

MAKESHIFT

/ PUBLICS

Curatorial Framework

Artists explore ideas of place in a changed city

In 2020, cities around the world have been transformed. These dense, networked sites of relationships, debate and observation have this year been hollowed out. Public space has mutated; the charged common grounds of theatres, galleries, museums and cinemas are empty; suburban footpaths and parks are negotiated in new ways. Artists know a lot about how to gather people around ideas, images and stories, and this is one thing 2020 has not changed. So a remaining question is: how will artists shape our experience of place in a changed city?

Makeshift Publics is a year-long program in which artists investigate this shift. It acknowledges artists as leaders through crisis, with the adaptive skills, resilience and experience to stay in unknown territory over an extended period - and still create. With a process driven by a cross-disciplinary team of arts leaders, this program is for committed arts practitioners who want to explore new contexts for contemporary art through doing (not Zoom meetings). It will be practical, collaborative and provide connection to a large group of eclectic thinkers and makers across Victoria. For this program, Arts House understands that public space can be social, historic, temporal, digital, economic, architectural, biological, chemical, inaccessible and contested; it includes civic spaces as well as outdoor environments. Makeshift Publics will culminate in an Open Day, where the discoveries made by the group throughout the year are shared with the community across a range of sites.

Acknowledging artists as leaders, Makeshift Publics asks committed practitioners to explore new methods of rebuilding fundamentally disrupted social ecologies.

Format

Makeshift Publics will run for two years, with different cohorts of artists in 2021 and 2022. The Facilitation Group will remain consistent where possible.

The Facilitation Group will co-design a creative process, starting at the beginning of 2021 with planning that emphasises cohesion, connection and is focused on both digital and in-person delivery. They determine the key themes of the program and co-design the process. Throughout the year, they then may facilitate workshops, develop reading lists, prompts, tasks or briefs for participating artists to respond to and work with. This is peer-to-peer learning alongside self-directed enquiry, research and making. Members of our Facilitation Group work across different industries. They are practicing artists and arts workers who bring a breadth of experiences and knowledges, with most based in Victoria. The program takes place on the lands of the Kulin Nations and the majority of our knowledge and discussions will be driven by a focus on Melbourne and Victoria. The program is only open to Victorian-based applicants.

The facilitators are Latai Taumoepeau, James Nguyen, Joel Spring, Madeleine Flynn, Fayen D'Evie, Sarah Scott and Hanna Cormick.