

Editorial: THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ACCOUNTANTS

The following was in the "Nation Review" of October 21. It expresses our view exactly -

"When the Art Gallery of New South Wales was reopened last May midst much pomp and vice regal brouhaha, there was much talk of Sydney finally achieving a gallery worthy of its size, status, etc. However, events of the last week cast doubt on the ability of the trustees of the gallery to safeguard works in their care, which is after all a part of their function.

Last Monday night at what can only be described as the kitsch event of the year, 5000 boozing accountants descended on the gallery, aided and abetted by the trustees.

Drink and food stalls were scattered amongst the paintings and cylindrical garbage cans were placed next to them. The collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales includes some of the best known Australian paintings, such as Tom Roberts' *Bailed Up* and *The Golden Fleece*, Streeton's *Fire's On* and Dobell's portrait of Bob Menzies. The justification for this rather inappropriate event was an art prize of \$2500 for Australian landscape. The resultant exhibition makes the Easter Show look exciting.

But back to the accountants. No one at the gallery is quite clear as to why the trustees approved it, but someone obviously thought it would be brilliant if the Tenth International Congress of Accountants had the big nosh up of the conference there.

Despite gallant attempts by the gallery staff to remove vulnerable paintings, the resultant carnage caused serious damage to at least one painting - John Passmore's *Millers Point*. My alert informant heard reports of the pitifully scarce attendants valiantly battling against people who insisted on leaning on paintings, putting their glasses against sculptures, etc.

The question that arises is not one of the behaviour of the accountants. One expects people at conventions to act like slob and inevitably this expectation is fulfilled. But what should be of concern to the good people of Sydney, who are after all paying for the gallery and its collection, is whether trustees should treat the gallery as a convenience or a pub and endanger the works of art."

Source CAS Broadsheet October 1972