

**Associate Professor Helge Larsen and Ms Darani Lewers
AM**



The degree of Doctor of Visual Arts (honoris causa) was conferred upon Associate Professor Helge Larsen and Ms Darani Lewers AM at the Sydney College of the Arts graduation ceremony held at 9.30am on 13 April 2007.



Chancellor the Hon Kim Santow conferring the degree of Doctor of Visual Arts (honoris causa) upon Associate Professor Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers, *photo, courtesy Memento Photography.*



Professor William Robert (Jim) Allen, Guy Warren, Associate Professor Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers, Doctor of Visual Arts (honoris causa), *photo, courtesy Memento Photography.*



With the Dean of Sydney College of the Arts, Professor Colin Rhodes (centre) are (from left) Guy Warren, Professor Jim Allen, Darani Lewers and Associate Professor Helge Larsen, *photo, courtesy University of Sydney News.*

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Associate Professor Helge Larsen and Ms Darani Lewers AM, both for admission to the degree of Doctor of Visual Arts (honoris causa).

Associate Professor Helge Larsen was appointed as a Senior Lecturer at Sydney College of the Arts in 1977. This began a long and distinguished career as a teacher in this institution, combined with positions of senior management and administration. He was the Head of the Jewellery and Silversmithing Department, and in 1985 was appointed Principal Lecturer in charge of Craft Studies.

In 1988 he was appointed Deputy Director (Academic) of Sydney College of the Arts, and in 1990, while Acting Director of the College, was promoted to Associate Professor of the University of Sydney. From 1991 to 1994 his position was Head of the School of Visual Arts. In this role he was instrumental in integrating a productive relationship between the College and the larger University through times of change and uncertainty.

In 1999 Helge Larsen was the recipient of the Emeritus Award from the Visual Arts/Craft Fund of the Australia Council. In addition Larsen curated a number of national exhibitions (on behalf of the Australia Council) that toured Japan and Europe between 1980 and 1991.

Since 1994 Larsen and Lewers have received a number of individual Australia Council Visual Arts/Craft Board grants, including support for major international exhibitions in Europe and the United States.

Darani Lewers, the daughter of two major artists of Australian modernism, Margo and Gerald Lewers, was appointed a member in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 1982. In 1979, Darani, together with her sister, donated their parents' property and art collection at Emu Plains to the Penrith Council to become a Regional Gallery.

Aside from her career as a practitioner at the forefront of contemporary jewellery, she has continuously and energetically taken a public advocacy role for contemporary Australian craft. Chairing the Crafts Board of the Australia Council from 1976 to 80, she established herself as an important voice championing equity for Australia Council support and funding for the crafts. Her practice and professional activism continue to inspire debate and exemplify the principles underpinning her commitment to crafts practice in the contemporary visual arts.

Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers have in their collaborative practice played a pivotal role in the establishment of contemporary jewellery, hollowware and design in Australia, through a creative partnership spanning forty-five years. Their significant exhibition profile includes fourteen major international solo exhibitions, nineteen international group exhibitions and over fifty solo exhibitions in Australia. Their work has been exhibited in numerous museums and is included in many important international and national collections. They have represented Australia in at least ten solo exhibitions internationally, including in the Australian Embassies in Paris and Washington.

Commissions have formed a substantial element of Larsen and Lewers' practice from the early 1960s, frequently working on a large scale in an architectural context. Examples include work in the New Parliament House, Canberra and as well as liturgical pieces for churches and chapels in Sydney and Melbourne, ceremonial Maces were commissioned by Sydney's University of Technology and The University of Western Sydney.

The remarkable collaborative partnership of Helge Larsen and Darani Lewers as educators, practitioners and curators has been acknowledged through international residencies, visiting professorships, conference participation and international exhibitions representing Australian jewellery and craft.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Visual Arts (honoris causa), artists, educators, and cultural ambassadors, Helge Esben Larsen and Darani Lewers and I invite you to confer the degrees upon them.