



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

# **Art in the Public Realm**

**The University of Sydney Strategy**

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Office of External Relations

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# 1. Introduction

The University of Sydney has fostered a range of visual art practices since its inception, from highly significant architecture to installations of major paintings and sculptures across the public spaces of its campus. The University's current infrastructure program is providing new opportunities to renew its contribution to art and culture in the twenty-first century including the Chau Chak Wing Museum where three original museum collections are being brought together as a celebration of art, antiquity and science.

The University of Sydney has a commitment to excellence and innovation across all its activities, as expressed in the Strategic Plan 2016–20 which aims: 'to create and sustain a university in which, for the benefit of Australia and the wider world, the brightest researchers and the most promising students, whatever their social or cultural background, can thrive and realise their potential'.

Art is uniquely placed to enrich the University experience and contribute creatively to a sense of inclusion, diversity, openness and engagement. The **Art in the Public Realm** strategy is aspirational, aiming to bring the University's values to the attention of both local and global audiences. It will support culture as an integral part of the university, inviting engagement with audiences beyond the immediate community, to enhance the university experience for all.

The strategy consists of a series of four broad recommendations. It aims to achieve the highest standard of art and cultural initiatives on campus. It identifies a process for the selection of artists, artworks, locations and partnerships. It emphasises the need to work closely with artists to harness the University's resources to realise their vision.

## 2. Summary of Recommendations

### 2.1

To optimise University expertise, all **Art in the Public Realm** projects will be coordinated by an advisory panel that reports to the office of Vice Principal, External Relations. The panel will include:

- Director, Museums
- University's senior art curator
- Campus Infrastructure Services
- University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- and relevant academics

### 2.2

To share the University's rich collections, the **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will be developed across all the campuses, through a diverse range of art consisting of:

- installations of the University's existing collection
- new commissions and place-making projects
- artist-in-residency programs.

## 2.3

To respond to the layered histories of a proposed site, the **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will foster partnerships with relevant faculties, local communities and the surrounding neighbourhood. In achieving these multiple aims the **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will give particular focus to commissioning Indigenous artists and curators in major locations on campus. Appropriate protocols will be adopted when commissioning and displaying Indigenous art.

## 2.4

To animate neglected spaces on campus, the **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will encourage temporary projects for buildings awaiting demolition and under construction.

# 3. Principles

**Art in the Public Realm** program will be informed by four key principles.

## 3.1 Excellence

The University's commitment to excellence and its core business of pursuing depth and meaning, should be reflected in its **Art in the Public Realm** strategy. The panel will have as a primary consideration the selection of creative artworks of excellence and originality to enhance the University experience.

## 3.2 Collaboration

The strategy will encourage consultation and collaboration with Indigenous custodians, artists and areas of the University involved in cultural production such as Sydney College of the Arts, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Information Technologies and the Chau Chak Wing Museum.

## 3.3 Partnerships

The strategy will develop potential creative partnerships across the neighborhood such as with Carriageworks – in jointly commissioned works and residencies; with other local educational and health partners; and encourage connections between the campus and the heart of Sydney.

## 3.4 Place-making

The strategy recognises that artists can enrich the experience of place, by creatively exploring the multiple meanings of locations. Artworks can also contribute to making places safe, by illuminating the campus at night or by defining pedestrian zones. Place-making areas can form part of an artwork, enlivening the campus beyond its normal operating hours (see Gehl Architects on the Campus Public Realm Strategy).

# 4. Guidelines for diversity and access

4.1 The **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will foster a diverse range of art practice from:

- installing University art collection paintings and sculptures;
- commemorating Indigenous and University histories;
- creating narrative, sound and digital works accessed on personal devices;
- art and design place-making projects integrated with the landscape.

4.2 The **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will also encourage access and visibility by:

- promoting artworks on campus through cultural tours and digital apps;
- and supporting external partnerships with other public galleries and museums exhibitions, studios and other cultural initiatives.

4.3 The **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will consider a range of issues when commissioning art for new buildings or installing art on campus, such as:

- the character, topography and physical memory of a site;
- visibility at different times of the day and the night;
- place-making and landscaping objectives;
- the creation of entrances and footbridges as gateways;
- transforming open space into gathering places;
- enlivening the experience of moving across campus;
- enhancing other University programs and projects.

## 5. Process and implementation

The aim is to identify the most singular artists working today and to engage with them early in productive and respectful relationships.

### 5.1 Panel

The strategy will be implemented by an **Art in the Public Realm** panel that will review and recommend art as part of the campus design excellence process. The process will be aligned with the Government Architect's design excellence review (applicable to State Significant Developments).

### 5.2 Audiences and stakeholders

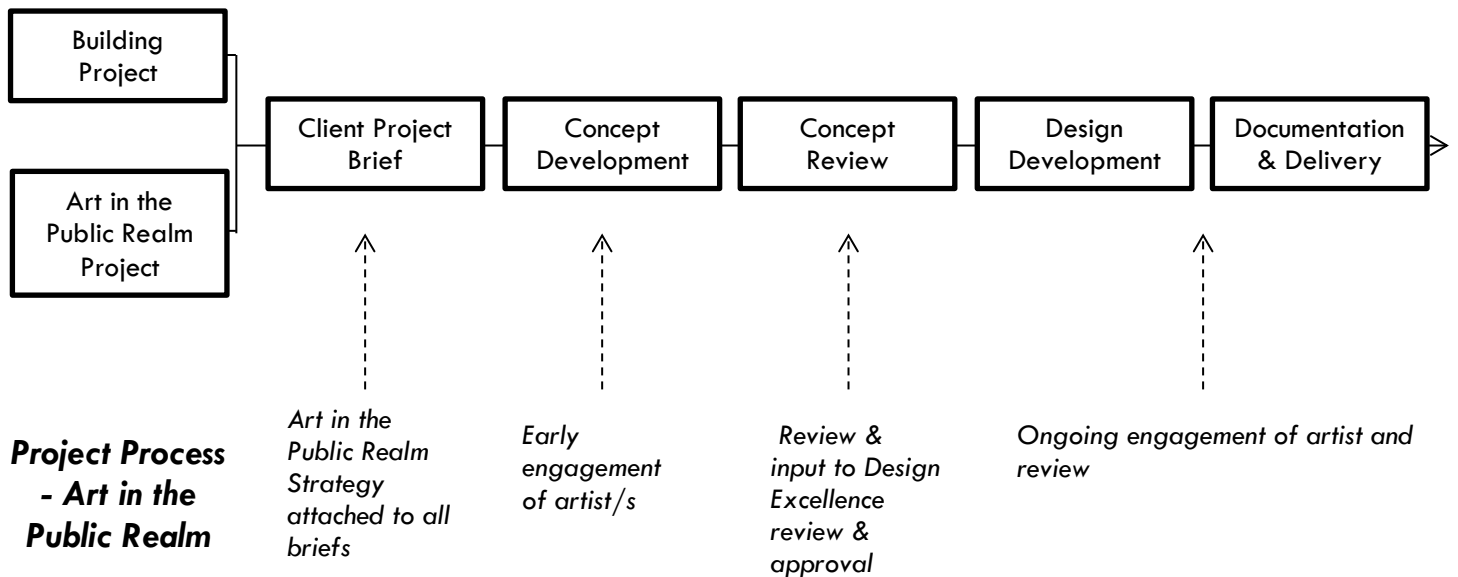
The panel will consider a range of potential audiences for art at the University including: students and staff; visitors and tourists; neighbouring community and nearby institutions; collaborative partners; event and festival attendees; authorities and government agencies; other universities; and artists.

### 5.3 Criteria for selection of artists

The key selection criteria for artists are excellence, innovation and originality. Artists also need to be able to respond to the values articulated by the University of Sydney particularly about diversity and equality. Artists will need to work collaboratively with architects and larger project teams, communicate effectively with precinct stakeholders and be able to meet the allocated budget and delivery program.

### 5.4 Artists and project team interface

Project briefs for artists commissioned for new or refurbished buildings will address the principles of the **Art in the Public Realm** strategy, whether delivered by the University or through external partnerships, as shown in the diagram below. All proposals will need to be accompanied by a budget.



## 5.5 Art in the Public Realm strategy implementation

The Campus Planning team, in conjunction with the **Art in the Public Realm** panel, will prepare an implementation strategy and program, which will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect campus priorities and emerging opportunities.

In its initial stages, it is anticipated that the **Art in the Public Realm** strategy will seek to:

- deliver one integrated landscape and art project in the University public domain;
- work with project teams through early contractor involvement (ECI) to deliver art as part of a campus building;
- create one partnership with an external stakeholder as creative partner, to deliver an art project;
- scope the feasibility of a designated artist-in-residence studio.

## 6. Reference documents

The **Art in the Public Realm** strategy has been informed by the following documents:

- The University of Sydney *Strategic Plan 2016-20*;
- Gehl Architects *Public Realm Strategy and Campus Design Guidelines*, March 2017;
- Wingara Mura – Bunga Barrabugu: The University of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Integrated Strategy (2012); Wingara Mura Design Principles (2016); and Wingara Mura Storylines (2017);
- Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence Report (Godden Mackay Logan, 2013);
- University of Sydney Public Realm Priority Works (Clouston Associates, 2017, internal working document);
- Campus Public Realm Pilot Projects: Catalyst for Change (Campus Infrastructure Services, undated internal working document).
- Barbara Flynn, "Public Art Strategy for The University of Sydney: A look at possibilities for art in the public domain campus-wide" Barbara Flynn, *Public Art Strategy for the University of Sydney: A look at the possibilities for art in the public domain campus wide* (March 2018), including extensive stakeholder consultation.