instance. It's not very great, so that something has to be added to that, and we find that almost all fields are advertising their greater intention given to the animated type of drawings with a more humorous approach.

Bernard Hames

And do you think your students sympathise with the changing approach to art?

Mr. A. Jordan

I don't think they are quite aware of it. In fact I'm sure they are not. Let's accept that the form of art that is involved at the present time, they take naturally to it and do not realise that some considerable change has taken place over the last few years.

Bernard Hames

Thank you Mr Jordan, and now I turn to Bob Carr, the Senior Art representative on the Student Council. That's what you are isn't it Bob?

Bob Carr

Yes. I'm on the student representative council and I also am President.

Bernard Hames

You heard what Mr Jordan has said about modern themes in art. Have you any views on that now?

Bob Carr

Yes. Well myself, I like modern art and modern painting, but even so, we still – most of the students do like modern art, but they still respect the old masters such as Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Rubens.

Bernard Hames

You intend to be an art teacher when you complete your training, don't you?

Bob Carr

Yes, Mr Hames. With being a teacher, the Education Department allows us seven pounds 10 a week which is half the basic wage.