

Friday 10 January 2014

Pioneering artwork to create and recreate history

Can one genuinely site specific artwork be made to work in three locations, in three different countries?

To answer this question, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, with international arts organisations Urbane Künste Ruhr and Glasgow Life / Merchant City Festival, are spearheading a pioneering cross-disciplinary creative incubator titled *Dirt Blood and Water*, which will bring together local and international collaborators to develop a major public artwork with resonance across three countries.

The result will be one of the world's first singular large-scale, water-based, public artworks designed to feature and have relevance to three international waterways of significant industrial heritage – Sydney Harbour, the River Clyde in Glasgow and the Rhine–Herne Canal in North West Germany.

On Monday 13 January, the Foreshore Authority will host the Dirt Blood and Water Lab at the famed artists' retreat, Bundanon, in southern NSW, where they will bring together internationally-acclaimed public artists Robyn Backen, Andre Dekker, Graham Eatough, Nigel Helyer and Jennifer Turpin in a melding of creative minds.

Why Dirt Blood and Water?

The artists will explore these three themes in the context of human connections to waterways, life at the edge of land, and the military echoes of The Great War in these urban habitats. They will be joined in their exploration by experts across a range of disciplines including urban planning, social geography, maritime archaeology and engineering.

Dirt Blood and Water is the latest creative forum hosted by the Authority using this pioneering cross-disciplinary model. The Authority's first creative forum resulted in The Rocks Windmill, an acclaimed arts and education installation which ran for a month in The Rocks last year, receiving a nomination for Best New Event at the Australian Event Awards.

As place maker for The Rocks, Darling Harbour and other foreshore lands, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority's unique creative model aims to give historic and contemporary resonance to some of the city's most visited public spaces, says the Authority's Chief Executive Officer Catherine Gallagher.

"Places are primarily about people. Places are founded upon memories and associations. Our challenge is to create work that draws on the history, social memory and contemporary use of a place to engage visitors in a resonant manner," said Ms Gallagher.

The joint creation is expected to be completed by 2014/15 and will be developed as an in-situ artwork with the capacity to be a touring installation.

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Editors notes:

Meet the Makers: Can Site Specific Work Tour?

Sydney Festival, Spiegeltent, Festival Village, 12pm, 25 January 2014

This innovative approach to public artwork curation will be presented by the artists and curators of The Dirt Blood and Water Lab at a public forum during Sydney Festival 2014.

This project is a co-production between Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Urbane Künste Ruhr, and Glasgow Life / Merchant City Festival.



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