



Summary

Great cities and communities have art in public places. Public art can contribute to the transformation of the urban landscape. It can celebrate and commemorate 'place' and provide a contemporary response to cultural and historical contexts, acting as a means for engaging with the community.

The successful implementation of art into public places relies upon best practice frameworks to encourage collaboration between all those involved in the development and installation of the art; from artist, to architect, project manager, community etc. There are good examples of government guidelines on public art which the Institute supports and encourages across the tiers of governments.

Background

In Australia, state and local governments play a key role in the implementation and delivery of public art programs. Integrating public art into building projects and public places can contribute to the transformation of our urban landscape.

The increasing popularity of public art in recent times is not only gaining momentum in Australia but also overseas. Today major cities across the world recognise the value of public art, not only as a marker of our cultural identity but also as a means to engage with the community. In some instances public art is used as a tool for political and cultural reconciliation.

However the term "public art" is not always well understood nor does the implementation of public art always meet best practice.



The term "public art" usually refers to contemporary art practice that occurs outside the traditional gallery or museum system. Public art can manifest in a wide range of activities and forms such as; performance, installation, site specific work, sculptures, community art, painting or conceptual art.

In the built environment, public art can also involve a highly diverse range of art and design integrated in building and public spaces. Examples range from seating and wall treatment to landscape and building design.

A best practice approach in integrated public art (i.e. art in public spaces) involves close collaboration between artist and architect as well as the community.

In order to protect the interests of the community and artists, some state and local governments have developed comprehensive public art policies, covering areas such as; education and employment and training, as well as preserving local cultural identity and history. These policies may include; promoting an awareness of a sense of place and local culture and heritage, protection of artists' intellectual property, encouragement of innovative public art models and training for the public art industry. The aim of these policies is to provide a meaningful cultural dimension and to allow idiosyncratic and memorable detail to important settings.

Some government public art programs also offer comprehensive public art implementation guidelines to assist architects, curators and artists to understand the environment in which they are working and to understand both the physical requirements and cultural dimensions of public art.



What Governments need to do

Governments need to:

- provide art in the public domain supported by best practice public art policies,
- provide incentives (such as tax reduction) for private property owners to include art in the public dimension of their project with guidelines to ensure that this funding is secured for the implementation of public art,
- protect established and relevant public art through maintenance programmes and heritage listing,
- provide a project framework which encourages collaboration between artists and architects, which is paramount to the successful delivery of public art outcomes,
- recognise and respect the intellectual property (IP) of artists and architects - obtaining a licence to use the IP created which does not require the transfer of IP,
- provide for relocation or de-commissioning in the Commissioning Agreement,
- enable quality outcomes through the inclusion of a public art curator in the project team for significant government funded projects,
- encourage public debate and discourse, competitions and awards related to new and innovative public art,
- encourage public art research (e.g. impact on culture, architecture and place).



What Institute members need to do

- encourage the inclusion of art to enhance the public dimension of any project,
- advocate and promote appropriate budgets for public art,
- acknowledge the unique character of public art projects by allocating sufficient time for delivering a public artwork,
- resist the erosion of public art budgets that can sometimes occur through project management and construction processes,
- encourage the engagement of a well qualified public art specialist for significant projects,
- invite artists to take part in the design process as early as possible,
- encourage artists and architects to understand cultural, historical, environmental and political context/significance of a place,
- engage with the community in the consultation process if possible (e.g. during schematic design stage).

What the community needs to do

- advocate for public initiatives and budgets which enable public art,
- become involved where public art projects include community participation.



Institute's initiatives

The Queensland and ACT Chapters have been running "Art and Architecture" awards for a number of years.

Further Information and Links

There are a number of websites dedicated to public art, following are a selection of sites:

www.publicartaroundtheworld.com

www.public-art-directory.com

www.publicartonline.org.uk

www.publicart.org

public-art.shu.ac.uk

www.publicartreview.com