

Here Today,

As public art practices increasingly take on new approaches to become more integrated into everyday life, short-term, site-specific approaches are becoming more common in urban Australia. Ephemeral public art practices have become increasingly popular. Local governments have recognized the benefits of nonpermanent work and revised their policies to become more inclusive and flexible.

The quality of ephemeral practices varies. Melbourne has embraced these practices since the mid-1990s while other capital cities are just beginning to formally introduce temporary programs into their public art policies. These changes in direction have created opportunities for artists to engage with the broader community through the processes of art-making and to avoid the problems associated with permanent works such as Ron Robertson-Swann's *Vault*, originally commissioned for Melbourne's city square in the late 1970s. This infamous modernist sculpture single-handedly divided the city through public opinion of the work and consequently has been moved to several locations. It now remains a nostalgic part of the city's urban history [see page 26 for details]. Here's a look at how ephemeral art is making its way into Australia's cities.



Gone Tomorrow:

Ephemeral Public Art Practices in Australia's Capital Cities

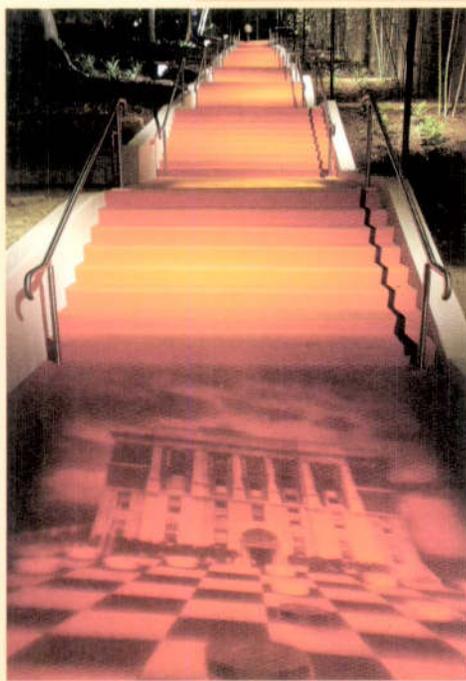
TAMMY WONG



Darwin, Northern Territory

In Darwin, the biannual Sculpture in the Park exhibition, traditionally held at the civic center, is a popular event. In 2011, it will occur at multiple sites around the city. Support of temporary public art practices is fairly new to the city, but recent reforms of its public art policies are more inclusive. A recent project developed by the City of Darwin in collaboration with the Charles Darwin University and the Casuarina Library invited emerging artists to submit concepts for temporary public projects.

Holly Eve Angeles' *Buttons for Breakfast*, 2008, uses buttons to transform ordinary objects into a colorful and whimsical sculpture. Photo courtesy the artist.



Brisbane, Queensland

In Brisbane, there has been a renewed commitment to ephemeral public art. Here, the focus is on the cultural activation of public spaces and the development of a public art database that records and archives nearly 1,000 permanent and temporary works. Recently, the City of Brisbane made its first attempt at commissioning temporary work when it invited emerging and established artists to create temporary projects through Vibrant Laneways and Inhabit programs for the Brisbane Arts Festival.

Norbert Francis Attard, *Jacob's Ladder*, 2009, King Edward Park. Photo by Shane Holzberter.

QUEENSLAND

Brisbane

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth



Adelaide, South Australia

Adelaide's central market has held a changing program of temporary public art projects using light boxes, murals, and three-dimensional installations. The City of Adelaide also annually commissions for their Outdoor Gallery program, which is open to temporary public art practices. Recent works by artist Matthew Stuckey included a series of colorful stickers placed on parking ticket machines.

Matthew Stuckey, *Ticket Machines* (1 of 7 designs), 2010. Photo by Jonathon van der Knapp.



Perth, Western Australia

The state of Western Australia, which has seen increased building due to the recent mining boom, has been a leader in introducing policies around percentage-for-art programs. As a result, the City of Perth is currently revising and updating its public art policies. The city also runs the TRANSART program, a yearly commission dedicated to temporary art practices. This year's commission went to artist Geoffrey Drake-Brockman. Another program that focuses on ephemeral practice is Three by Three, which got started in 2008.

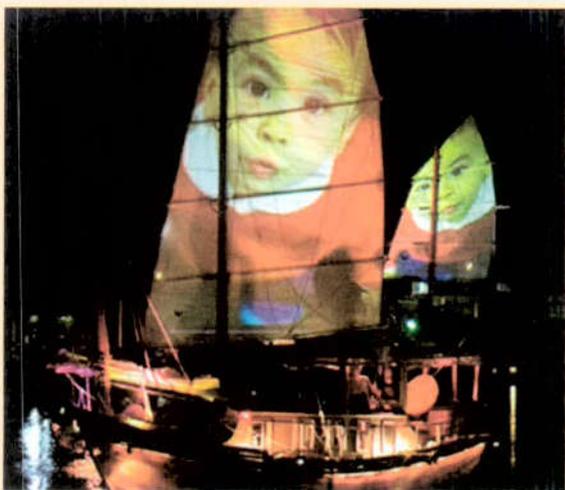
Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, *Counter*, 2010. Photo courtesy the artist.



Melbourne, Victoria

Melbourne leads the way with visible and imaginative artistic street intervention. The presence of the city's street artists, working in a variety of inventive media, can be seen throughout the city center. More formally, the City of Melbourne holds its annual Laneways Commission, a program focused on engaging emerging contemporary artists to develop site-specific works in unused street lanes for up to six months. The program, active since 2001, has seen the Commission embrace artists working in disciplines outside of the traditional framework of public art practice. In 2009, highlights included Huang QingLan's *City Dream*, an animated "electric graffiti" style drawing projected in one of the darkened spaces of Lingham Lane that revealed a gentle play between street intervention and commissioned art.

Huang QingLan, *City Dream*, 2009 (detail). Photo by Greg Sims.



Hobart, Tasmania

Most major public art projects in Hobart have been permanent. That's due to change, however, since the current revision of the public art master plan proposes to be more inclusive of temporary public art practices. Hobart's ephemeral art has primarily taken place in conjunction with popular arts festivals such as Ten Days on the Island and the Taste of Tasmania.

Big hART Inc, *Junk Theory*, 2007, created by Scott Rankin with creative producer Michelle Kotevski. The group opened the Ten Days on the Island festival in 2009. Photo by Keith Saunders.

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