VOLUME 25 | NUMBER 2 | AUGUST 2012

The newsletter of the Australian–American Fulbright Commission promoting educational and cultural exchange between Australia and the United States.

the fulbrighter AUSTRALIA

THROUGH A LENS, CLEARLY

Glass artist Matthew Day Perez, who recently completed his Fulbright in Canberra, held a solo exhibition of his work at the Canberra Glassworks at the end of June.

Matthew Perez and Romaldo Giurgola with one of Matthew's artworkds

A group of Fulbright Scholars, Alumni, Commission staff and other friends joined Matthew at the opening of the exhibition, which was called *Clearly*.

Creative Director of the Glassworks, Ms Clare Belfrage, introduced the show, saying how delighted the community at the Glassworks has been to have Matthew in Australia, and how pleased they were to be able to present the solo show.

The key speaker who opened the event was well-known architect, Romaldo (Aldo) Giurgola, himself a Fulbright Alumnus (1949 to the U.S. from Italy). Aldo has had an impressive career, being a principal architect in the Canberra-based company Mitchell Giurgola and Thorp, which designed the new Parliament House in Canberra and other significant Australian buildings. The company has been awarded some of the industry's leading and most prestigious prizes, including being a two-time winner of the RAIA Sir Zelman Cowen Award for Public Buildings.

Aldo paid tribute to the work of his fellow Fulbrighter Matthew, which he said was extraordinary, and then spoke about his own Fulbright, the opportunities it offered, and the impact that it had on his life.

"The Fulbright was a wonderful thing for me. It allowed me to realise my aspiration to become an architect."

Aldo had received his Fulbright soon after finishing school, and he spent two years at Columbia in New York. He said that he had always benefitted from the award and felt grateful to Fulbright.

Matthew Perez came to Australia at the end of 2010, to the ANU School of Art to gain a detailed understanding of a part of the process of casting glass known as annealing.

"Cast glass is made by putting sand into a mould and melting it at a high temperature. Annealing is the step where cast glass is cooled, and it is crucial that this is done properly to ensure that the resultant glass object won't crack or shatter due to internal stresses in the material."

Reflecting back on his experience, Matthew said that it had gone beyond his expectations.

"It was fantastic. I achieved my initial project aims and then some. It gave me the opportunity, the time and place to work. My project evolved in a healthy response to the work I was doing, migrating in response to problems of cracking. I was able to embrace the qualities of glass. The Fulbright name was a great support."

"I learnt more about the annealing of glass, which has given me more confidence in working with the material. The experience itself was also pretty amazing, I went on tour to a few universities, was able to teach, and I ran two shows."

Matthew has returned to the U.S. and is undertaking a lecture and teaching tour to share the experience and insights he has gained during his Fulbright. He is also planning a return to Australia in the future.

FULBRIGHT AUSTRALIAN–AMERICAN

Kristen hard at work in the bat cave.

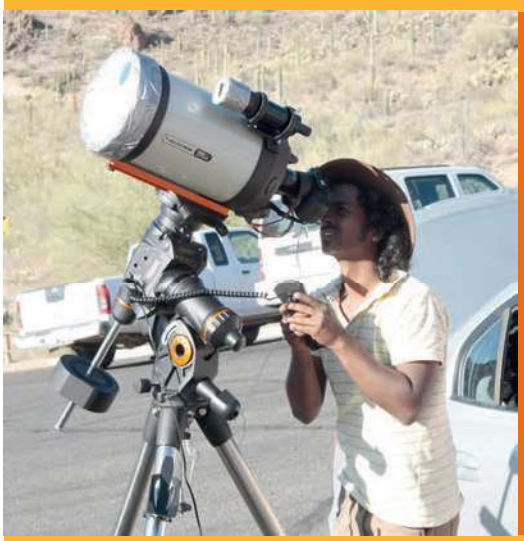
TRACKING BATS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Ms Kristen Lear was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 2011 to come to Australia to study population and breeding of the Southern Bent-wing Bat. She has sent us this update of her Fulbright project.

My Fulbright journey began over two years ago with an idea to combine my passion for bats with my long-standing desire to see Australia. Two years later that idea has led me to Naracoorte, South Australia to study the Critically Endangered Southern Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii bassanii*). The Southern Bent-wing Bat was listed as Critically Endangered under Australia's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act of 1999 based on the fact that the sub-species has undergone a reduction in population from about 100,000-200,000 individuals in the 1960s to about 30,000 individuals in 2009 and that it has a highly restricted range, relying on only two maternity caves (Bat Cave in Naracoorte and Starlight Cave in Warrnambool, Victoria). The aim of my Fulbright project is to monitor the bats at the Bat Cave maternity site and at their overwintering sites throughout South East South Australia and southwest Victoria. The information gathered from my study will help guide management strategies that will aid in the recovery of this species.

I arrived in Australia in August 2011 and began monitoring the Bat Cave colony shortly afterward. My nightly work during the summer months consisted of setting up a thermal imaging camera outside Bat Cave to count the bats with an automated counting system developed from U.S. military missile-tracking software. This method is a much easier and less time-consuming way to count the bats than the previous method of hand counting from a video recording, considering that the highest number of bats I recorded was over 42,000 and that the bats can come out of the cave at rates over 1,000 per minute! Now that the bats have left the maternity cave for their over-wintering sites (they spend the winter in over 60 caves throughout the region) I am helping to plan a winter survey of all known over-wintering caves in conjunction with the South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment. I am excited for this survey, as it will involve volunteers from both states and will be a useful tool in determining which caves are most important for the bats in winter.

The Fulbright has allowed me to pursue my passion for bats and further explore what my long-term interests are. Ever since my first summer of working with bats after my sophomore year of college, I knew I wanted to pursue a PhD to explore some aspect of bat ecology. Through my Fulbright work and my interactions with other bat researches at conferences and workshops in Australia, I have come to realize what aspect of bat ecology I'm most interested in: the role of bats in providing ecosystem services in agricultural systems and how to best encourage farmers to incorporate bats (and other natural pest controllers) in their management strategies, with the ultimate aim to create more sustainable agricultural practices. There are so many intricacies in the study of "ecosystem services" and it's definitely a complicated issue, but it's something that I think is very important as we strive to maintain a balance between conservation and economic growth and development. I strongly believe that the two ends don't have to be mutually exclusive; this is one of the ideas I hope to pursue further in graduate school. My time in Australia will be coming to an end soon, but I know I will not soon forget my experiences here as a Fulbright Scholar.



Lashi Bandara following the transit of Venus.

Lashi Bandara is a 2011 Fulbright Australian Scholar, who went to the U.S. in November 2011 to progress his work in mathematics at Stanford and the University of Missouri. He has sent us this report of his Fulbright.

TAKING FULBRIGHT TO THE TRANSIT

When I set out on my Fulbright, I could not have envisioned that my experience would be so rich. My time in the U.S. began with a visit to Philip Glass' 9th Symphony orchestra with a fellow Fulbright Krysten Keches (Fulbright U.S. Scholar 2010) at Carnegie Hall in New York. This was only the beginning of a remarkable experience.

For my Fulbright project, I have been considering a general version of a mathematical problem popularly (in the right circles) called the Kato Square Root problem. My PhD supervisor , Alan McIntosh, was one of a team of five that