



Taking a Line for a Walk

A famous artist, Paul Klee, once said that drawing was like taking a line for a walk. Artists are always exploring. Sometimes they go where no artist has gone before—and they take us with them on the journey.

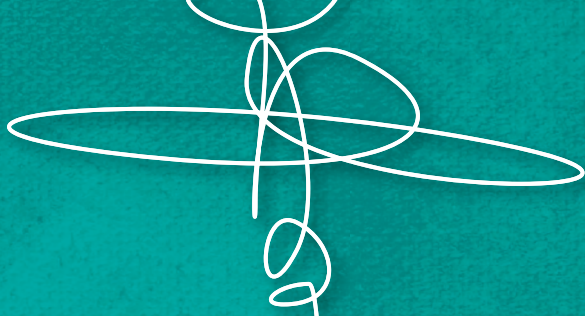
Musicians, dancers, actors, writers, performance artists, sculptors, painters and media artists are all artists in different ways. Artists are often pushing the boundaries of technology, materials, the form of their art, and how they make their art. Frequently, artists investigate new ideas in their work. Their art might break down barriers between cultures and make new connections for us. It might also challenge us to think about what art is, what purpose it has, who should make it, where it should be, who should experience it and who should pay for it.

These days we experience art of endless variety. There seem to be no boundaries to what might be called art. It may be stencil graffiti on a wall or an image on a mobile phone. It could be people living in a shop window or a musical improvisation in a cave. But every artwork is linked to an artistic practice and a tradition. It is the boundaries of the **tradition** that some artists push.

In this book, we look at just a few Australian artists who have created work that is **innovative** and has broken with **convention** in some way. Most of these artists continue to create art, and their art is still evolving. Frank Hurley, the expedition photographer, and some of the original artists of the Western Desert painting movement have died, but their work lives on and influences the artists that have followed them.

And now for the journey...

The forms that art can take are limited
only by our imagination.



PHYSICAL THEATRE

Legs on the Wall

Australia has produced some of the world's finest actors, musicians, dancers and circus artists. They continue artistic traditions through their memorable performances. But some have gone beyond that, and challenged the conventions of their particular art form.

In 1984 two buskers, Brian Keogh and Thor Blomfield, along with three others, Brigid Kitchin, Matthew Lafferty and Kristen Robson, created the performance company Legs on the Wall. They were inspired by the "new circus" of Circus Oz, where the circus acts are linked through stories, themes, dance and music; the performances reflect on politics and society; and everyone is equal in the company structure.

By 1994 Legs on the Wall had developed a new art form that blended theatre, dance and new circus. They created a show called *All of Me*, which combined drama, dance, music and circus skills to tell a story. This marked the beginning of a new art form in Australia called "physical theatre".



Legs on the Wall perform *Eora Crossing* on the side of the Sydney Museum in January 2004.

The performers in Legs on the Wall are multi-skilled—in dance, acrobatics, aerial work, balance and acting. They work with writers, composers, musicians, artists, riggers and theatre designers to create new works.

To tell a story, they choreograph circus tricks and dance moves to music and dialogue. Actors might speak, then intertwine in dance and acrobatics, as they physically express the story, emotions and relationships. They also use the theatre space in a new way. In traditional theatre and dance, the stage is often separate from the audience, whereas in the performances of Legs on the Wall, the whole theatre is used by the performers. The performance comes alive with the unexpected—acrobatic and aerial feats might occur above you or on the walls at any moment.