

**Travel Report**  
**Shanti Shea An**  
**Eloquence Art Prize 2022**

As winner of the 2022 Eloquence Art Prize, I visited Paris from 17 June to 8 July 2023. During my stay, I attended the École du Louvre's Summer School program alongside professional meetings with curators working in French museums, organised through the French Embassy in Australia. My three-week visit afforded me the opportunity to immerse myself in French culture whilst learning about the diversity and history of French museum practice from esteemed art historians, curators, and conservators, through a series of seminars and practical visits to French cultural institutions.

The École du Louvre is located within the Palais du Louvre and offers courses in Art History, Archaeology, Museology, the History of Civilizations, and Epigraphy. The Summer School introduces students to key principles in French Museology. The 2023 program focussed on the diversity of Parisian museums, where I joined a group of postgraduate students from Peking University, University of Saint Andrews, and University of Essex. There was lively discussion each week around the different approaches to art historical scholarship and museum practice around the world. Key highlights included visits to the Bourse de commerce (the Pinault Collection), Musée d'Orsay, Musée des arts décoratifs, and Versailles, where I was offered unique insights into the history of these institutions and the material culture they care for.

Alongside taking part in the École du Louvre program, I had the privilege of meeting with curators working in modern and contemporary art museums in Paris. I first met with Daria de Beauvais, Senior Curator at the Palais de Tokyo, to speak with her about her experience working with Australian First Nations artists, including her recent project, *Jonathan Jones: untitled (transcriptions of country)* at the Palais de Tokyo, co-presented with Artspace in Sydney. I then met with curator Aurélie Verdier at the Centre Pompidou, who co-curated *Matisse: Life & Spirit, Masterpieces from the Centre Pompidou, Paris* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2022. We spoke about my early love of Matisse and Dr Verdier generously shared her experience as a curator, including what questions curators ask, how to manage a growing contemporary collection and telling stories through art. Finally, I was lucky to meet with Juliette Lecorne, Curator at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, where we discussed her 2022 exhibition, *Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori*, the first major solo survey exhibition of Gabori's work outside Australia, and spoke about the importance of fostering relationships with community, working with contemporary artists, and forging new paths in art history.

These visits and meetings opened my eyes to the rich diversity of cultural objects and works of art held in these institutions, with many surprise encounters, both old and new. In the final week of my stay, I had the honour of delivering a short speech at an event hosted by the Ambassador to Australia in Paris. It was NAIDOC Week, and I elected to speak on a work by the First Nations artist Lena Nyadbi that is featured on the roof of the Musée du Quai Branly. As I

mentioned in my speech, millions of visitors see Nyadbi's *Barramundi scales* (2013) each year from atop the Eiffel Tower. I feel incredibly lucky to have been one of them in 2023.