

Regional Arts Fund

Community Grant

Case study:

BUILDING | ART ON WALLS



Belinda Fraser Artist Talk/Walk- Artwork by Belinda Fraser
Photographer Ashlee Laing

Project Summary

In the rural north east Victorian township of Tallangatta, Australian artists Ashlee Laing, Belinda Fraser, Steven Rhall and Raquel Ormella each created and installed three large paste-ups on buildings and walls. Working within the broad context of cultural and identity politics, the artworks loosely responded to and drew parallels with the towns unique history. The art and accompanying artist talks created a space for members of the community, passers-by and visitors to the town to engage directly with contemporary art and art practitioners.

Public Outcome

Over a period of eight months 12 large-scale “paste-ups” were created and exhibited on the buildings and walls of Tallangatta. Each of the artists that contributed conducted an artist Talk/Walk launching their exhibition. These talks were overwhelmingly supported by the local community and visitors to the area with, on average, around 55 people attending each event.

There was a public outcry in response to a work created by Ashlee, Untitled (Oi, Oi, Oi), which resulted in it being removed. This work (pictured below right) challenged the community's ideological notion of what it is to be “Australian”. Ashlee responded to the controversy by writing an article for the local newspaper explaining who he is, what his practice is concerned with, and concepts of contemporary art. He actively engaged in conversations and debate surrounding the project, and made every effort to re-engage with community members who had been offended by his work.

Artist Benefits

The project created individual opportunities for the local artists involved. Belinda Fraser received a commission to have one of the works she created for the project digitally printed onto fabric and used to upholster a chair. She is also negotiating with the local council for the possibility of some of the works she made to be used in a rebranding of the local government area.

Ashlee Laing had a show at Murray Art Museum, Albury which saw the controversial works from the project re-presented in a gallery context. He also made four new works (including a soundscape) that all directly responded to the “outrage” over his contribution to the project.

Community Benefits

Not only did the project activate and contribute to the streetscape, but the concepts underling all the works exhibited created conversations, opening a bigger space for diversity to exist within the bounds of a tight-knit community. Feedback from locals indicates that they have a wider understanding of how to view, interpret and respond to contemporary art as a result of this project.

The controversy surrounding Ashlee's work directly engaged community members in conversations about current political and social concerns. One of the models in Ashlee's work was asked, shortly after the controversy, to showcase his cultural heritage as a guest cook at the cooking program held at the local community centre. The controversy also had socio-economic benefits for the township as it gained attention, and attracted visitors (regionally and interstate) to the project and township.

Another direct outcome of the public art program is that Teddy's Joint Cafe is now running an on-going exhibition program, free of charge, for local contemporary artists and designers.



Project Start Date	02/09/2017
Project End Date	31/07/2018
Project Location	Tallangatta
Federal Electorate	Indi
No. Audience	3000
No. Participants	4
Project Beneficiary	General Community
Main Art Form	Visual Arts
No. Artists Paid	4
No. Artists Unpaid	0
No. Arts Worker Paid	1
No. Arts Worker Unpaid	0

