

Queen's Birthday Honour for Carlton North art expert

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Alison Carroll has been appointed a member of Order of Australia (AM).

A BURNING passion for art and improved cultural ties with Asia has seen a Carlton North resident recognised with a Queen's Birthday honour.

Alison Carroll, the founder and director of the Asialink Arts Program based out of Melbourne University, was announced today as a member of Order of Australia (AM).

She is one of just 135 people from around the country to receive the prestigious nomination.

Ms Carroll, who sits on a wide array of arts committees and panels, said the Asialink initiative had its origins in a trip to Sri Lanka 20 years ago.

"I had a light-bulb moment, I suppose you could say," she said.

"I had studied art history at Melbourne University and knew a lot about European art, but I found myself in a country where I didn't know any of the artists' names.

"I thought to myself, 'this is wrong - I have to do something to change this'."

Aware of the need to create more constructive dialogue between Australian artists and their Asian counterparts, Ms Carroll rolled up her sleeves and got to work.

She started approaching artists, galleries and government bodies in South-East Asia to gain a greater appreciation of the different mediums in that part of the world.

The eventual payoff was immense - the foundation of the Asialink Arts Program in 1991, which continues to this day with the support of Melbourne University, the Federal Government and the Myer Foundation.

Ms Carroll, whose own expertise lies in the visual arts, said the program also supported literature and the performing arts.

But she said while Asialink had made enormous strides in improving relations with Asian artists, a lot more still needed to be done.

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Chuen Lim, Southbank
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