Public Art: Access all areas

Fiona Hillary
2013 Higher Education and Skills Group Overseas Fellowship Report

An ISS Institute Fellowship sponsored by
Higher Education and Skills Group
This Fellowship enabled Fiona Hillary to examine current international trends in public art practice, management and curation, focusing on models of collaborative practice and mechanisms of cultural dialogue and knowledge exchange in the online environment. The Fellow undertook a series of interviews and site visits and attended conferences in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, all of which provided the framework for the research. Exposure to a range of exhibitions and public works enriched the research experience. Additional visits to China and Japan extended the Fellow’s knowledge.

The research revealed a dynamic and potent culture of public art practice and dialogue internationally. International engagement allowed the Fellow exposure to the diverse practices and voices in the field and the critical nature of that diversity. The International experience shifted the Fellow’s understanding of what is required to create effective scaffolding for emerging public art practitioners from a singular online platform to a diverse range of opportunities for engagement.

Creating opportunities for research is one of the key platforms the Fellow has engaged in on her return. Influenced strongly by a range of practices experienced during the Fellowship, the Fellow developed and implemented a working model of socially engaged public practice, the ‘Urban Laboratory’ via the development of ‘live test sites’ in the central business district of Melbourne, commissioned as a research methodology by the City of Melbourne.

The Fellow’s interests have developed beyond the curation of an online portal to the translation of ‘live test sites’ of practice in the urban context and as online collaborative studios. Creating online public art studios, will build interdisciplinary collaborations in learning, teaching and practice. It will provide the opportunity to engage more directly in an international context, the benefits of which will filter through online forums, symposiums and publications to create a multitude of opportunities for students to engage and develop, meanwhile creating strong advocates for practice and learning.

Building research into Vocational Education is paramount. The ISS Institute is one of few avenues for this to occur and the Fellow recognises the critical role ISS Institute has to play as an advocate. The Fellowship has contributed significantly to the Fellow’s approach to practice as an artist, curator/producer and teacher. The development, implementation and evaluation of the ‘Urban Laboratory’, strongly influenced by the Fellowship experience, resulted in a co-authored publication in New York based peer reviewed journal, Public Art Dialogue.
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<tr>
<td>CAST</td>
<td>Centre for Art Society and Transformation RMIT University</td>
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<td>CERES</td>
<td>Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (Community Environment Park located in Brunswick, Victoria, Australia)</td>
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<td>CFP</td>
<td>Centre for Performance and Creative Writing, Goldsmith University, UK</td>
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<td>TAE</td>
<td>Certificate IV in Teaching and Assessment</td>
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<td>VCA</td>
<td>Victorian College of the Arts and</td>
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<td>Melbourne Conservatorium of Music</td>
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Fiona Hillary thanks the following individuals and organisations that have generously given of their time and their expertise to assist, advise and guide her through this Fellowship program.

**Awarding Body – International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)**

The International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) is an independent, national organisation. In 2015 it is celebrating twenty-five (25) years working with Australian governments, industry education institutions and individuals to enable them to gain enhanced skills, knowledge and experience in traditional trades, professions and leading edge technologies.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our individual Fellows. Under the Overseas Applied Research Fellowship Program the Fellows travel overseas. Upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

- Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions
- Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses
- Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

Over 300 Australians have received Fellowships, across many industry sectors. In addition, recognised experts from overseas conduct training activities and events. To date, 25 leaders in their field have shared their expertise in Australia.

According to Skills Australia’s ‘Australian Workforce Futures: A National Workforce Development Strategy 2010’,

> Australia requires a highly skilled population to maintain and improve our economic position in the face of increasing global competition, and to have the skills to adapt to the introduction of new technology and rapid change. International and Australian research indicates we need a deeper level of skills than currently exists in the Australian labour market to lift productivity. We need a workforce in which more people have skills and knowledge, but also multiple and higher level skills and qualifications. Deepening skills and knowledge across all occupations is crucial to achieving long-term productivity growth. It also reflects the recent trend for jobs to become more complex and the consequent increased demand for higher-level skills. This trend is projected to continue regardless of whether we experience strong or weak economic growth in the future. Future environmental challenges will also create demand for more sustainability related skills and knowledge across a range of industries and occupations.

In this context, the ISS Institute works with our Fellows, industry and government to identify specific skills and knowledge in Australia that require enhancing, where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions or other Registered Training Organisations. The Fellows’ overseas experience sees them broadening and deepening their own professional knowledge, which they then share with their peers, industry and government upon their return. This is the focus of the ISS Institute’s work.

For further information on our Fellows and our work see http://www.issinstitute.org.au.

Fiona Hillary also thanks the CEO (Bella Irlicht AO) and staff (Ken Greenhill and Paul Sumner) of ISS Institute for their assistance in planning and development of the Fellowship and completion of this report.

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fellowship Sponsor
The Higher education and Skills Group (HESG) of the Department of Education and Training (DET), Victorian Government, is responsible for the administration and coordination of programs for the provision of training and further education, adult community education and employment services in Victoria and is a valued sponsor of the ISS Institute. Hillary thanks them for providing the opportunity to undertake this international research Fellowship.

The following organisations and individuals also gave generously of their time and assisted the Fellows to prepare, plan and develop his research activities:

Supporters
- Prof Martyn Hook, Acting Head of School, School of Art, RMIT.
- Dr Ruth Fazakerley, Lecturer/Researcher, University of South Australia.
- Claire Hatch, Public Matter.
- Dr Geoff Hogg, Director, Centre for Art, Society and Transformation, RMIT University.
- Belinda Wilson, Program Manager, Diploma of Visual Art, Vocational Education, RMIT University.
- Linda Arnold, Industry Manager, IBSA.
- Dr Maggie McCormick, Program Manager, Art in Public Places, RMIT.
- Michelle Ely, Grants Management Team Leader, Arts & Culture, City of Melbourne.
- Andrea Kleist, Team Leader, Docklands I, City of Melbourne.
- Dr Dean Merlino, Masters Co-ordinator, Centre for Cultural Partnerships, VCA & MCM, University of Melbourne.
- Grissel Walmaggia, Cultural Planning Officer, City of Greater Dandenong.

Employer Support
The Fellow extends her sincerest thanks to the team at RMIT School of Art for their support and encouragement for all her endeavours as a teacher, researcher and artist.

Organisations Impacted by the Fellowship

Government
- Creative Victoria
- Regional Arts Victoria
- Australia Council for the Arts
- City of Melbourne
- Local Government Organisations throughout Australia
- Department of Housing
- Places Victoria
- VIC Health
- Department of Planning & Community Development
1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Industry
- Artists
- Artslaw
- Australian Business Arts Foundation
- Consultants; including but not limited to Brecknock Consulting
- Commissioning bodies: including but not limited to VicUrban, Lendlease, commercial developers
- Cultural Researchers
- Kaldor Public Art Projects
- Urban Art Projects
- Urban Planners
- Architects
- Federation Square
- Signal Youth Art Studio
- Horse Bazaar
- Next Wave
- Fringe

Professional Associations
- National Association for Visual Arts
- Artshub
- Architects for Peace

Education and Training
- Higher Education and Skills
- RMIT VE
- Gordon Institute of TAFE
- RMIT School of Art
- Centre for Cultural Partnerships, VCA & MCM, Melbourne University

Community
- Artist’s collectives: Public Assembly, roarawar feartata, Punctum, PVI collective
- Practitioners working in public spaces
- Platform Art Space
- City Lights Gallery
- The Gertrude Association
- CERES
- Renew Australia
2. ABOUT THE FELLOW

Name
Fiona Hillary

Employment
- Teacher, Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Visual Art - Public Art/Painting RMIT University
- Curator/Producer, Urban Laboratory, Centre for Art Society and Transformation RMIT University
- Lecturer, Master of Arts (Art in public space).

Qualifications
- TAE Certificate IV in Training and Assessment Upgrade, RMIT, 2012
- Masters of Art – Art in Public Places, with distinction, RMIT, 2009
- Bachelor of Visual Art & University Art Prize, Edith Cowan University, WA, 2004
- Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment, SW Regional College TAFE WA, 2002
- Graduate Diploma of Adult Education and Training, University of South Australia, 1999
- Bachelor of Arts Politics, Flinders University of South Australia, 1992

Membership
- Australian Education Union
- The Gertrude Projection Festival Association Board

Biography
Fiona Hillary is a visual artist and educator concerned with activating cultural landscapes through artistic creation, development and engagement. The Fellow's practice engages notions of collaboration as process and outcome. 'Contain yourself' is her most recent collaboration (January 2015), in which she worked with a cross-disciplinary group of artists/researchers utilising light, sound, vibration and shipping containers to create a temporary, affective atmosphere on the banks of the Maribyrnong River. Commissioned public art works by the Fellow include a major commission for the City of Greater Dandenong ‘...a place to gather’ (2013).

As an arts educator, Hillary has had responsibilities across vocational and postgraduate programs at RMIT University since 2010. She is currently responsible for delivering Tools for Creative Practice within the Masters of Art in Public Space at RMIT. Additionally Hillary is responsible for co-ordinating and delivering the Painting and Public Art program within the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Visual Art at RMIT University in the School of Art - Vocational Education. Students in this program are required to undertake art projects in public space and Hillary is responsible for generating and developing the industry partnerships that make these projects happen. Hillary’s engagement with industry was acknowledged in 2013 with an RMIT University Teaching Award. Vocational Education Public Art students are mentored by practicing artists, engage in commissioned works and annually they make a splash in the Gertrude Projection Festival.

Fiona Hillary has had a long professional connection with local government and community, having worked as a cultural consultant and in a range of arts administration roles in regional Western Australia and inner metropolitan Victorian local government organisations.
2. ABOUT THE FELLOW

Hillary was the founding Co-ordinator of Signal Youth Arts Studio, the City of Melbourne’s youth arts project. At Signal she developed a model of practice that has seen Signal develop a creative community of professional artists engaging with young people as mentors and co-creators.

Since completing her Masters of Arts – Art in Public Space at RMIT, where her research focussed on the re-territorialisation of space, Fiona has developed a keen research interest in the use of public space, particularly contested spaces and the implications of artistic engagement. In 2013 Fiona was the Curator/Producer of the Urban Laboratory, a research project exploring perceptions of safety in Hosier and Rutledge Lane in Melbourne, run through the Centre for Art, Society and Transformation at RMIT University and commissioned by the City of Melbourne.
3. AIMS OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Victorian TAFE training packages associated with Visual Art have since 2011 included the delivery of Public Art as a training area. Students are ushered through a suite of units that assist them in developing conceptually and practically as potential public art practitioners. Public art is multi-disciplinary and may engage students interested in a broad range of practice including, but not limited to: socially engaged practice, sculpture, painting, printmaking, projection, sound and light works. It can incorporate the production of ephemeral or permanent works.

In order to extend the education and training environment for current students and future practitioners, this Fellowship aimed to explore the potential of information and exchange networks (via an online portal), added to a vocational program, as a form of scaffolding to help facilitate pathways from Vocational Education (VE), across higher education, into industry and beyond.

The broad nature of public art means developing an educational model that will have a broad reach across a range of industries that engage in public art creation, development, commissioning, implementation and critique across Victoria.

The specific aims of this Fellowship were threefold. Firstly, to explore an existing model of information dissemination in the UK, specifically the development of Public Art Online and its affiliated partners, with a particular focus on the capacity to build on the existing model of vocational training to provide opportunities for students and emerging artists in the public realm.

Secondly, to engage in critical cultural dialogue in an international context that explores the street and public realm as a site of practice. The Fellow attended and reported on a conference at Goldsmith University, ‘return to the streets’, a European exploration of the notion of the shifting role of the street in the context of contemporary culture and politics.

Finally to develop a framework for igniting educational partnerships across Victoria, Australia and internationally that will facilitate critical dialogue about Public Art and its iteration in each context.
4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

In this current political climate it is critical that a platform to advocate the role of public art emerge, and that artists, curators, administrators, educators and researchers advance a critical voice in the political landscape. Currently, public art provides a significant career pathway for a range of professions in Australia, including but not limited to: artists, arts managers, curators, arts administrators, architects, urban designers, researchers, trades—all of these professionals graduating from a range of training and education institutions.

Varied means of developing practice in public spaces, commissioning practice and building industry knowledge have come to the fore in the contemporary Australian context. Many government organisations (federal, state and local) have developed public art policies to define and direct their specific interests in and commitment to public art practice. Public art plays a significant role globally in development, urban regeneration and community engagement. As articulated by Ruth Fazakerley, ‘Public art has increasingly been advocated for on the grounds of its contribution to resolving visual and social conflict, and in collaboration with the work of other design professionals, as providing improved visual comprehension and literacy; opportunities for social cohesion, citizenship, and place identification; and a range of economic benefits to both public and private providers’.

Organisations have developed useful tools for practitioners, for example, the National Association for the Visual Arts dedicate a chapter to public art within the Code of Practice for the Professional Australian Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sector. Artslaw have been instrumental in developing contracts that are user friendly both to industry and artists. Universities have developed programs across disciplines and TAFE have recognised an area of training and developed units relevant to developing the skills sets of artists aspiring to practice in the public realm.

In a broad, competitive and changing field it is difficult to maintain an understanding of all the aspects of practice in the public realm. Currently there are a number of public art networks; however, attempts to develop an industry-wide platform for engagement is yet to emerge. Exploring and developing a collaborative framework that could act as a repository of knowledge and opportunity in the public art sector in Australia would provide a valuable resource across the sector.

The Victorian context is a particularly innovative environment for public art practice, evidenced by the plethora of projects across the sector in the last ten years including but not limited to: the City of Melbourne Laneways Commissions (2001-2011) that focussed on commissioning site specific temporary artworks, The Light in Winter (2007-current) program Federation Square, the Eastlink Freeway Public Art Works (2007), Victoria Harbour Young Artist Initiative (2007-2013), Depot: City of Greater Dandenong (2008) in partnership with Grenda’s Bus Depot, and not to mention Melbourne’s reputation as the stencil capital of the world. It seems fitting to develop a tool to enhance skill development and industry links in an environment of public practice that is internationally recognised for its innovation.

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1 Fazakerley, R. 2005 The uses of public art research, Claiming Ground Public Art Conference, Hobart, p.3.
4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

• Opportunity to build industry relationships.
• Possibility to expand access to knowledge: explore the understanding of public art and its varied roles in the Australian context.
• Potential to promote a platform for research: sharing case studies & approaches to practice.
• Increased access to commissioning opportunities.
• Potential to provide a repository of best practice commissioning models with access to contracts and support for artists/commissioners engaging in contractual arrangements.
• Develop further access to training opportunities.

Weaknesses

• Industry reluctance to participate.
• Lack of ability to define appropriate partnership model for managing an online portal.

Opportunities

• Opportunity to facilitate growth in the public art sector.
• Ability to explore industry standards for artists and commissioning bodies.
• Possibility to build research and development capacity beyond current level.
• Potential to open up dialogue internationally, for example building partnerships in Asia and provide a platform to exchange ideas, research and skills development.

Threats

• Potential lack of ongoing funding for human resources to maintain an online portal.
• Developing and maintaining a valid critical framework for debate.
• Maintaining an independent framework.
There are examples of areas in Australian industries and practices where there are weaknesses in innovation, skills, knowledge, experience, policies and/or formal organisational structures to support the ongoing successful development and recognition of individuals and the particular sector.

The focus of all ISS Institute Fellowships is on applied research and investigation overseas by Australians. The main objective is to enable enhancement and improvement in skills, knowledge and practice not currently available or implemented in Australia and the subsequent dissemination and sharing of those skills and recommendations throughout the relevant Australian industry, education, government bodies and the community.

The Skill Enhancement areas of applied research for this Fellowship are identified as follows:

5.1 Investigate the development of a public art think tank to create dialogue between artists, educators, researchers and commissioning bodies; an innovative clearinghouse of research, education, training and vocational opportunities for Public Art Practice.

- Research a current model of information dissemination managed by IXIA based in London.
- Explore the partnership model and functionality used by current organisations in the UK.

*Action: Researching current information and partnership models to identify elements critical to building a think tank model relevant to Australia and potentially Asia, driven by the TAFE sector and industry partners.*

5.2 Explore a model of engagement that is collaborative and effective.

- Explore how other organisations have developed successful models of collaborative engagement.
- Explore international projects relevant to current practice, for example Massey University of Creative Arts ‘one day sculpture project’.

*Action: This Fellowship investigation proposes to identify a model that ignites dialogue and builds pathways to engage students from TAFE to their chosen vocation of public art in a global economy and emergent forms of public practice in Australia.*

5.3 Explore the use of online technology to connect and share information in the public art realm.

- Investigate the use of online portals.
- Explore the use of other online tools that increase information in the public art space and encourage collaboration.
- Modelled on Public Art Online a program of IXIA, explore how the Australian and Asian public art sector could benefit from developing a similar tool to exchange ideas.

*Action: Explore the use of online technology to connect and share information in the public art realm with the view to the Australian education sector utilising and creating online tools that are collaborative and give agency to the exchange of ideas providing access to opportunities for students, artists, researchers, administrators, commissioners and government bodies.*
5. IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENTS REQUIRED

5.4 Engage and contribute to current debate around practice in public space.

- Explore the shifting role of the street as discourse and real physical space in the context of contemporary culture and politics.

*Action: Engage and contribute to current debate around practice in public space to inform the Australian education sector of developing trends.*

*Action: Attend, engage in and report on:*

- Goldsmiths University of London’s conference, return to the street – cfp 27-28 June 2012.
- Central St Martin’s conference ‘Unlocking the public realm: how arts and design transform urban space’ – 29 June 2012.
‘... at the moment I am convinced that the more creativity there is the better we will be able to overcome crisis.’ Achille Bonito Oliva

Critical to this research is the context within which the discussions and research occurred. Cultural and urban regeneration were evident in the Fellow’s chosen destinations, each nuanced by local conditions. Social change and social unrest were particularly palpable in Birmingham, London and Bristol revealing the impact of urban regeneration. New Zealand and Japan were foreshadowed by redevelopment in the aftermath of natural disaster and China’s rapid urbanisation has seen a dynamic shift for the role of public art practice.

Globally, urban regeneration is implemented by governments and planning authorities to address economic, social and cultural decline. In the United Kingdom, urban regeneration is the key mechanism at the forefront of social and economic policy in the postmodern city. Some approaches have seen commercial led-redevelopment, as evidenced by the Bullring development in Birmingham, running in tandem with cultural-led regeneration (and developments such as Birmingham’s Custard Factory, home to Public Art Online). The developer Argent, responsible for the redevelopment of Kings Cross, the largest redevelopment in London this century, maintain culture is critical in their approach to development.

The European Union Public Art Project (EUPA) is an example of resources focussed on the use of culture-led regeneration:

EUROPA is a 24-months cultural action aimed at fostering the transnational mobility of artists, designers and creative practitioners (especially the younger). They are mobilized using a participatory approach

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1  www.achillebonitoliva.com/
2  Tallon, A. 2013 Urban regeneration in the UK, Routledge, Oxon, UK.
6. The International Experience

for developing arts/urban interventions in three targeted EU territories featured by different scale of urbanity and environment. The project promotes the diffusion, experience and circulation of novel site-specific installations, interventions and/or creative environment.3

EUPA Projects have been significantly utilised in the early stages of the Kings Cross redevelopment via Central St Martin’s School of Art, the presentation of a number of these projects occurred at Central St Martins conference ‘Unlocking the public realm: how arts and design transform urban space’ – 29 June 2012.

The significance of curatorial approaches to connectedness to site were explored in depth by multiple presenters at Central St Martin’s ‘Unlocking the public realm’. Roger Madelin, Chief Executive of Argent, responsible for the redevelopment of Kings Cross expressed that art and cultural investment is what draws people to a space and stimulates economy through the effect of developing personal pride in both space and self.

Cultural commentators, researchers and authorities involved in Goldsmiths University of London’s conference, ‘return to the streets’ were articulating a level of social tension in the lead up to the first anniversary of the Tottenham riots. This was also evident in the media at the time. The riots occurred in August 2011, triggered by the death of Mark Duggan and when retrospectively considered, have been attributed to the implementation of austerity measures by the Cameron Government. A plethora of issues were raised as a result of the riots including but not limited to: the role of social media; social unrest, particularly among young people; reflection on the 1981 Brixton riots; the debate between justified and unjustified rioting and its cultural impact.4

Presenters were tasked with speaking on the relationship of each of their projects to the context of ‘the street’. What unfolded were discussions and issues beyond the UK context. Topics included underground engagement in the street sticker art, particularly evident in Tokyo; the way children map their pathways and view the street; the relationship between street art culture; and the ways in which street art was giving a voice to some of the most disengaged in Brazil and the media; and the rise of the culturally dislocated pop icon, MIA.

At the time of the London conference, the lead up to the 2012 Olympics was well underway, the site still closed but the impact of funding evident particularly via the Cultural Olympiad:

Culture has traditionally been an important part of the Games and this is continued today through Olympic cultural programmes such as the Cultural Olympiad, which sees host cities organise a series of cultural events in the build-up to the Games, as well as during the Games themselves. The programme spans myriad art genres and often includes plays, concerts, ballets and exhibitions, which are held within the host city and across the nation.5

‘Nowhere Island,’ a project by Alex Hartley curated by Situations, was one of 12 Artists Taking the Lead Projects funded through the Cultural Olympiad:

Nowhere island was an island which journeyed from the High Arctic region of Svalbard to the south west coast of England in summer 2012. As it made this epic journey, it travelled through international waters, whereupon it became the world’s newest nation – Nowhere island - with citizenship open to all.6

‘Nowhere Island’ explored notions of citizenship and triggered collective and individual imagination.

3 http://www.culturefund.eu/projects/european-public-art-project
6 http://www.nowhereisland.org/about/
about the possibility of forming a new nation, timely within the political and cultural context from which it emerged. It dealt with the impact of global warming and citizenship; it invigorated discussion from a range of prominent resident thinkers on the possibility of a new nation. From a new island nation to one with a longer history, the Fellow travelled across continents to visit a collaborative partner of Situations', David Cross, at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. Situations’ Claire Doherty and David Cross collaborated on challenging notions of public art across New Zealand in ‘One Day Sculpture’ in 2008.

Arriving in Wellington, New Zealand was reminiscent of a Tracey Moffat film - landing in an idyllic location, the harbour fringed with snow capped mountains. The role of public art is evident across the city, particularly along the waterfront, indicating a strong link between development, tourism and public art. Recovery from natural disaster, the Christchurch earthquake, was ever present in dialogue and the foreboding possibility of an earthquake in Wellington. The critical role art has played in the re-development and re-imagining of Christchurch was a constant discussion point, many a reference identifying the ground breaking creative work occurring in the recovery process. David Cross is a critical figure embarking on a collaborative project with Situations’, Claire Doherty ‘One Day Sculpture’ an innovative approach to public art research and advocacy. Cross cites the importance of innovative policy on the part of local government in attracting and embracing cutting edge practice. Eve Armstrong, Public Art Officer at the City of Wellington described a vibrant and rhizomatic approach to public art with philanthropists playing a strong role in the city.

Alongside the Fellowship, Fiona Hillary was invited to Shanghai’s East China Normal University (ECNU) to speak about contemporary public art practice in Melbourne and participate in the conference ‘City, Public Arts and Cultural Ecology Forum’ with her colleague Dr Maggie McCormick, who was presenting a paper. In her research, McCormick recognises the role of rapid urbanisation in bringing about the public turn:

*Public art, long relegated to the sidelines of the contemporary scene or located as a ‘between’ practice is now set to be centre stage, as a practice of the times.*

ECNU are academically delivering public art as a part of their curriculum and are interested in exploring and engaging in critical dialogue, with a particular interest in collaboration, McCormick identifies that:

*In both China and in Australia in particular, critique goes little beyond a general enthusiasm for the temporary manifestations of public art, such as the public art programs of both the City of Melbourne and the City of Sydney. On the other hand permanent commissioned works in both places remain remarkably lacking in reflection on the changing nature of urban culture.*

Professor Wei, the host, indicated an interest in engaging in an online platform, although at the time of the Fellow’s visit, social networking and online forums were not as readily available within China. Professor Wei is open to dialogue about what it could mean both for public art within China and an intercultural exchange.

A brief visit to Japan in 2012 revealed a vibrant public art culture. Japan was in the recovery process post Fukushima. Collaborative projects were evident across Tokyo. ‘Tokyo in Progress’ and the work of Tadashi Kawamata drew the Fellow’s attention. Kawamata’s work creates platforms to view the city at locations along the Sumida River, creating a more human scale-viewing platform than many of the high-rise developments were offering. His materials reflected traditional building materials, rarely used in contemporary construction thereby memorialising the history of materiality while allowing people to make their city more tangible on a human scale.

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The Fellowship journey allowed a number of additional and unexpected benefits. Exposure to a range of public art works across the UK, NZ, China and Tokyo continued the critical development of the Fellow. The Fourth Plinth, in Trafalgar Square in London, was activated by artistic duo Elmgreen and Dragset ‘Powerless Structures’ below.

The iconic Serpentine Gallery was showing a Yoko Ono retrospective. The opportunity to see her work was overwhelming, citing her as one of the most significant influences in the Fellow’s practice. Exploring the Hayward Gallery and the South Bank centre allowed the Fellow to draw comparisons with Melbourne’s arts precinct: both located on the banks of inner city-rivers, each growing and changing to meet the needs of the community offering significant public engagement programs. Both precincts open what have been more traditional art spaces to the banks of the river and public practice.

Bristol is the home to both Situations and internationally renowned street artist Banksy. Exposure to the works commissioned and curated by Situations was a welcome experience. Observing and experiencing the street art culture, not dissimilar to the culture of Hosier and Rutledge lane, where the Fellow curated/produced a research project on her return, was rewarding.
Destination 1: “Return to the Streets” Conference, Goldsmiths University of London, London, UK

Conference Summary:
Goldsmith’s conference ‘return to the streets’, 27th and 28th June, provided a critical analysis of the cultural role of the street, its potency and immediacy both mediated and unmediated. Multiple presenters explored the power of the proliferation of social media and the pluralistic nature of culture, some talking of cultural non-belonging, or a blurring of the lines of cultural identity and belonging, specifically providing a platform for radicalisation.


Across two days, conference participants were presented with a range of topics to engage with across a number of sessions. The sessions the Fellow attended included:

**Plenary 1:** The Dialectic of the Street - Small Hall - Ash Sharma, University of East London

**Surfaces, Levels and Layers** - Schizophrenic Space: Who does the street think it is? - Rob Sawyer, University of Plymouth, UK

The Street as Digital Display: Augmented Reality and Autoamputation in 3D Street Art - Regner Ramos & Sabina Andron, The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, UK

The Stairway as Street: An Alternate Street Typology - Jennifer Preston, University of Queensland, Australia

Chair: Leila Whitley, Goldsmiths, UK

*The art of protest*
6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Takin’ it to the Streets and Stickin’ it to the Man: Contemporary Street Art Stickers as Cultural Expression and Political Protest – Catherine Tedford, Richard F. Brush Art Gallery, St. Lawrence University, NY, USA

Producing Anti-Fascism: Lea Grundig and the Print Portfolio 1933-1939 – Caitlin Dalton, Boston University, USA

Chair: Claire Reddleman, Goldsmiths, UK

Street Encounters

“The private kindness of one individual towards another; a petty, thoughtless kindness; an unwitnessed kindness. Something we could call senseless kindness. A kindness outside any system of social or religious good.” Vasily Grossman, Life and Fate – Tiffany Page, Goldsmiths, UK

Unattended Items: Cooperation vs. Anxiety - Jekaterina Lavrinec, Vilnius Gediminas Technological University, Lithuania & Oksana Zaporozhets, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia

Sidewalk Variations – Children and ‘Urban Care’ – Kim Kullman, University of Helsinki, Finland

Chair: Theo Reeves-Evison, Goldsmiths, UK

Walking the Streets

The political potential of walking. A critical analysis of embodied resistance in the projects of the artist collective Ne pas plier – Elke Couchez

Chair: Elizabeth English, Royal Holloway, UK

Mapping and Counter-Mapping

Public space design in the contemporary city: emerging themes - Martina Orsini, Polytechnic of Milan, Italy

Always Let the Road Decide 2008 – 2012 – David Kendall, Goldsmiths, UK

Mapping new political territories in the light of Spinoza: The affective tones of the multitude - Ljuba Castelli, Queen Mary, University of London, UK

Chair: Lillian Llamas Acosta, Goldsmiths, UK

Plenary 2: ‘I throw some shit in your face when I see ya, ‘cause I got something to say’ MIA Videos and Discussion - Small Hall - Nabeel Zuberi, University of Auckland, New Zealand- Anamik Saha, University of Leeds, UK

Chair: John Hutnyk, Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, UK

‘return to the streets’ was an invigorating exposure to contemporary thinkers, researchers and practitioners across the world focussing on the street as a subject. Critical to this was the opportunity to engage in dialogue and debate, explore the street as a radicalised space, consider a range of approaches to art practice and research methodologies. The political potency of practicing in a public context shifted the Fellow’s research concerns and framed the rest of the international experience.
‘Unlocking the public realm: how arts and design transform urban space’ was a one day symposium focusing on the presentation of a series of works commissioned to demonstrate cross-sector socially engaged public practice, funded through the European Public Art Fund. These works saw designers and artists collaborate to engage the community in and around Kings Cross. Additionally, approaches to development of public space were explored with a presentation from Roger Madelin, Director of Argent, the developer responsible for the redevelopment of Kings Cross and Adriana Marques presented the curatorial framework for public works at the Olympics site in Stratford.

The symposium was part of the EU-PA project and the London Festival of Architecture 2012. Central St Martin’s School of Art is the first active cultural site in the redevelopment of Kings Cross. Key topics for the day were regeneration, community engagement, interventions in practice and culturally-led regeneration. Speakers were described as key players in art, design and architecture as well as representatives from community and corporate environments.

‘Unlocking the Public Realm’ presented a suite of artist-led projects aimed at engaging communities. The works were developed by teams of students engaged in courses at Central St Martin’s School of Art across disciplines. Two of the projects presented were ‘The Skills Cycle’ and ‘The Soundbridge 2025’. The symposium concluded with the embedding of the Soundbridge archive in the wall of the canal in the forecourt of Central St Martin’s School of Art:
6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Skills Cycle: the main strategy was developed to enable the communities to demonstrate their exchangeable skills amongst themselves, and to Central St Martin’s students as newcomers to the area. To facilitate the exchange of skills we designed four mobile pop-up structures. These are made from converted wheelbarrows that can be wheeled to community group premises and physically fold out into an equipped workspace.

The project aim is to encourage people to bring their skills, knowledge or advice to the events, and exchange these without payment using the principles of bartering.9

Participants in the symposium were able to engage with and experience the Skills Cycle. The Fellow was offered the opportunity to learn how to cook a simple meal, if they were in turn willing to share a valued skill of their own with the person facilitating the cooking session.

‘The Sound Bridge 2025’ was designed, “to acknowledge the fast and dramatic changes that are occurring in King’s Cross, building links between both the existing and future communities of Kings Cross. This was achieved using sound, recognising the psychological importance sound plays in both individual and collective memories of a physical space”10

A sound archive was recorded and developed in the Kings Cross area. It was embedded as a time capsule in the wall of the canal in the forecourt of Central St Martin’s School of Art, with the premise of being opened in 2025, the date that the redevelopment of Kings Cross will be completed.

Both these projects are live examples of socially-engaged public art practice that provide an opportunity for artists to test their concepts and ideas in collaboration with designers and the impact this has in the context of urban redevelopment.


9  http://www.narrative-environments.com/wp/2012/07/the-eu-pa-project/
10  http://www.narrative-environments.com/wp/2012/07/the-eu-pa-project/
The Kings Cross redevelopment is the largest urban development of its kind in London this century. Roger Madelin, Director of Argent, was very clear about his agenda - to make money. However he believed critical to creating the scope to make money was the development of culture. Critical to urban redevelopment for Madelin is engaging a diverse group of liberal, pragmatic people: if you have a public realm, if you want it to be public space, you need to have a very broad debate about what goes in it; you need to avoid a small clique of people; invite the people using the space to make decisions; be brave, let go. Additionally you need to understand how things get done and have someone that knows about money.

The first live site in the redevelopment is Central St Martin’s School of Art, Madelin described how he felt this was critical to activating the site in a creative manner that might set the direction for the rest of the site, creating a vibrant starting point.

The Olympic site was still under construction in Stratford at the time of the conference. Adriana Marques had been in the curatorial role for the site, commissioning public works to invigorate the site. She revealed that art had not been factored into the masterplan of the site, a critical flaw in planning and the legacy of which meant a great deal of work occurred in raising funds and post-fitting artwork to a highly planned and developed site. She described her experiences as curator outlining the highs and the lows of curating public spaces.

Eleven million pounds had been raised to deliver 30 projects on the Olympic site with a distinct focus on permanent and physical works. Regeneration was a considerable part of the process; in this context Marques was concerned that the works needed to be considered within a plan for the future (although that future is uncertain) and that community must be engaged in the process. Her intention was that the artworks selected would embed some kind of narrative, some kind of future offer, considering cultural infrastructure. The opportunity to create an iconic work, beyond Anish Kapoor’s ‘The Orbit’ was critical in her approach. Her vision for the site post-Olympics, included offering studios to artists and the housing of cultural organisations.

‘Unlocking the public realm’ highlighted the changing nature of public space and the critical role public art can play in regeneration. It clarified the need for artists to be engaged at the beginning of any development, rather than considered as an add-on once the development had got to a certain point where engaging community was critical. It detailed the benefits of cross-disciplinary collaboration to achieving successful socially engaged outcomes. It celebrated the role public art can play in the invigoration of space and culture.
6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Destination 2: Public Art Online Forum, Birmingham, UK

Contact: Jonathan Banks

Brief History
Public Art Forum was an initiative of Jonathan Banks in the 1980s. It was a membership-based forum on all that was public art and Banks reflected that a paid membership base has the capacity to limit critical dialogue. A review of Public Art Forum led to the formation of IXIA, broadening the focus of the organisation to a public art research, advocacy, communication and training organisation with an online presence. In 2010 IXIA was commissioned by the Arts Council of England to take on the management of Public Art Online. Public Art Online is a unique public art information site which provides guidance and examples of public art practice from around the UK and internationally. 11

Public Art Online offices are located in the Custard Factory in Birmingham. The Custard Factory is an initiative that has grown from a cultural regeneration framework across the UK and is evident in a number of developments across Birmingham including the Jewellery Quarter and the activation of unused shops by creative organisations.

Banks talked of the importance of a collaborative approach to practice, being able to draw on a multidisciplinary range of practitioners to work with on specific projects as vital, citing examples of IXIA’s work with Situations in Bristol, creating timely project-specific forums or training workshops.

11 http://www.publicartonline.org.uk/
Key issues in conversation included:

- An open independent forum provides a range of voices to be heard
- Resourcing is critical
- Peer review is fundamental to any online forum being vital and meaningful
- Critical friends in key government roles, curatorial organisations and the arts sector are invaluable.
6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Destination 3: Situations: Public Art Commissioning Organisation, Bristol, UK

Contact: Katie Daley-Yates

Brief History:

Claire Doherty established Situations 12 years ago in her role as Senior Research Fellow at the University of South West England. Situations commissions and produces public art, develops policy and consults on a vast array of projects across Europe. In 2012, Situations successfully won Arts Council of England funding, becoming independent from the University and is now one of the key public art commissioning organisations in the UK and Europe. Claire Doherty was unavailable for interview when the Fellow arrived due to the Nowhere Island project. The Fellow interviewed Katie Daley Yates, at the time a Senior Curator for Situations, and now an Associate at Spike Island, Bristol's iconic arts facility.

Daley-Yates highlighted the importance of contributing to the ecology of a city, collaborating with other organisation like the Arnolfini Gallery and local council.

Bristol City Council established a unique planning policy - S106 - that commits all planning projects to contribute funds to make improvements in the local community. A representative group of council and the community select works to be funded; many of the public art works in Bristol have been funded through this program.
Situations work on projects with a long-term vision, commissioning, producing and implementing an array of permanent and temporary works. Katie acknowledges the importance of time in producing and creating successful works. In the lead up to the Olympic Games, Situations collaborated with artist Alex Hartley to create the ‘Nowhere Island’ project as a part of the Cultural Olympiad during the Olympics. Hartley claimed an island from the King of Iceland, in a demi colonial act and towed the island by barge around the South West of England for the duration of the Olympics. The island was a land mass revealed by the consequences of global warming and diminishing glaciers.

Accompanied by a land-based embassy, ‘Nowhere Island’ was able to capture the imagination of people locally and around the world, inviting them to become citizens and contribute to an online constitution. Land based events occurred as the island passed townships and communities along the coast. Resident thinkers were commissioned to respond to the notion of a new nation-state.
6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

International collaborations have occurred such as with David Cross at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. Cross invited Doherty to work with him on a curatorial project that would engage the whole of New Zealand. One Day Sculpture was the outcome: a series of temporary works commissioned across New Zealand, producing works within a 24 hour time frame. Currently Situations are working in Oslo developing a Public Art program across the harbour. Claire wrote a curatorial strategy, a set of principles and is in the process of commissioning works that aren’t normally associated with harbour developments exploring principles of slow travel and the slow food movement via socially engaged public practice. One of the projects involves growing a forest that will be felled to create paper to make a book in 100 years time. The artist Katie Paterson has invited Margaret Attwood to write the first work that will be printed in 100 years.

Key issues in conversation included:
- Time and appropriate resourcing are critical in the development of public works
- Collaboration is a key to success
- Commitment to artists and community engagement processes are paramount
- Risk – making room to fail and take risks.

Destination 4: Litmus, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Contact: David Cross

Litmus is a research hub established by David Cross in the School of Art at Massey University in Wellington in 2005. Litmus advocates the vitality of practice led research. One Day Sculpture Show was a way to explore what Litmus could do within this context. Cross collaborated with Claire Doherty of Situations to create the project. It was a trans-disciplinary project that involved five cities and thirteen local and international artists. A pan-institutional approach allowed Litmus to grow knowledge around commissioning temporary works. Cross was subsequently invited to curate Iteration Again by Contemporary Arts Tasmania: he engaged with seven curators, 22 Australian and international artists across Tasmania to explore how temporary works transform experience of space across time.

Cross believes an online clearing house of public art knowledge in Australia, New Zealand and Asia would require a creative, collaborative approach to its development. He recommended adopting a practice-led research approach, inviting a range of stakeholders to engage in a creative project with the possible outcome resulting in a dynamic shared online presence, potentially challenging the typical framework of the clearinghouse of knowledge and evolving a more creative, critical-shared environment.
Key issues in conversation:

- Practice led research reveals a critical understanding of space
- Time
- Collaboration on a pan-institutional scale reaps greater benefits
- Challenge rather than conform
- Work outside the dominant policy framework may reveal a more critical understanding.

Destination 5: Wellington City Council, Wellington Sculpture Trust, New Zealand

Contact: Eve Armstrong

The City of Wellington works closely with the Wellington Sculpture Trust. The Wellington Sculpture Trust raise funds to create public artworks within Wellington and then works are gifted to council for ongoing maintenance and support. The Trust has developed a number of sculpture walks through Wellington. Traditionally the Trust commissions permanent works although this is changing. In terms of online presence and public art, New Zealand have ‘The Big Idea’, a website similar to Artshub in Australia. Eve Armstrong referenced Eye Contact a critical contemporary art forum online. Eve acknowledges that local government are often limited with what they can do online, the idea of an independent online forum is attractive.

Wellington City Council had considerable involvement financially with One Day Sculpture. Eve spoke of the scope of collaboration demonstrated by this approach to curatorial practice. She made reference to a plethora of artist led organisations in New Zealand and the importance of collaboration within and amongst these organisation and local authorities.

Key issues in conversation:
- Collaboration
- Critical dialogue in online forums that operate outside constraints of local government.
7. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: APPLYING THE OUTCOMES

Given time to contemplate and reflect on the observations, discussions and learning gained from the experiences in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, China and Japan, the Fellow proposes a shift in how the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector views and values research. ISS Institute has a significant role to play as an advocate in this process. ISS Institute is one of few avenues for TAFE to grow its knowledge on an international scale. Within the Fellow’s own organisation, as a VET employee, research activity is not formally recognised. This fellowships applied research has expanded the Fellow’s capacity as an educator, engaging students in projects that reflect contemporary methodologies. Advocacy for the recognition of the value of research to the work of VET practitioners is critical.

Exposure and dialogue within an international context is critical for any industry. Jonathan Banks of Public Art Online, spoke of the importance of the diversity of audience in any dialogic platform; critical to this is the engagement of practitioners in a range of forums, not necessarily one singular forum.

Experiencing Situations in Bristol, David Cross’ work with Litmus in Wellington and Tadashi Kawamata’s work with Tokyo in Progress, ignited the Fellow’s interest in Public Art as a research methodology. The importance of engagement and critical practice networks to the development of the sector has become a renewed focus in her practice.

The Fellowship has unlocked a new vision for the Fellow as a practitioner and educator. In the Australian context we need independent voices driving practice rather than creating a homogenised voice. We need to find a space where risk in a public context navigates, shifts and changes how we create work in a public context.
On returning from the Fellowship, the Fellow was fortunate enough to take on the role of Curator/Producer in a research project Urban Laboratory through RMIT School of Art – Centre for Art, Society and Transformation, commissioned by the City of Melbourne for a twelve-month period. The knowledge gleaned from international counterparts through the Fellowship strongly influenced the commissioning process and engagement strategies of the project. Students in VE were given numerous opportunities to engage in a live test site for public art research in the heart of the City, Hosier and Rutledge Lanes. The graduate Diploma of Visual Art Public Art students in 2013 exhibited their final works in Hosier and Rutledge Lanes - an invaluable experience and opportunity. In 2015 the fellow is undertaking a second Urban Laboratory with the City of Port Phillip, embedding the live test site in her teaching program across the Advanced Diploma of Visual Art.

Since completing this project the Fellow has presented the work in a range of industry settings, key symposiums and educational contexts, including the 2015 International Award for Public Art: Cities in a Climate of Change co-hosted by the University of Auckland and Shandong University in Auckland. The fellow, with Dr Ruth Fazakerley from the University of South Australia, is co-convening a round table forum Public Art School (Now) as a part of the Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools in Adelaide in 2015. The Fellow has written and edited a major research report for the City of Melbourne – Urban Laboratory. Collaborating with Dr Shanti Sumartojo, academic and cultural geographer, the Fellow has co-authored a paper about one of the projects within the Urban Laboratory published in Public Art Dialogue, a peer-reviewed journal from New York. The fellow is currently working with Dr Geoff Hogg Director of RMIT’s Centre for Art, Society and Transformation on a co-authored book chapter about the Urban Laboratory.

Creating opportunities for emerging artists to engage in live ‘test-sites’ is critical to their learning outcomes and opportunities as professional practitioners. It allows them to move beyond the studio and online environments and to engage in critical practice.
8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are the result of the fellowship experience articulated across the art sector. Critical to these recommendations has been the individual professional development experiences afforded by the fellowship that now proliferate in the fellow’s artistic, curatorial and educational practice. The fellow is committed to developing a critical network of advocates across Government, Education, Industry and among Artists, this is evidenced in her activities since she returned from the fellowship experience detailed in the previous section.

Government:
• Identify key advocates for public art practice across government and local government departments to enable research outcomes to be reflected in policy development creating a vibrant commissioning and engagement process.

Education:
• Promote the value of research to the Vocational Education sector.
• Recognise that embedding research into the Vocational Education sector is critical to create cutting edge learning experiences for students and opportunities for staff to extend their practice and maintain their passion and advocacy for standards of practice in the industry.
• Create opportunities and collaborative frameworks for the development of research projects in a critical context.
• Seek opportunities to create ‘live test sites’ for public art practice, geographically and online.

Industry:
• Create online shared studios for public art practice to enhance, interdisciplinary and international collaborations.
• Promote a range of mechanisms and online forums to students in the development of their work to engage critical understanding of practice.
• Promote industry collaborations with academia to allow a flow between research and practice, deepening what we know.

Artists:
• Participate in public forums, symposiums and publications to contribute to the growing field of knowledge.
• Contribute online content to a range of sites to increase the international experience of students.
9. REFERENCES


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