

THE NEW RULES OF PUBLIC ART

1. It doesn't have to look like public art.

The days of bronze heroes and roundabout baubles are numbered. Public art can take any form or mode of encounter. Be prepared to be surprised, delighted, even unnerved.

2. It's not forever.

Artists are shaking up the life expectancy of public artworks. Places don't remain still and unchanged, so why should public art?

3. Don't make it for a community. Create a community.

Be wary of predefining an audience. As Brian Eno once said, "sometimes the strongest single importance of a work of art is the celebration of some kind of temporary community."

4. Create space for the unplanned.

Commissioning public art is not a simple design-and-build process. Artworks arrive through a series of accidents, failures and experiments and open up the potential for unforeseen things to happen.

5. Withdraw from the cultural arms race.

Towns and cities across the world are locked into a one-size-fits-all style of public art. In a culture of globalised brands and clone towns, we hanker after authentic, distinctive places. If we are place-making, then let's make unusual places.

6. Demand more than fireworks.

Believe in the quiet, unexpected encounter as much as the magic of the mass spectacle. It's often in the silence of a solitary moment, rather than the exhilaration of whizzes and bangs, that transformation occurs.

7. Don't embellish. Interrupt.

We need smart urban design, uplifting street lighting and landmark buildings, but public art can do so much more than decorate. Interruptions to our surroundings or everyday activities can open our eyes to new possibilities.

8. Share ownership freely, but authorship wisely.

Public art is of the people and made with the people, but not always by the people. Artists are skilled creative thinkers as well as makers, trust their judgment, follow their lead and invest in their process.

9. Welcome outsiders.

Outsiders challenge our assumptions about what we believe to be true of a place. Embrace the opportunity to see through an outsider's eyes.

10. Don't waste time on definitions.

Is it sculpture? Is it visual art? Is it performance? *Who* cares. There are more important questions to ask. Does it move you? Does it shake up your perceptions of the world around you, or your backyard? Does it make you curious to see more?

11. Suspend your disbelief.

Art gives us the chance to imagine alternative ways of living, to disappear down rabbit holes, to live for a moment in a different world. Local specifics might have been the stepping off point – but public art is not a history lesson. Be prepared that it might not always tell the truth.

12. Get lost.

Public art is neither a destination nor a way-finder. Artists encourage us to follow them down unexpected paths as a work unfolds. Surrender the guidebook, get off the art trail and step into unfamiliar territory.