



# Planning Cultural Creation and Production in Sydney

## A venue and infrastructure needs analysis

April 2018

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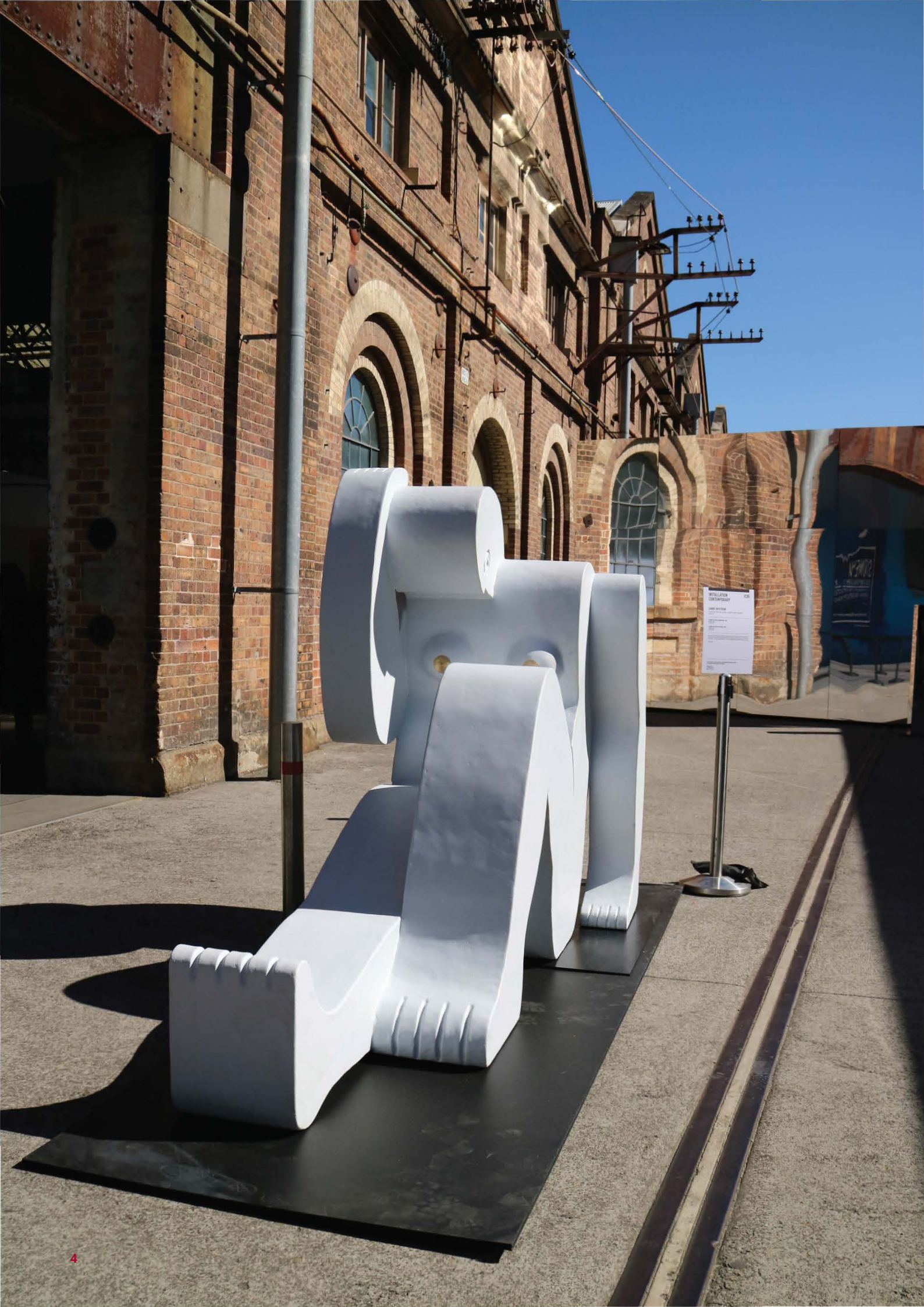
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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Executive Summary.....	7
Introduction.....	9
Background .....	9
Objectives .....	10
Methods .....	11
About the Case Study Areas .....	11
About the Interviews .....	14
Creative Space in Context.....	15
Artists' Studios: London .....	15
Artscape: Toronto .....	16
Arts Precincts: Melbourne .....	17
Implications for Creative Space in Sydney .....	18
Case Studies.....	19
Redfern Village Case Studies .....	19
107 PROJECTS .....	21
THE CLOTHING STORE.....	23
PERFORMANCE SPACE.....	25
MOOGAHLIN PERFORMING ARTS INC.....	27
DUCKRABBIT .....	29
WORK-SHOP.....	31
SEMI-PERMANENT.....	33
FBI RADIO .....	35
STUDIO DAMIEN BUTLER .....	38
GALERIE POMPOM - FORMER MOP PROJECTS .....	40
GRUMPY SAILOR .....	43

<b>Green Square Village Case Studies .....</b>	<b>46</b>
SQUARE ONE STUDIOS .....	48
aMBUSH GALLERY .....	50
THE NEST CREATIVE SPACE .....	53
STUDIOS 301 .....	55
STABLES STUDIOS .....	57
<b>Creative Space Located Elsewhere in the City .....</b>	<b>59</b>
MATCHBOX PICTURES .....	60
CLAYPOOL .....	63
<b>Discussion.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Emerging Trends .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Trend 1 - Commercialisation of cultural production and space.....	65
Trend 2 - Gentrification of the inner city .....	66
Trend 3 - Privatisation of cultural infrastructure.....	67
Trend 4 - Casualisation of cultural workers and ‘flexibilisation’ of workspace .....	68
Trend 5 - Diversification of creative space needs .....	71
<b>Major Issues .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Issue 1- Availability of affordable creative space in the City .....	73
Issue 2 - Suitability of creative space and suitability of tenure .....	73
Issue 3 - Disappearance of industrial buildings.....	74
Issue 4 - Diminishing creative clusters in the City .....	75
Issue 5 - The need for targeted support and funding programs .....	75
Issue 6 - Planning issues and building controls.....	76
Issue 7 - Unsuitability of a ‘one size fit all’ approach to creative space planning .....	77
Issue 8 - Limited space availability in outer metropolitan Sydney .....	78
<b>Considerations and Conclusions.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Photo Credits .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - List of Interviewees .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - Outline of Interview Questions .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Appendix 3 - Profile of Case Studies Venues .....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Appendix 4 - Summary of Trends, Issues and Considerations. ....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Researcher Biographies.....</b>	<b>97</b>



# Executive Summary

This report was commissioned to assist the City of Sydney in developing a greater understanding of the nature and extent of future needs for creative space in the city, especially spaces for cultural creation and production. The research focuses on the relationships between cultural creators, activities and spaces with the potential for nurturing cultural life and practice in Sydney. The objectives of the research were to:

- Provide detailed knowledge about the workspaces within which cultural and creative producers conduct their work in the City of Sydney, and the role of such workspaces (commercial or otherwise) within wider cultural value chains.
- Gain understanding of the social and economic environment within which cultural and creative sector agents operate, and the impact of this environment on their selection and use of particular venues or sites.

The report provides case-study profiles of 18 cultural venues/spaces currently in use within the City of Sydney LGA, through semi-structured interviews with space managers and users. The main spatial foci are Redfern Village and the Green Square area, which were selected because they represent, respectively, established and emergent zones of cultural creation and production in the city. This research was underpinned by 5

interviews with key stakeholders across Sydney's cultural sector and the creative space data assembled for the *Mapping Culture* (2016) report and database which laid the foundation for this project, and other available data.

Based on these case studies, we distil five emerging trends and eight major issues related to current and future creative space needs in Sydney. The report concludes with a series of recommendations. Succinctly, the emerging trends, major issues and recommendations can be summarised in terms of the following plan of action:

## **EXPANDING VISIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE SPACES FOR CULTURAL CREATION AND PRODUCTION**

Some of the emerging trends highlighted in the analysis focus on the impact of commercialisation, gentrification and privatisation upon spaces for cultural creation and production in the City of Sydney. Specific issues included: lack of availability of affordable creative space in the city; concerns about the suitability of creative space and tenure; as well as gentrification and the disappearance of industrial buildings. To address these issues our recommendations aim to promote the following: *visibility* (promote better use and visibility of existing space); *volume* (increase supply of suitable creative space); and *inversion* (map and save remaining

industrial buildings for potential cultural investment). We suggest that these mechanisms, combined with our other recommendations, can contribute to expanding the availability of suitable creative spaces in the City of Sydney. Such an approach help ameliorate the encroachment of commercialisation, privatisation and gentrification identified in the report.

## **INCREASING SUPPORT MECHANISMS SO AS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE CREATIVE CLUSTERS**

The casualisation of cultural workers and the flexibilisation of creative workspaces were identified as other significant and emerging trends. Pressure on creative clusters located in the City of Sydney is combined with the diminishing range of creative spaces, it was often believed by our informants that local government support and public funding could be increased. Our recommendations suggest enhanced: *pooling* (support for knowledge-sharing between creative clusters to combine resources and advocacy efforts, as well as the flexibilisation of creative workspace); *processes* (innovate planning, administrative and communicative procedures to overcome barriers); and *protection* (initiating more residential programs and funding opportunities for emerging artists and smaller-scale organisations). If embedded, these recommendations could help

maintain and enhance creative clusters, address procedural obstacles, as well as take a more proactive role in tenancy offerings and protections across the City of Sydney. These strategies could begin to address the rather mixed feelings raised by our informants: pride in the cooperative atmosphere of creative clusters, alongside fears that these spatial concentrations were in decline. These concerns, and the situation itself, could begin to be remedied by the support mechanisms raised in this report.

the City of Sydney and the whole metropolis. Because of the complexity of emerging trends and issues, the recommendations should not be read as a linear list of isolated solutions. Instead, they should be viewed as a repertoire or toolkit on which the City of Sydney can draw in the difficult task of prioritising multi-layered attention and actions to safeguard and nurture cultural creation and production in the city.

### **FOSTERING CROSS-SECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE METROPOLITAN SYDNEY REGION**

Diversification of the creative sector was another emerging trend identified from our analysis. Associated issues highlighted included: difficulties in cultural production space planning; problems with relocating to Western Sydney and other parts of metropolitan Sydney; as well as grappling with planning issues and the increasingly common mixed-use building model. Stemming from these issues, our recommendations seek to promote *collaboration* (identify and support creative brokers) and *cooperation* (foster a metropolitan Sydney perspective and cultural planning approach by enhancing dialogue among Council areas). We suggest that a range of constituencies (artists, creators, organisations, landlords, council and communities) would benefit from the ensuing dialogue, in contrast to the still often 'siloed', developer-led approaches and solutions toward both planning difficulties and uncertainties.

In conclusion, we suggest that a 'place-keeping approach to urban cultural planning' provides a useful framework for recognising the immediate demands and longer-term responsibilities which are necessary to support artists, cultural practitioners, organisations and culture across



# Introduction

## Background

The Greater Sydney Commission has recently issued *Towards Our Greater Sydney 2056* (Greater Sydney Commission, 2017), a vision framework for Sydney's next 40 years. A little earlier, the New South Wales Government released *A Plan for Growing Sydney* (Department of Planning and Environment, 2014) with regard to the development of the Sydney Metropolitan Area over the next 20 years. Meanwhile, UrbanGrowth NSW, the NSW Government's urban transformation agency established in 2013, has been charged with the task of focussing on large-scale urban transformation projects in order to create 'innovative and productive urban places with world class standards of liveability, resilience, inclusion, affordability and environmental quality' (UrbanGrowth NSW, 2018).

In the context of this heightened, wide-ranging planning activity, it is important to consider Sydney's future as a city where cultural creation and production thrives. At present, however, there is no reliable evidence base on which city planners can draw to develop culturally-related policy and planning frameworks to promote such a future through cooperation with and between the Greater Sydney Commission, UrbanGrowth NSW, Property NSW and other agencies. Does the city

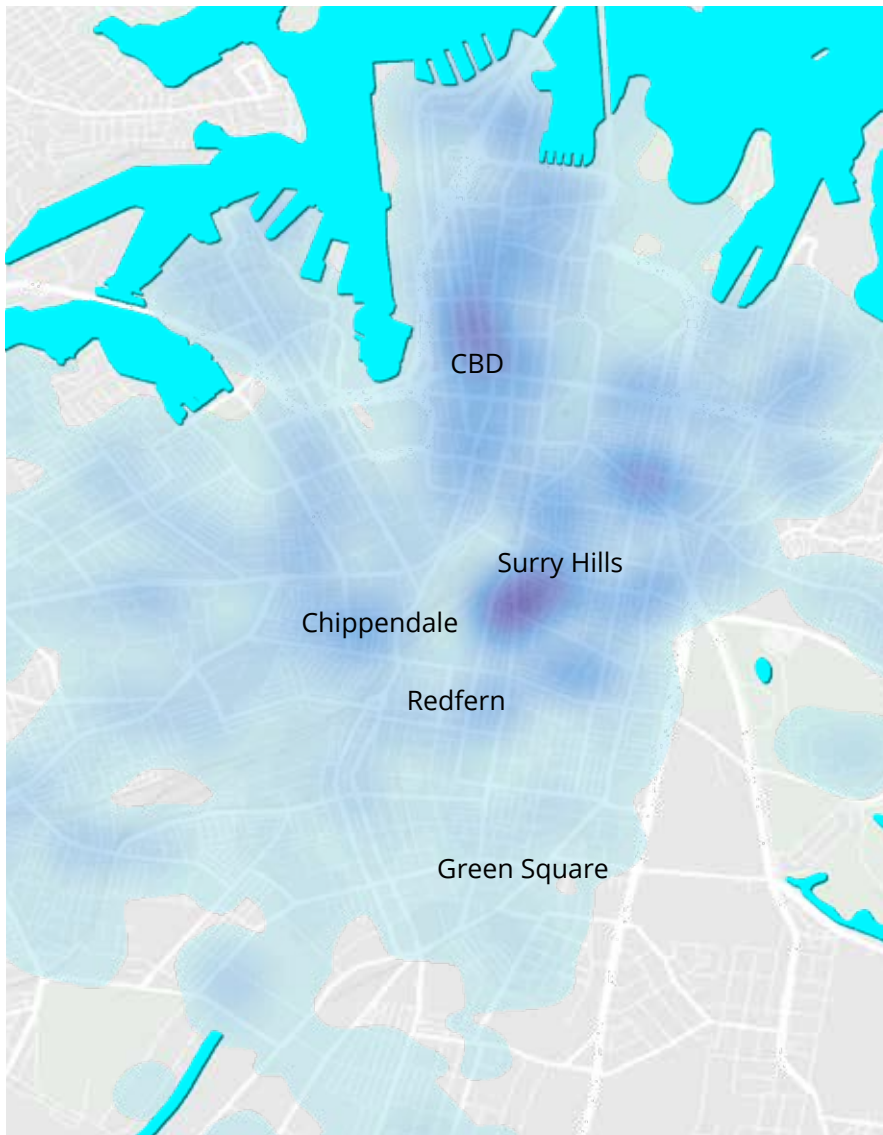
provide sufficient infrastructure and resources to assist the creative sector in conducting its work? What, for example, can be done to prevent 'creatives' being pushed out of the City of Sydney and its environs as a consequence of high-level residential development? What kinds of space are required to support the growth of the creative and cultural sector in the city?

This project on which this report is based aimed to assist the City of Sydney in addressing such questions by conducting a research-informed analysis of the venues and infrastructure needs of the cultural and creative sector in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA). This research will help the City of Sydney to identify appropriate and necessary policy responses in relation to such areas as strategic planning, use of property portfolios, and advocacy to state government.

An earlier report by the Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) research team, *Mapping Culture: Venues and Infrastructure in the City of Sydney* (Ang, et al., 2016), provided a broad understanding of the distribution of cultural venues in the LGA. This report developed a classification system with regard to all cultural venues and infrastructure in the city. Using information derived from various sources, including the City of Sydney Floorspace and Employment survey and other databases, lists and online directories, the research created

a series of maps - at both whole LGA and City of Sydney village levels - indicating the location, size, and utilisation of individual venues. Utilisation here is defined in terms of the 'value chain' role(s) of spaces (i.e., creation, production, use, dissemination and education roles).

The current, succeeding project built on the findings of this research report to examine the nature and extent of future needs for cultural space in the city, especially spaces for cultural creation and production. The research involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and focus relating to the people, activities and spaces with the potential for developing cultural life and practice in Sydney. The main spatial foci are Redfern Village (the main case study of the *Mapping Culture* report) and the Green Square area, which were selected because they represent, respectively, established and emergent zones of cultural creation and production.



A map showing the density of cultural venues in the City of Sydney (the light colour corresponds to a density of less than 50 venues per km<sup>2</sup>, and the dark colour indicates more than 800 creative spaces per km<sup>2</sup>). Source: Ang et al., 2016.

## Objectives

The objectives of the research were to:

- Provide detailed knowledge about the workspaces within which cultural and creative producers conduct their work in the City of Sydney, and the role of such workspaces (commercial or otherwise) within wider cultural value chains.
- Gain understanding of the social and economic environment within which cultural and creative sector agents operate, and the impact of this environment on their selection and use of particular venues or sites.

This project is a more targeted and in-depth endeavour than the broader *Mapping Culture* report on which it is based. By going 'narrower and deeper', it can make an important contribution to Sydney's planning frameworks through a timely intervention in the City's policy deliberations.

## Methods

The research consists of 3 interrelated strands:

1. A quantitative analysis of the spaces of cultural creation and production in the City of Sydney LGA, based on data assembled for the *Mapping Culture: Venues and Infrastructure in the City of Sydney* report and other available data. This analysis has developed a profile (with selected areas of detailed inspection) of Redfern Village, and a more limited profile of Green Square for comparative purposes.
2. Interviews (individually or in small groups) with council cultural policy officers, building experts, urban planners and other key stakeholders from across metropolitan Sydney, with a view to establishing changes in, and contemporary patterns of availability of, creative and productive spaces and their uses.
3. In-depth case studies of 18 cultural venues/spaces, through semi-structured interviews with 19 space managers and users, and deploying the mobile method of 'walking interviews' (Evans & Jones, 2011) to gather detailed, place-specific data.

The selected case studies are mainly located in Redfern and Green Square village areas, but also cover a handful of creative spaces located elsewhere in the City. Based on the interviews, profiles of 18 cultural venues/spaces were produced, covering a wide range of art forms and creative industries. A full list of the selected venues and their space categories can be found in Appendix 1.

## About the Case Study Areas

### Redfern Street Village Area

Evidence of the high concentration of creative businesses and workers in Redfern Street Village area can be found in the City of Sydney's 2012 Floorspace and Employment Survey, which showed that creative industries was the largest business sector in the Village area. The sector, it notes, had 171 businesses and a workforce of 2,501, accounting for 15.8% of all businesses and 14.5% of all

employment in the Village area (City of Sydney, 2013).

The creative industries in Redfern Street Village also recorded significant growth in terms of its businesses and workforce - respectively, 38% and 105%. The phenomenal growth of employment in the sector was largely driven by the formation of new creative businesses in the area, with about 55% of the creative businesses being founded less than 5 years ago. Despite this boom, the Survey also revealed that around 40% of the creative businesses that existed in 2007 had either ceased operation or moved away 5 years later (City



*The proposed demolition of the Waterloo public housing estate was mentioned by some informants as an example of the fast-paced change in the demographic profile of Redfern Street Village. Source: see photo credits.*



## KEY FIGURES OF REDFERN STREET VILLAGE AREA

	2016			2011			Change in number
	Number	%	City of Sydney %	Number	%	City of Sydney %	
<b>Population</b>							
Usual resident population	27,394	-	-	19,827	-	-	+7,567
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	678	2.5	1.2	622	3.1	1.3	+56
<b>Dwellings</b>							
Medium density	3,873	27.2	21.8	4,102	38.2	24.5	-264
High density	9,843	69.7	74.6	5,881	54.7	70.2	+3,962

Table 1. Source: Profile id, 2018a, 2018b

of Sydney, 2013).

Currently, Redfern Street Village area is experiencing rapid change, caused mainly by large-scale urban renewal and redevelopment projects. The latest census shows that the population of the Village area in 2016 was 27,394, an increase of 38% since 2011 (Profile id, 2018a). This rapid increase in population is related to the recent intensive property development in the area. While the census data showed that Redfern Street Village area has a higher percentage of medium-density dwellings than the City of Sydney average, the area has also recorded a substantial increase in high-density dwellings - a surge of 67% in the five years between 2011-2016 (Profile id, 2018b). Massive property development in Redfern has significant implications regarding the existence of creative space for use by the cultural community. In particular, there has been growing pressure on the remaining limited number of warehouses and industrial buildings, which are used by artists and creative communities for cultural creation

and production. These spaces are in demand to be redeveloped as more lucrative residential apartments or office buildings. The City of Sydney Floor Space and Employment Survey showed, relatedly, that there was a 65.3% decline (98,005 sq metres) in the total internal floor area designated as industrial space between 2007-2012 in the Redfern Village area (City of Sydney, 2013).

The importance of Redfern Street Village to the artistic and creative community is also reflected in the presence of a number of significant heritage buildings which have been adapted and turned into space for cultural creation and production, such as Carriageworks, Clothing Store and the Australian Technology Park. The Village area is also recognised for its highly visible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. Redfern is, historically, a vital hub for the Indigenous community, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders accounting for 2.5% of the total population in the area, compared to 1.2% of the total population in the City of Sydney (Profile id, 2018a). Cultural organisations and

projects to celebrate and promote Indigenous culture in the area include Eora Journey, Koori Radio, Moogahlin Performing Arts and Eora College.

### Green Square and City South Village

In contrast to Redfern Street Village, Green Square and City South Village is predominantly an industrial area, although there is evidence of significant residential development. According to the City of Sydney 2012 Floorspace and Employment Survey, the largest sector in the Village is Transport and Logistics, which accounts for 19.7% of total businesses and 21.9% of total employment. The significance of this industry is also reflected in the fact that the largest percentage of floorspace (18.2%) in the Village as used for warehousing and storage (City of Sydney, 2012a). Creative industries, on the other hand, accounted, respectively, for only 8.4% and 9.7% of the total businesses and workforce (City of Sydney, 2012a).



KEY FIGURES OF GREEN SQUARE VILLAGE AREA							
	2016			2011			Change in number
	Number	%	City of Sydney %	Number	%	City of Sydney %	
<b>Population</b>							
Usual resident population	30,635	-	-	18,671	-	-	+11,964
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	237	0.8	1.2	121	0.7	1.3	+115
<b>Dwellings</b>							
Medium density	1,147	7.6	21.8	1,066	11.8	24.5	+81
High density	13,062	81.6	74.6	7,004	77.2	70.2	+6,058

Table 2. Source: Profile id, 2018c, 2018d

Creative industries only recorded a modest growth in the Green Square and City South Village area. There was only an addition of 5 creative businesses (up 2.9%) and 17 workers (up 0.6%) between 2007-2012 (City of Sydney, 2012a). Our *Mapping Culture* report (2016) also identified that cultural venues and infrastructure were largely inadequate in the Village area.

In spite of this situation, Green Square and City South Village area still forms an important case study for this study. In particular, the area has a very long history of large-scale urban redevelopment, which dates back to the State government's 1995 Metropolitan Strategy (Searle, 2007). Extensive urban renewal projects in Green Square were led by Landcom, the land and property development arm of the NSW government, at the site of the old Leyland plant/ navy warehouse. High-density residential apartments have been constructed in the area since the early 2000s, and the opening of the Green Square Railway Station in 2000 further attracted people to move into the area.

The City of Sydney Floor Space

and Employment Survey 2012 showed a decrease of 269,724 sq metres or 38.6% of industrial space between 2007-2012 in Green Square. In contrast, residential space has increased by 185,426 sq metres, a rise of 22.6% (City of Sydney, 2012a). The latest census also confirmed an unprecedented increase in high-rise development and population in the Green Square and City South Village area, respectively 86.5% and 64% between 2011 to 2016 (Profile id, 2018c, 2018d).

As the urban redevelopment process in Green Square Village continues, it threatens the existing stock of old warehouses and industrial buildings, some of which have been earmarked for demolition to make way for high-rise apartment development. The rapid population growth and demographic change also call for more creative space and community facilities for people who currently live in the Village, and the many more who will do so.

## About the Interviews

In order to get a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding creative space, 25 interviews were conducted with 31 informants between 11 August and 7 December 2017. These interviews were conducted under the Western Sydney University's ethics protocol (approval no: 11651). One case study and interview involving an architectural firm was not used after subsequent concerns were raised by the interviewee about passing on any information about financial and spatial planning, as well as wider publication of the report.

The interviews were divided into two categories: case study interviews and key stakeholder interviews. The case study interviews were conducted to seek knowledge and understanding of a specific creative space. The case study venues were identified with the assistance of the *Mapping Culture* database (2016) developed by the research team. The case studies covered a variety of space categories and cultural industries, with an aim to shed light on the diversity of issues concerning artists and cultural practitioners, as well as cultural space operators and managers. Our selected case studies include art galleries, multi-purpose venues, performing arts companies, sculptors, development and maker spaces, as well as a wide range of commercial creative enterprises, such as digital services, radio stations and music studios (see Appendix 1 for the full list of case study venues).

Interviews at case study venues were generally conducted by two researchers and incorporated a walking interview component. The interviews were semi-structured, but some specific questions took account of the distinctive nature of the venue and business. Each interview was divided into three parts: first, a checklist to

collect key facts about the venue, such as building type, history or tenure information. Second, the walking interview, with the interviewee asked to show the researchers around the space and to discuss specific features of the space. Field notes and photos were taken during the walking interview. Third, a seated interview with questions about interviewees' reasons for choosing the space, the specific activities conducted there, major pressures concerning the space, changes in the neighbourhood and future plans for their organisation and the space. A detailed interview guide can be found in Appendix 2. All interviews lasted about 45 minutes to 1 hour and were audio recorded and transcribed. The geographical distribution of the case study venues is as follows: 11 in Redfern Village, 5 in Green Square Village and 2 located elsewhere in the City.

In terms of the 5 stakeholder interviews, with a total of 7 participants, the aim was to obtain additional information and expert opinion from members of the cultural community on issues insufficiently addressed in the case study interviews. The stakeholders that we consulted include managers of City of Sydney Creative Spaces program, a building specialist, urban planner, cultural policy planner in Parramatta, and a former operator of creative venues. The stakeholder interviews were less structured than the case study interviews, and the questions asked were adjusted according to the specific expertise and knowledge of the informant. All these interviews highlight the common issues and challenges faced by cultural creators and producers in Sydney. We summarise these issues and challenges in the Discussion section below.

# Creative Space in Context

It is now generally accepted that the great cities of the world should be places of cultural production as well as of consumption and display. With gentrification and rising property values, however, having suitable affordable, available creative space in close proximity to the city centre has become difficult and a view is emerging that this is something that can no longer be left to the market (Grodach, O' Connor & Gibson, 2017; Stevenson, 2014). Indeed, it is increasingly obvious that governments at all levels have a role to play in subsidising spaces for cultural production, particularly those needed for creative practices that fall outside the commercial and the entrepreneurial spheres. These forms of practice are primarily the traditional arts, although supporting 'start up' creative industries, often by fostering cultural clustering, can also be a priority, as well as assisting cultural workers who have completed their formal education and training but are yet to become established, is critical to the development of the creative sector in any city.

The difficulty, though, is to determine what types of space are required, where, and through which mechanisms they should be provided, managed and funded. Studio and cultural production spaces differ greatly in form, function and configuration, ranging from those that are large and open access, to small areas which are the domain of

an individual artist. The needs of the classical music composer, for instance, are very different from those of a visual artist or sculptor who produces large and logistically complex work. Requirements vary from the intimate to the quasi-industrial; from a single room to a building or even an entire urban neighbourhood. There are cities with recognisable precincts where the studio spaces and offices of a variety of artists, cultural workers, and creative entrepreneurs and organisations are clustered. Some 'quarters' are focused on a single sector of the creative industries, such as popular music, while others bring together many different activities and practices. Some spaces also provide affordable housing for artists and cultural workers to enable them to live and work on the same site. There are also cultural quarters that have formed through the location decisions of private cultural enterprises and others that are the result of government intervention.

It is timely to consider briefly some examples of cultural precincts established in other major cities around the world and in Australia facing similar pressures to Sydney. These initiatives provide pointers to some common features and trends.

## Artists' Studios: London

The 2014 *Artists' Workspace Study* by the Mayor of London, conducted in response to concerns about the 'exodus of artists out of central London and the attractiveness of other global cities that offer more space at cheaper rents' (Greater London Council, 2014a, p. 5), found that approximately 3,500 artists were likely to lose their work spaces in the city by 2020, which amounted to almost a third of the city's physical stock of creative infrastructure. The aim of a follow-up study, entitled '*Creating Artists' Workspace*' (Greater London Council, 2014b), was to consider novel approaches to the establishment of affordable creative workspaces and to explore ways in which the public, private and not-for profit sectors might collaborate in the provision of such spaces. From this second study, several key features were highlighted as critical. First, space must be 'affordable' because artists earn very little from their work and it is high rent that is forcing them out of city centres; second, partnerships between developers, facility owners, and local authorities are common and will often be supplemented by targeted grant funding from other governmental bodies and supra-state operatives, such as the European Union (EU); third, strong links between creative worker spaces and the local

community are important, with local authorities and community associations seen as having key roles to play. Finally, the value of clustering through the establishment of designated cultural precincts is clear.

An instructive example of a creative precinct is The Triangle in the London Borough of Hackney, which is a renovated office and industrial facility that now houses 58 artist's studios, a number of co-working project spaces, and a gallery. The site was leased in 2001 for a period of 25 years by a social enterprise called SPACE, which is a not-for-profit body that, along with the 40,000 square feet (approx. 3,167 sq metres) at The Triangle, provides 275,000 square feet (approx. 25,548 sq metres) of affordable studio space across Greater London (SPACE, 2018a, 2018b). Funding for The Triangle development came from a number of sources, with the Borough of Hackney not only contributing financially but also, indirectly, through improvements to the public space surrounding the site. But it is important to note that, of the £1,752,000 that it cost to set up the facility, only £36,000 came from the local authority. The bulk of the funding came from the London Development Agency, with additional support from the European Regional Development Fund and Arts Council England. The Triangle also received capital lottery funding in 2012, which was used for further refurbishment and development of the space. Such multi-jurisdictional support was critical because Hackney, like most local authorities, does not have access to the resources needed to establish and manage a space like The Triangle.

Artist's tenancies in The Triangle (as in all SPACE-managed properties) are for 5 years, at which time they are reviewed and there is an opportunity for renewal. The Triangle also directly employs a number of artists on a part-time basis to work in local schools and there is a range of other community outreach

initiatives intended to embed the facility in the locality. Since The Triangle was established several other co-worker spaces have been established in the locality along with cafes, music venues and a boutique brewery.

## Artscape: Toronto

Since being established in 1986, the not-for-profit Toronto Artscape has developed as something of an exemplar for the development and provision of multi-tenant space for the arts and culture sector. Initiatives and activities of Artscape include developing arts precincts, creating and managing tenanted facilities, and undertaking research into arts-led regeneration. Artscape also provides affordable spaces for artists, theatres, galleries, and spaces for not-for-profit organisations. Artscape is focused on the redevelopment of former industrial and disused buildings into spaces for creative work. These activities are clustered not only with cognate activities, but also with a range of business and community activities. The result is the establishment of

hubs that are intended to be incubators as well as stimuli for the broader animation and redevelopment of an area. The explicit aim of the organisation is 'make space for creativity and transform communities' (Toronto Artscape, 2018). To this end, the organisation has supported a rather impressive range of property development projects which include: creating a 60,000 square foot (approx. 5,574 sq metres) community centre that is the location of a range of arts and cultural activities, environmental leadership, heritage preservation, urban agriculture and affordable housing in a redeveloped space that was once a streetcar repair centre (Artscape Wychwood Barns); an outdoor weekend market involving artists, craftspeople and food 'artisans' held in a redeveloped area called the Distillery Historic District (Distillery Art Market); a readapted former police station that now houses artist live/work studios and business associations, and social service organisations, and includes spaces for community associations, a 'Business Improvement Area', and an Arts and Cultural Centre Community Board (the Parkdale Arts and Cultural Centre); and the Theatre Passe Muraille, which



*The Stonehouse Distillery in Toronto's Distillery District, a mixed redevelopment including residential units, commercial spaces and artists' studios run by Artscape. Source: see photo credits.*





Artscape Wychwood Barns in Toronto. Source: see photo credits.

is a partnership between the Artscape, the theatre company and the City of Toronto.

While the arts as they are traditionally understood are certainly present in the Artscape spaces, dance, theatre and the visual arts frequently coexist with digital media, film, sound recording and animation, as well as furniture making, jewellery design, and bookbinding. Significantly, many venues also house a range of 'community' and 'social' activities and organisations, including those associated with Aboriginality, multiculturalism, youth, and education, as well as retail and residential spaces. In some instances, it is also possible for the public to view creative works as they are being produced and people can place commissions directly with the producer/artist. 'Creative workers' zoos' involving architectural features such as overhead platforms and walkways, are not new, being rather vivid examples of the phenomenon of working under the 'tourist gaze' which the sociologist John Urry (1990) suggests is an integral element of the discourse of contemporary travel and tourism. While many

artists prefer not to work under conditions where they observed while engaged in creative labour, some spaces in Toronto and in many other cities across the world are designed and marketed with regard to this form of urban image making and cultural tourism.

## Arts Precincts: Melbourne

Formerly a convent, and at one time owned by La Trobe University, the heritage-listed Abbotsford Convent, which 'badges' itself as 'Australia's Largest Multi-Arts Precinct' (Abbotsford Convent, 2018), is now the property of the not-for-profit Abbotsford Convent Foundation. Its redevelopment into an arts space since 2004 has been supported by numerous grants from all levels of government and a number of other sources. The site itself was a gift from the Victorian State Government. The Abbotsford Convent cultural precinct is large,

comprising 11 different buildings and 16 acres of land. Its spaces include: 100 studios, two galleries, a number of cafes, a radio station, and a school. The venue is the site of activities including workshops, rehearsals, exhibitions, markets, and festivals and special events. Studio spaces range in size from 8 to 120 square metres. Rents vary, with some spaces charging in the order of \$300-400 per square metre per annum, while a short-term project studio will cost about \$260 per month. While some lease terms are quite short (3 months), others are negotiable and there are spaces that can be rented by the hour. Studio space is available for lease through an online expression of interest process, with applications sought from: commercial organisations and individuals; arts and cultural organisations that support artistic work; individuals and organisations working in the creative arts; health and 'wellbeing' organisations and practitioners; and, finally, educational bodies, in particular those offering teaching on-site. It is interesting to note that, in their expression of interest, potential tenants are required explicitly to address how their presence will help 'activate' the site by attracting people to it as audiences or clients.

One of Melbourne's and Australia's newest arts spaces is the Collingwood Arts Precinct (CAP), which is the 3,000 square metre site of a former technical college. Designated in 2016 by the Victorian State Government as a cultural space, the CAP is less than 2 kilometres from the Abbotsford Convent precinct. It is managed by a social enterprise called Contemporary Arts Precincts. The CAP was established to be the site of gallery and studio spaces, as well as of hospitality outlets. Part of the site is occupied by the well-known Circus Oz, which relocated there in 2014. CAP has received financial support from both the State government and private donors. The first key or anchor

tenants are to take up residency in 2018, with expressions of interest sought from small-to-medium-sized creative enterprises and cultural organisations. Lease terms of between 2 and 6 years are available for selected key tenants, and annual rent starts at \$18,000. There are also spaces which can be hired for one-off activities and events such as exhibitions, performances, and lectures (Collingwood Arts Precinct, 2018). As is the case with Abbotsford Convent, much is made of site activation and of the space being a community facility that is open to, and used by, the public for recreation. The CAP has indoor and outdoor spaces that can readily be accessed by visitors and audiences. Also in common with the Convent, CAP is intended to be both multi-practice and multi-purpose. The emphasis is on creating an 'ecosystem' that will animate the space, attract a range of artists and other cultural workers, and be the impetus for further development of the creative sector in the neighbourhood.

term. Also important is security of tenure. In the case of The Triangle, for instance, the initial lease of the building was for 25 years, which is a significant length of time, but there is no guarantee that the lease will be renewed as the building is privately owned. In contrast, the spaces of the Collingwood Arts Precinct and the Abbotsford Convent have been gifted by the State Government to the social enterprises that are managing the space, which gives security of tenure and is clearly preferable to limited-term tenure in a privately-owned building. The role of not-for-profit organisations in the establishment and running of artist spaces is also noteworthy, with this form of management operating at arm's length from government, seemingly to some extent taking over the role once assumed by publicly owned, funded and managed community arts centres.

## Implications for Creative Space in Sydney

What emerges from the cases discussed above and the literature more broadly, is the importance of partnerships. Local government authorities lack the resources needed to underwrite the provision of large-scale cultural workspaces, so the solution is to work with other levels of government, the education sector, and private donors. There is no one optimum space size for such facilities; indeed, it appears preferable to have spaces of varying size and which can be used for a range of activities, along with lease terms that range from short to long-

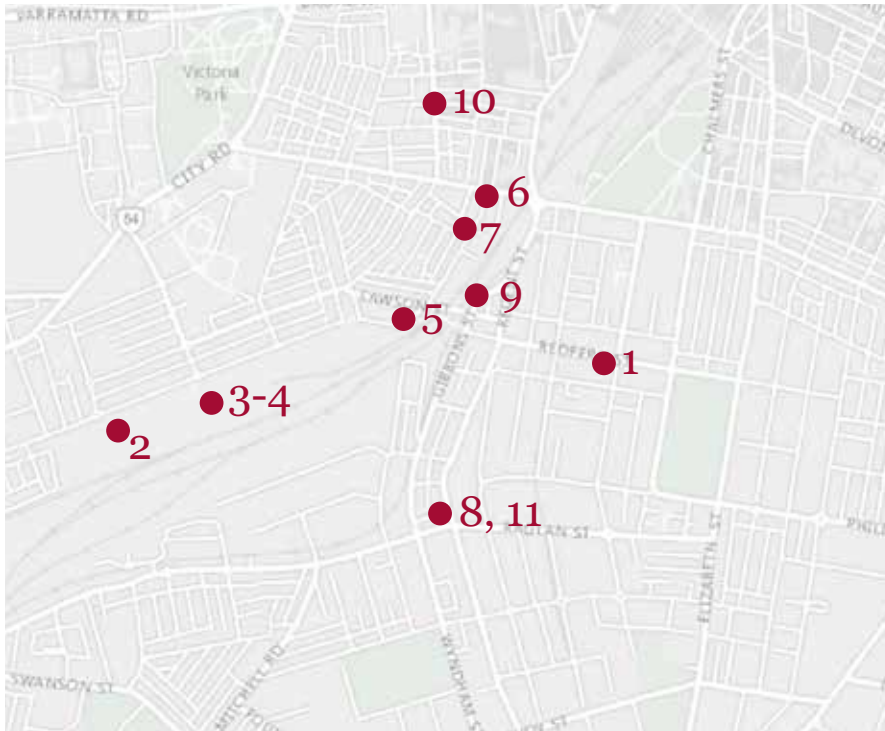
# Case Studies



Cultural Venues in Redfern Village from Ang et al., 2016 ( • Performance and Exhibition Spaces • Festival, Event and Public Spaces • Commercial and Enterprise Spaces • Practice, Education and Development Spaces • Community and Participation Spaces)

## Redfern Village Case Studies

Redfern currently boasts a healthy diversity of cultural spaces. Prince Alfred and Redfern Parks offer substantial land identified in the *Mapping Culture* report as 'Festival, Event and Public' spaces, along with a number of smaller public areas on both sides of Redfern Station. The *Mapping Culture* report (2016) identified that the largest venue count of cultural space in Redfern Village belonged to the 'Commercial and Enterprise' category (39%). The extent of 'Commercial and Enterprise' spaces is probably understated in the map, as the spatial concentration of creative enterprises in multi-storey commercial buildings is hard to visualise in two dimensions. 'Community and Participation', 'Practice, Education and Development', and 'Performance and Exhibition' categories appear well represented, although, as our interviews suggest, some of these spaces are under pressure due to commercial competition and other constraints.



## CASE STUDIES

1. 107 Projects
2. The Clothing Store
3. Performance Space
4. Moogahlin Performing Arts
5. Duckrabbit
6. Work-Shop
7. Semi-Permanent
8. FBi Radio
9. Studio Damien Butler
10. Galerie pompom
11. Grumpy Sailor





## 107 PROJECTS

<http://107.org.au/>

### Venue Address

107 Redfern Street, Redfern NSW 2016

### General Facts

107 Projects is a not-for-profit artist-run creative space located in a decommissioned garage and a former sheltered workshop for people with disabilities. It consists of exhibition/gallery space, performance space, artist studios and co-working office space. The success of 107 Projects has made it an important cultural hub for Redfern and a destination for visitors from further afield.

### The Venue

107 Projects has been operating at 107 Redfern Street since November 2011. According to its founder and director, Jess Cook, it grew out of a demand for an independent art space in the inner city. It was originally operated as a live music venue

by an artist collective in an old dentist's office on Elizabeth Street in Surry Hills (without official approval). However, the overwhelming success of this operation led to it being closed by the Council in 2006. The founders then began a six-year endeavour to search for a new site and finally found the empty building at 107 Redfern Street in 2008. They saw ample potential in it as their organisation's new home. The venue was secured through the support of the City of Sydney accommodation grant program, with a lease now confirmed until 2021.

Having undergone extensive Development Approval (DA) applications over 5 years, 107 Projects now operates over two levels with year-round community and cultural projects, exhibitions and performances. The 1,700 square metres of disused space in this two-storey warehouse building was transformed into a multi-function creative space for artists to create, develop, exhibit and perform their works. The building was divided into public and private space. The public space consists of a gallery, a sound-proofed theatre/

performance space, a wood workshop space, and a café and bar, which Jess described as an essential socialising space and a key to maintaining and enhancing community ties. The private space consists of 10 private artist's studios, located at the back of the building on the ground floor, and on the second floor there is open plan co-working office space, an industrial kitchen, an additional exhibition space/conference room, a landscaped rooftop garden/performance space, and a meeting room. These spaces are available for hire for private events at a reasonable rate. The maximum capacity of the whole venue (including upstairs and downstairs) is 200 people.

As a recipient of the accommodation grant, 107 Projects has the rent of the building fully subsidised. The subsidies from the City of Sydney are passed on 100% to the community either by subsidised venue hire or subsidised office and studio rent. The subsidised rent enables emerging artists and community groups to overcome financial barriers to producing and presenting their works. As Jess pointed out, the financial

resources of 107 Projects are limited, with 74% of its income coming from its activities (self-funded) and a very important 26% from other supporting groups, such as philanthropic foundations and non-art government program grants. The organisation only has three full-time and four part-time staff, and a pool of casual staff. It is mainly run by more than 30 volunteers.

The floors of 107 Projects are proudly unpolished, and most of the decorative materials and furniture were donated. However, the mix and match of different styles has given the place a quirky, yet welcoming and relaxing, feel. Over the years, 107 Projects has become a dynamic art hub in Redfern and has developed strong connections with artistic and local communities. According to its 2015-16 annual report, 107 Projects held 696 events in that year and attracted 44,568 visitors. According to Jess, apart from the cheap rent, many artists want to



participate because 107 Projects is 'artist focused'. All the managers and administrators have different artistic interests and backgrounds, including photography, visual arts, theatre, music, and so on. In Jess's words, 'we understand what artists need and we don't dictate to them.'

### The Neighbourhood

The key advantage of being located in Redfern is that it is 'accessible to all kind of stuff.' However, the neighbourhood has been changing since the organisation moved there in 2011. Among other developments, the increasing number of restaurants and the arrival of more affluent residents into the area as a result of gentrification have altered the neighbourhood in both positive and negative ways. Change is change. Jess expressed concern that the redevelopment of public housing may have led to people from lower socio-economic backgrounds moving out of the neighbourhood. However, she thinks that this change makes it even more important for the organisation to remain in their current location, as they are serving and listening to the local community. Many people from the neighbourhood like to 'hang out' at 107 Projects or enjoy free wifi there. 107 Projects also



represents an affordable option for artists to exhibit their works in the city, and thus attracts artists from across Sydney and from afar, including people from the Blue Mountains and regional NSW, and international artists and community groups.

### Pressure Points

Thanks to the City of Sydney's accommodation grant, 107 Projects does not face too much pressure in its operations, except that the budget is tight and the staff tend to be overworked. 107 Projects still hopes to receive an infrastructure grant to upgrade some of their facilities and equipment. But Jess admitted that it generally has a 'DIY approach to things' and can use their creativity to 'navigate obstacles.'

Nevertheless, Jess pointed out that 107 Projects faced more difficulties when they began their operations, especially when it had to go through the process of Development Approvals (DAs). For instance, it took five years to get through three DAs for the venue. Due to the financial constraints, 107 Projects had to complete the DA applications itself, with the help of friends who were specialists in the area. It was a difficult and frustrating process, needing to go through different departments, complete various sections of the development applications, and there were difficulties negotiating with the Council about different restrictions. As Jess explained '107 Projects doesn't fit into a box and so it is very hard to get through approvals if you don't fit into their preconceived ideas of what a community centre/exhibition space/all ages licensed venue is.'







## THE CLOTHING STORE

<http://carriageworks.com.au/clothing-store-carriageworks/the-clothing-store/>

### Venue Address

7 Carriageworks Way, Eveleigh, NSW 2015

### General Facts

The Clothing Store is a community-focused temporary arts and creative facility in a warehouse situated in the historic railway precinct in Eveleigh. In 2017 UrbanGrowth NSW (UrbanGrowth) partnered with Carriageworks to activate the building on a temporary basis. Through this partnership, UrbanGrowth is leasing the 8 studios to 7 established and emerging contemporary artists in Sydney, and to one architecture firm. The 8 tenants have been selected through a public callout (March 2017) and enjoy a

subsidised rent of \$60 per week. As part of the agreement, artists occupying the studios at the Clothing Store are required to participate in three community-engagement activities: two artist-run events for each, and a general Open Studio day when local residents can meet the artists and visit their workshops.

Samuel Hodge, our informant, is a visual artist who combines photography, fashion and other modes of image production. Active since the early 2000s, Samuel has had solo and group exhibitions in Oceania, North America and Europe. In Sydney, in particular, he has been showing his works through ALASKA Projects, an artist-run initiative operating out of a disused car park in Kings Cross, where he was also based for a short time during which the organisation ran a studio space (now terminated). Thanks to the residence at The Clothing Store, albeit only brief thus far, Samuel feels that his work has received a great boost in visibility, both regarding the

general public and within the artistic community.

### The Venue

Built in 1913, the Clothing Store is a large warehouse that is part of the larger historic railway precinct that includes Carriageworks. It was originally used as a facility to store and produce uniforms for the NSW railway workers. The building consists of two storeys. The ground level is not partitioned and presents two rows of steel columns reinforced at the base. The upper level is entirely open, but has been partitioned with removable dry walls that create 8 studios of 6 x 9 meters each. All the studios are accessed from a central corridor and have exterior windows. The first floor is accessible via a concrete staircase, and also features a common area, a room for polluting works, and a kitchenette.

The Clothing Store building is owned by Railcorp and managed by UrbanGrowth, the state-owned

corporation that functions as an urban redevelopment agency. The land around the warehouse is also licensed to UrbanGrowth as part of the Central-to-Eveleigh project, which will transpire in the years to come. The Clothing Store, however, is not likely to be redeveloped as many of its features, including walls, roofing, ceilings and floors, are protected under its statutory listing as a heritage building.

### The Neighbourhood

For Samuel, being a resident at the Clothing Store is a great privilege, but not only for the opportunity of using a wide studio space at a subsidised rent. The main advantage is proximity to Carriageworks, both physical and through the partnership arrangements. As part of these agreements, all artists in residence enjoy complimentary tickets to all Carriageworks performances, invitations to opening nights and can avail themselves of the professional development services that the organisation offers to their 'creatives' in residence. What's most important to Samuel is access to the local and international curators who visit Carriageworks. Through this exposure, Samuel feels that his work has greatly improved, even in the short time that he has been in residence.

The Clothing Store is also conveniently located, easily accessible through public transport, and close enough to the cafes and restaurants of Newtown's King Street, to which Samuel and the other artists usually walk for lunch.

### Pressure Points

From Samuel's perspective, the major element of uncertainty is the temporary nature of his residence at Carriageworks. His lease only extends to May 2018. At that point, UrbanGrowth



may decide to offer the same opportunity to another group of artists, or simply bring the experiment to a close. For Samuel, this kind of unpredictability is not necessarily specific to his residence at Carriageworks, but a more general situation for artists who occupy subsidised studios. As a consequence of these transient agreements, artists tend to reduce the scope and the extent of their experimentation. Samuel knows, for example, that he cannot afford to create artwork that is too large or difficult to be moved, because he does not have long-term certainty about the size of his studio. He believes that residence programmes should develop on-a-medium-to-long-term span (one year would be far too short), so that creatives can expand their work to the point where they no longer need a subsidised residence.

Another disadvantage, as he sees it, is the community engagement requirement, which, in many cases, features open studio days. Although he is not opposed

to such agreements, he feels that open days are sometimes intrusive with regard to an artist's work-in-progress. He knows that public entities use these events as showcases in support of the maintenance of subsidised studios, but also that many artists do not like their work being seen or photographed before completion.

Lastly, the only drawback of working in a heritage-listed warehouse is the limitation imposed by some building features. At the Clothing Store, for example, crafts which may 'pollute' their environment need to be practised in a small room where the walls and floors have been protected, thereby curbing the possibility of experimenting on a larger scale. However, as Samuel notes, there are many more opportunities in The Clothing Store than in a rented apartment, where many artists, including himself before starting his residency, live and produce their work without the knowledge of their landlords.





## PERFORMANCE SPACE

<http://performancespace.com.au>

### Venue Address

Carriageworks, 245 Wilson Street,  
Eveleigh, NSW 2015

### General Facts

Performance Space is a resident company at Carriageworks. The organisation was set up in 1983 as a response to artists' desire to explore and experiment with new forms and practices of art. Over 30 years, Performance Space has grown into a leading organisation in Australia for the development and presentation of interdisciplinary arts. The organisation curates concept-led festivals and programs, and runs a year-round artist residency program at Carriageworks and elsewhere.

### The Venue

According to the organisation's artistic director, Jeff Khan, Performance Space was originally based in Cleveland Street in Redfern. The gentrification process made the commercial rents no longer affordable. It moved into its current venue as one of Carriageworks' anchor tenants in 2007. Performance Space is one of the organisations that has lobbied for Carriageworks to be developed as a cultural precinct.

Performance Space has a contract with Carriageworks, from whom it rents its permanent office. The company is allowed to use the theatres, gallery space and studios at Carriageworks at a discounted rent. Although Performance Space does not produce work itself, it runs an artist residency program to support at least six new creative developments by artists and collectives each year. Performance Space's residencies also use space belonging to its



partner organisations, such as studios and rehearsal space at universities or other performing art companies.

Like the other resident companies, Performance Space has a three-year lease with Carriageworks. The major leasing conditions are required alignment with Carriageworks' artistic policy and to present at least one project a year at Carriageworks. Performance Space presents about 10-20 projects at Carriageworks each year through its Liveworks Festival and artist residency program. Jeff said that Carriageworks is the 'best space' for the company because 'the venue has the capacity to hold that kind of work.' He stressed, 'I don't think there is equivalent space anywhere in Sydney.'

### The Neighbourhood

Commenting on changes in the neighbourhood, Jeff has noticed that Redfern has become 'hugely gentrified' in the last decade. He sees this change as having both good and bad influences on the neighbourhood. On the positive side, he thinks that Redfern has become more vibrant, as a lot of businesses and institutions have moved into the area. New bars and cafés, including live music venues, have opened that can be used by the artistic and

creative communities. However, the negative side of gentrification is that those who have roots in the neighbourhood cannot afford to live there anymore, which is particularly problematic for those in the Indigenous community facing the challenge of displacement from their long-term base. While he believes that change is inevitable, Jeff says, 'I think obviously governments have an enormous amount of influence on the way, the direction that those neighbourhoods develop in.'

While Performance Space's staff mainly travel from the inner west and inner east, the organisation works with artists from all over Australia and the Asia Pacific. In terms of production and technical equipment, they tend to work with local companies. Jeff commented that the cultural sector in general has very close collaborative relationships, and cultural organisations usually share casual staff and borrow or hire equipment from each other. Talking about its relationship with artistic organisations in Western Sydney, Jeff said that, while Performance Space has great working relations with a lot of cultural institutions in the area, it refuses just to 'parachute' work produced in the city into Western Sydney because Jeff believes its

work has to be 'meaningful in that context.' Therefore, Performance Space prefers to partner with artists or organisations in Western Sydney to make that sure that the work is 'relevant and appropriate to that community.'

### Pressure Points

Performance Space receives four-year funding from the Australia Council and triennial funding from Create NSW. These sources account for 70% of its total funding, and the rest is made up of philanthropy, corporate sponsors and box office or co-production revenue. According to Jeff, the changes to arts funding a few years ago brought pressure to the organisation as its recurrent funding was capped at significantly lower levels than previously received, and also because it was no longer eligible for project funding. To cope with the shortfall in funding, Performance Space reduced its staff from 12 to 6 people and changed its mode of operation from a year-long program to an annual festival program. It also cut back other projects.

Performance Space is currently facing the imminent prospect of further increases in rent for

both office and artistic spaces at Carriageworks from 2019 onwards. This increase is due to Carriageworks' planned expansion, and uncertainty about the future of Carriageworks' leasing agreements with the NSW State Government. Jeff pointed out that Performance Space's funding is not projected to rise to match the rental rise, causing a major potential problem for its capacity to deliver programs in the building.

Apart from the rental increase faced by his organisation, Jeff pointed out that individual artists and small-to-medium art organisations are facing problems of accessing affordable studios and rehearsal space. This problem stems from two issues. First, Sydney in general is a very expensive city to live in, causing particular challenges for artists and cultural workers, who tend to earn very low incomes. Many artists and small artistic organisations are gradually being pushed out of the city due to financial pressure. Second, Jeff also sees problems in the NSW government's cultural policies. While the government has plans to invest in cultural infrastructure, its focus is on iconic venues for displaying art works, such as the Sydney Modern development at



the Art Gallery of NSW, the Walsh Bay precinct and Carriageworks itself. The spaces and resources for creating and developing the artistic work has been overlooked. Moreover, funding cuts by the Australia Council and Create NSW, and the policy of diverting funding from the City to Western Sydney, have put further strain on the affordability of cultural space in the inner city for art organisations.

Jeff wishes that cultural policy would focus on 'making sure that our sort of independent organisations who champion artists' work are well equipped with spaces to work and [have] money for creative development.' At present, Performance Space is leveraging its long-term relations with education institutions to access their studios and rehearsal spaces, such as the Rex Cramphorn Studio at the University of Sydney's Department of Theatre and Performance Studies, and the Creative Practice Lab at the University of New South Wales's School of Arts and Media.







## MOOGAHLIN PERFORMING ARTS INC

<http://www.moogahlin.org/>

### Venue Address

Carriageworks, 245 Wilson Street,  
Eveleigh, NSW 2015

### General Facts

Moogahlin Performing Arts (MPA) belongs to the small-to-medium theatre sector and produces cross-cultural and interdisciplinary performance works. It is a First Peoples' theatre company located as a resident company of Carriageworks, producing work by First Peoples for First Peoples and the broader community. The organisation has been in the Carriageworks space for nearly three years, with the lease, at the time of our interview, close to being up for renewal. We spoke to Liza-Mare Syron (co-artistic director of MPA, part of Moogahlin Artistic Directorate) over a coffee in the outdoor seating area of

Cornerstone Bar and Food, the in-house cafe, before moving to explore the space inside.

### The Venue

The cavernous main area of Carriageworks is well known for its steel beams and high ceilings, and its former history as Eveleigh Rail Yards. We pass through an unobtrusive entryway, which leads us up some stairs to a mezzanine, open-air corridor of offices. It is here, hidden from the main foyer area, that several arts organisations are situated as resident companies of Carriageworks. Adding value to the co-located space is the sharing of resources and the linking to other companies in Carriageworks. For example, MPA's finance officer rotates across a few organisations within the space.

Moogahlin Performing Arts currently leases a residency space in Carriageworks, and its office has four desks and can fit up to seven people during busy times. The organisation became aware

of the space when it heard that Carriageworks was interested in having a First Peoples' company as a resident company. So MPA applied through an Expression of Interest and was successful. It initially had a small office which became too small after a year, when more staff came on board. In addition to the co-artistic directors, there is now a part-time managing director and a part-time payroll officer - as well as plans for an artistic associate. The space needs of Moogahlin have evolved since the group's inception, with the former centre of operations being a filing cabinet, originally located at the Redfern Community Centre, where co-artistic director Lily Shearer was working at the time.

Vital to the work of Moogahlin is the growing ecology of local, rural and international partnerships which surpasses the small space in which it operates. Being only one of the few Aboriginal theatre companies in Australia (and the only one in New South Wales), MPA participates in a variety of city, regional and overseas

forums. Examples of this variety of connections include Griffin Theatre Company, Blacktown Arts Centre, the Festival of Biaime's Ngunnhu (a community cultural development festival in Brewarrina), as well as a Tri-Nations International Exchange.

### The Neighbourhood

Significant residential and business changes are evident in the area. For example, many members of the Indigenous community were moved off The Block in Redfern. More recently, a large number of people in the Waterloo community will be affected by major development. In terms of businesses, it is evident that gentrification is encroaching, as is evident in the rise of boutique coffee shops and specialty stores. To balance some of these changes, Liza-Mare believes that more visible representation and ownership of Indigenous culture and enterprise is vital. This is because Redfern is historically a meeting place for Aboriginal people across the country, and this important role could be lost if not carefully maintained.

Moogahlin is passionately clear in its philosophy of supporting the Redfern neighbourhood and community. This commitment is achieved in a number of

ways, including support for local audiences, as well as for local artists and their families: 'We're a Redfern company; we came out of the community; we need to stay in the community and we need people to offer us space in the community, because how many Aboriginal businesses do you see in Redfern?'

### Pressure Points

A key pressure point is the lack of availability of local performance and rehearsal spaces for Aboriginal people. When opportunities do arise, they are often only shared spaces with short-term access. For example, Carriageworks only offers space for six performances, where Moogahlin requires at least a four-week period for the intensive process leading up to performances. Moreover, there are local spaces which could fit their requirements, but these spaces are currently underutilised due to restrictions on access and sharing. MPA has short-term, mid-term and long-term strategies, and is currently looking for a partnership which supports this strategic range. Ideally, the organisation would like a mix of both short-term flexibility and long-term stability. The ability to plan is gained when there is longer-term vision and support.



Another pressure point is the cutting back of course offerings for capacity building of Aboriginal actors, designers and directors. For example, the local TAFE no longer offers performing arts courses, which has been a loss in terms of training local creative talent. With some local educational opportunities in the arts dwindling, Moogahlin sometimes struggles to find people to bring in and train in its programs.

Underlying all these contemporary pressures is the significant need to respect the past, present and future of First Peoples. Redfern, as noted, is historically a meeting place for Aboriginal people from across the country, and Liza-Mare sees a vital need for a local Aboriginal footprint that's historical, economic, social and cultural. Not only is there a need to document more comprehensively Black History in Redfern and in wider Sydney, there is a need for a Black Theatre site which is self-managed and owned. There are currently only three Black arts companies in Australia – with none owning a venue. For Moogahlin there is an ecology that needs not only to be supported and maintained, but also transformed, opening up a larger social and political conversation about Aboriginal people owning property and land. This focus on self-determination is not only to sustain current Aboriginal practices, but to inform capacity building, creating opportunities for Aboriginal stories to be told, written down, presented and engaged with - all from a place of their own.







## DUCKRABBIT

<https://www.facebook.com/duckrabbitartr/>

### Venue Address

138 Little Eveleigh Street, Redfern, NSW 2016

### General Facts

138 Little Eveleigh Street is a former shirt factory. In the warehouse, owned by the New South Wales Esperanto Society, four artists have their *atelier* (working space). Our informant, visual artist Hugh Ramage, has had the lease in his name for 15 years, while the others have been sub-tenants for about 6/7 years. Hugh runs the day-to-day operations of the co-working arrangement as well as an experimental gallery called Duckrabbit, which holds temporary exhibitions of Sydney artists

### The Venue

The building is a long and narrow one-story warehouse between two rows of Victorian terraces. Over the years, Hugh has built three mezzanines which are used to store artworks and equipment, and renovated the backyard that the building shares with the Esperanto Society. He has also coordinated the replacement of the roof with skylight panels that bring more diffused light into the venue. In more recent times, movable walls have been added to the front area of the warehouse in order to create a hallway and to function as exhibition support during the periods when Duckrabbit is operating. Thanks to his previous experience as a construction worker, Hugh himself has carried out most of the architectural experimentation with the way in which the studio spaces are assembled. For example, it was Hugh's idea to have mobile plaster walls that can be stored during exhibitions, whilst creating private studios

during normal periods of work.

Of the original 180 square metres of the warehouse, only a small part is unobstructed, whilst the remainder of the space is fully occupied by the artists' workshops. When Duckrabbit is running, the front area of the warehouse facing Little Eveleigh Street is emptied and transformed into an exhibition space. However, thanks to the recently-added movable walls, Hugh plans to arrange a working corner where he is able to continue with his own artistic work even during the shows.

As an experimental gallery, Duckrabbit only hosts personal and group exhibitions during Spring and Summer months. Unlike traditional gallerists, Hugh does not charge any percentage on walk-in sales but only a flat fee for the space hire, which is the sole revenue stream of the operation. This business model might change in the future, but thus far it has allowed



Hugh to maintain a light-touch management and to focus on his own art. The street window is the only year-round activity of Duckrabbit, being a display that can be hired.

### The Neighbourhood

When Hugh moved into the venue, he was looking for a warehouse space where he could work on his art and on his startup, 3d funky, an on-demand art service producing commissioned sculptures and unique objects. At that time, he had been working in a squatted warehouse in the CBD, which was demolished, and in other similar spaces in the Redfern area. The availability of unobstructed open space, the diverse nature of the urban environment, as well as cheap rents and affordable housing prices, made the area very

attractive to young artists at that time.

Hugh remembers that when he first started spending time in Darlington in the early 1990s, there were at least three other warehouses occupied by artists in close proximity. Although they have gone today, and all but one replaced by apartment blocks, the establishment of Carriageworks as a major performance venue has brought new vibrancy to the area. New artist spaces have opened in recent years, and the position of Duckrabbit's window on the street that connects Redfern Station and Carriageworks is a great advantage. To leverage this network effect, Hugh schedules Duckrabbit's exhibitions in relation to major events taking place in Carriageworks. In this way, he catches the pedestrian traffic without having overheads such as an up-to-date website or

promotional marketing.

### Pressure Points

As Hugh explains, despite the arrival of Carriageworks and its positive effect on the neighborhood, many artists have had to leave the area because of booming real estate values. In the next few years there will be further private and public investment as a part of the Central-to-Eveleigh corridor strategy of UrbanGrowth. The survival of 138 Little Eveleigh Street has been possible because the owner of the venue is a not-for-profit organisation. The present rent (\$30,000 per annum) is well below market value, and for many years the Esperanto Society chose not to raise the rent. Hugh's good landlord-tenant relationship, and the non-commercial status of the Society, are the reasons why this arrangement is not likely to change for the time being. If it did so, however, Hugh knows that he would not be able to afford a similar space in the area, and it would mean moving out of the city into a regional centre.





## WORK-SHOP

<http://www.work-shop.com.au>

### Venue Address

175-177 Cleveland Street, Redfern,  
NSW 2016

### General Facts

Work-Shop is a registered company which runs creative spaces in six Australian cities. Founded by Matt Branagan and Chester Garcia in 2013 as a partnership, Work-Shop's original business model was based on offering creative courses held by local artists, artisans and do-it-yourself craftspeople. Over the last 4 years, Work-Shop has enrolled more than 900 creatives to run classes and workshops and has built a reputation that has allowed it to expand the revenue stream with team building and other corporate services offered to private and public companies. At the moment, as Matt recalls, this is the company's main source of income. The original idea behind Work-Shop, which persists today, is to have a space that could be activated with creative classes, but also incorporate other activities, such as exhibitions and craft retail.

### The Venue

Work-Shop's original location in 2013 was a warehouse on Broadway, Chippendale, which was, however, rented only for a few months, as it was later demolished to allow for the Central Park redevelopment. At that point, Work-Shop moved to Redfern, in a warehouse on George Street. However, that space, too, was rented on a month-to-month basis and, not long after the move, the lease was discontinued and the warehouse was transformed into an upscale powerlifting gym. Meanwhile, Work-Shop approached the City of Sydney, which had launched a call



for the use of a window gallery in a heritage building in Oxford Street, Darlinghurst. Work-Shop's idea was to use the space to showcase the handmade products of local artisans, who can sell their crafts by renting out one of the displays and with no commission fees. The enterprise is still operating as Work-Shop Makery, a shop and creative lab where customers can meet makers and buy their handcrafts.

Work-Shop's most recent base is a large warehouse in Redfern, on the corner of Cleveland and Eveleigh Street. In the beginning, it shared the space with a vintage French furniture retailer and designer, who originally had a lease for the full warehouse. As they shared the warehouse, Matt and Chester helped the furniture designer downsize her business and eventually to move out. At that point, they took over the full

warehouse (550 square metres) and the lease, which began as a monthly arrangement because the building was meant to be demolished and transformed into apartments, became a two-year contract lasting until 2019.

The warehouse is split on two levels, with high ceilings and industrial flooring that allows great flexibility of activities. There is a small kitchen and office space, while leftovers from the previous industrial activities, in particular cigarette advertising, are part of the 'vibe' that Matt likes about the space.

Since 2014, Work-Shop has expanded from its Sydney headquarters to Melbourne, Adelaide, Lismore, Brisbane and Fremantle.

## The Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood is a crucial aspect of Work-Shop's business model. As its mission is to source local products, it needed a warehouse that was conveniently located close to other creative businesses, as well as to cafes and wine bars.

Whilst the upper side of Eveleigh Street (the former Redfern Block) is about to undergo the Pemulwuy redevelopment, the lower side of Eveleigh Street is still dotted by some small industrial spaces. As such, it is a particularly appropriate location. In recent years, the warehouses in the area have been renovated and transformed into offices for creative workers. One block away, Aura Creatives runs a co-working and event space, whilst the warehouse on the other side of the road has been recently redeveloped as offices for small creative businesses, a cafe (Henry Lee's) and a boutique wine merchant (Cake Wines). Matt and Chester have used these neighbouring businesses for their own classes, and for catering purposes as well as to approach creatives.

The importance of being located in an area such as Redfern, as Matt explains, also relates to the types of customer that Work-Shop's classes attract. These are mostly corporate workers who have day-jobs in the CBD. Therefore, Work-Shop would not consider moving outside the inner-city area, as such a move would affect its business. Even Marrickville, less than 7 kilometres away, would be too far, although Matt has considered the option.



## Pressure Points

Matt acknowledges that very short rental contracts are an issue, but considers that overcoming such difficulties underpins Work-Shop's resilience and low-maintenance management. He is not worried about moving again or finding another similar space, despite the gradual disappearance of warehouse spaces in the inner city.



## SEMI-PERMANENT

<https://www.semipermanent.com>

### Venue Address

15 Woodburn Street, Redfern,  
NSW, 2016

### General Facts

According to its website, Semi-Permanent is a 'global creative and design thinking platform'. It was founded in 2002 and is best known for operating eponymous annual design events in Sydney and Auckland. The company also provides boutique design services and is developing a lab for novel digital experiences using technology such as Google VR. It employs a flexible staff team of between 5 and 15 people across the two cities, and outsources work to a large number of freelance artists, designers and technicians depending on demand. We interviewed Luke Woods, Head of Studio, in the company's Redfern office.

### The Venue

Semi-Permanent operates on the ground floor of a converted two-storey industrial building at the end of Woodburn Street in Redfern. The building is next to the busy rail lines connecting Redfern and Central Station. The business is run in a small open plan space, approximately 75 (15 x 5) square metres in size. Another production company, Rabbit Content, operates in an adjoining space. With no clear physical boundary (wall or door) between them, staff from the two businesses frequently collaborate. Semi-Permanent rents its space from Rabbit Content through a leasing arrangement that is informal, and two other businesses are co-tenants in the same building.

Despite the industrial origins of the building, its current use



is similar to that of many office blocks, and the selection of the building appeared to be on the basis of its low cost and aesthetic appeal.

Beyond furniture and computer equipment, Semi-Permanent also appears to have very little in terms of equipment or stock, and would presumably find little difficulty in relocating to other comparable spaces in the area if required. Length and conditions of lease did not appear to be a concern, possibly because of this

relative mobility as well as the current informal nature of the arrangement.

### The Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood, in the north-western corner of Redfern bordered by Cleveland Street, was formerly a light industrial area that is now heavily occupied by creative industries and technology start-ups very similar in profile to Semi-Permanent. Nearby businesses, for example,



boast names like 'Massive Interactive', 'Aura Co-working', 'Helix Collective' and 'Future Reference'. The concentration of new technology-oriented creative industry businesses, in retrofitted and comparatively cheap building stock, is of benefit to its tenants. As Luke mentioned, the company's central location means that staff can easily and quickly meet with clients, partners and freelancers, who are often also located in Redfern or nearby suburbs like Surry Hills. The annual Semi-Permanent event is currently held at Carriageworks, which is a relatively short distance away on the other side of Redfern.

Semi-Permanent stated that they had little interaction with local government, and this appears to be a common characteristic of similar businesses in this pocket of Redfern. As a digitally-oriented agency, it has comparatively little dependence on its spatial environment - issues such as venue size, natural light, sound proofing and roller doors or ground floor access were not significant. Staff were likely to meet other businesses informally - at local coffee shops, for example - and to commute via public transport or bike, meaning that parking was not raised as an issue of importance.

On our walk around the neighbourhood, these features seemed to apply equally to many of the other design-oriented firms in the area. Semi-Permanent appears to have similar client and staff profiles to many of the artistic and creative businesses in Redfern and Green Square, but we imagine Semi-Permanent to



be operationally more typical of small technology operations: agile and flexible, able to call on an extensive network of freelancers, contractors and businesses, and far more dependent upon fast Internet services, public transport options and accessibility to local clients than on advantageous building leases, specific building facilities, or access to local government services.

### Pressure Points

According to Luke, Semi-Permanent experiences relatively few pressure points due to its location. Some staff face lengthy commute times, which is partly mitigated by the company's heavy digital focus and use of freelancers working off-site. Luke also discussed the sometimes-dilapidated state of Woodford Street, including uncollected rubbish on the street. However, neither of these constituted significant concerns to the business.





## FBi RADIO

<https://fbiradio.com/>

### Venue Address

44-54 Botany Road, Alexandria, NSW 2015

### General Facts

FBi (Free Broadcast inc.) Radio is the major community-based radio station in New South Wales, describing itself on its website as an 'independent youth broadcaster'. FBi was founded in 1995 and ran a series of month-long test broadcasts for many years, following the federal government's promise to allocate the last three FM licenses in Sydney. After a trial campaign, during which FBi and other broadcasters alternated, the Australian Broadcasting Authority granted FBi Radio the last available licence in Sydney and the station launched full-time

in 2003.

As part of the licence agreement, FBi's mandate is to have an emphasis on youth and emerging cultures. In compliance with this mission, it is a community-based station, with volunteer broadcasters, writers and producers. Furthermore, FBi broadcasts a ratio of at least 50% Australian music, of which at least half is from musicians based in Sydney. As a not-for-profit organisation, FBi is run by a management committee and is registered as a charity. Its running costs, however, are only in very small portion covered by public funds and donations. For the most part, the radio is self-financed through sponsorships, subscriptions and events.

Clare Holland, our interlocutor, is the managing director at FBi Radio. After a career in the creative sector, in particular as executive director of the Underbelly Art Festival, Clare has been involved with FBi since its launch. In recent years, her role in

the organisation has evolved and she is increasingly working as an advocate for the emerging music sector, especially in the aftermath of the lock-out regulations that have had a severe impact on the live music scene in the city.

### The Venue

During its trial period, FBi broadcast from different temporary locations around the city, until the licence allowed the radio station to establish permanent headquarters on the ground floor of a 1970's building on Botany Road in Alexandria—where the station has been based ever since. Only endowed with a small initial budget, the interior fittings for the station were recycled from another radio station, which was coincidentally renovating its headquarters at the time FBi was settling into the new location.

Today, FBi's space features a community area, managing office, music library, broadcasting and

server room, voice recording booth, meeting room, and two recording studios. As Clare points out, FBi headquarters reflect, in many ways, the recent and rapid evolution of radio broadcasting. Some of the spaces once required by radio are not as important any longer: for example, FBi's extensive physical music library is just used as an archive, whilst all music is now stored on local servers. Similarly, the present possibility to record phone interviews easily makes a small booth—originally conceived for that purpose—obsolete. Moreover, the space that was allocated to the broadcasting equipment and servers is now oversized, given that the machines have become much smaller.

Also, the two separate recording studios are a reminder of the evolution of the radio. Originally, they were used to broadcast separately on FM and DAB+ (digital radio) as FBi was running two different channels, FBi Radio and FBi Click. Recently, the digital channel has been discontinued and some programs transferred to the FM channel, which is now duplicated on digital radio. For this reason, one of the studios is now used 24 hours for radio programming, and the other for pre-recording and training purposes. Given the community nature of FBi, new volunteer broadcasters use the second studio to familiarise themselves with the equipment and to gain confidence before going on air.

The largest room in the venue is

the community area, an L-shaped, unobstructed room that is used for different purposes. In a normal configuration, the room hosts a reception on wheels, large tables, and computer-equipped hot desks that can be used by volunteers. All the furniture has been designed so as to be easily removed when the broadcast features live music performed by bands or large groups of people. As Clare explains, this is a makeshift solution to the lack of a large recording studio, but thus far it has worked.

### The Neighbourhood

FBi Radio's present location is on the border between Redfern, Alexandria and Waterloo, on the ground floor of a 1970s office complex overlooking the busy road that connects the suburbs to the airport. Not far away are the Australian Technology Park, the new Commonwealth Bank Headquarters under construction, Redfern Station and the large social housing blocks of Waterloo.

As Clare recalls, this peculiar geography was originally the reason why FBi Radio could afford moving into the area. Back then, the surroundings were perceived as unsafe, and rents were generally cheap considering its proximity to the CBD. The building was shared with other creatives, artists and designers, as well as by another not-for-profit cultural organisation, the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), of which FBi



Radio is a member.

The perceived lack of safety generated the need to create a protected environment for the volunteers, some of whom would be on-air overnight. Therefore, the premises were fully securitised with gates and 24-hour CCTV cameras. However, Clare notes that the neighbourhood has rapidly changed in the last few years. As a result, the area is not only safer, but some of the artists working in the same complex were no longer able to afford increasing rents and have been replaced by creative industry organisations with greater resources, such as advertising agencies.

For Clare, this is a problematic shift, in particular because the area is caught up in a double process: one of fast gentrification and the other involving much slower change, since the large public housing estates are likely to stay for some time. In her opinion, creative workers and studios constitute something of a social buffer between low-







income residents and the process of urban renewal that attracts new, wealthier inhabitants. As this middle layer disappears, and whilst plans to replace the social housing blocks are under discussion, the diversity and cohesion of the neighbourhood is under threat.

The central position of FBI's current headquarters in relation to Greater Metropolitan Sydney, over which its coverage extends, is vital. Clare explains that this centrality also means neutrality, as the accessibility of FBI's premises via public transport affords the possibility of becoming a radio volunteer to young people residing all over the metropolitan area. Also, the close proximity of some of the major universities is seen as fundamental to the community base of the radio. This does not mean that FBI is not

involved in events and activities that take place in other parts of the city, such as Western Sydney. However, relocating further away from the inner city would mean losing the network effect created by larger radio and media outlets that are based in the nearby neighbourhoods. Being spatially close to Sydney's ABC Radio headquarters (including the youth-oriented Triple J station), for example, means that FBI can more easily invite the international guests that are appearing on major radio outlets, which they would not be able to afford otherwise.

### Pressure Points

Rent and the temporary nature of leasing contracts are the major pressure point for a community radio broadcaster like FBI. Until recently, the station had enjoyed a relatively fortunate situation, with a below market-value rent for over more than a decade. Although the rent has increased in the recent past, FBI still benefits from a 3-year contract, which can be extended for a further 3 years. In practical terms, this arrangement bestows a certain degree of certainty. However, it would not be able to afford moving, if required, to a new location on a short-term contract. Relocating expensive radio equipment and redeveloping recording studios in a new building is an investment that is only sustainable over the long term. This is where, according to Clare, the creative spaces offered

by the City of Sydney fail to cater to the needs of organisations that require costly interior fittings, with short-term leasing making the financial investment in relocation unsustainable. In the years to come, maintaining a space in the inner city on a long-term contract will be FBI's major challenge.

A second challenge for FBI is less specifically about the availability of venues for the station, but concerns the availability of space for music creation and production that foster the necessary talent pipeline. As FBI, via its mandate, broadcasts a high proportion of music produced in Sydney, the disappearance of live music venues affects the potential of the station and the diversity of its programming, as well as the possibility for young musicians to breakthrough. For this reason, FBI Radio has been critical of the regulatory choices by the NSW government around the night-time economy in Sydney. These, Clare argues, have had an enduring impact, not only on the economy itself, but also by inhibiting the emergence of the musical talent that the station is dedicated to promote and cultivate.



## STUDIO DAMIEN BUTLER

<https://www.instagram.com/studiodamienbutler/>

### Venue Address

11 Gibbons Street, Redfern, NSW 2016

### General Facts

Studio Damien Butler is a contemporary art studio mainly used by the Sydney-based artist and his team. Damien's projects include sculptural installations, art furniture, objects and designing interiors. Damien has completed a number of major commissions, including an art installation at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices in Sydney. He formerly operated an artist studio called 'The Assemblages' in a warehouse awaiting development in Chippendale. In 2012 he moved to his current location, a vacant building owned by the City of Sydney on a commercial lease.

### The Venue

According to Damien, the building was originally built before 1940s, and was used as a depot for the storage of agricultural machinery. Before Damien moved in, the building was empty and had been used occasionally as storage for the floats of the Chinese New Year Parade. The total site is 380 square metres in size and the indoor space is 200 square metres. The rent is \$100 per square metre per annum of usable space. The building has two levels. Upstairs has been turned into an office for staff members, while downstairs consists primarily of open-plan workspaces, material stores and a multi-purpose room that can be used as a dark room or spray booth.

One of the special features of the studio is that it is full of industrial machinery. At the main entrance of the workshop building there is an overhead gantry crane, which is used to lift heavy materials or sculptures in and out of the studio from a truck. In the outdoor space there is also an

industrial horizontal bandsaw for cutting steel or metal. Inside the building there is a digital corner with a laser cutter and 3D scanner, and an industrial robot arm that can be used for the installation of Damien's sculptures or other artwork. At the other end of the building there is an air compressor specifically designed for artists to use for spray painting, cleaning surfaces, and spraying metal. He also owns a large machine called a CNC router, which is used for cutting hard materials, and a dewaxing kiln for a process called 'investment casting', to name just a few functions.

Damien explained the importance of having this equipment. Paying a company to process raw materials for making an artwork incurs huge cost. For example, the cutting cost for a piece of metal with a bandsaw can be as much as the cost of the metal itself. Similarly, paying an external company for using the CNC router costs over \$100 per hour. If Damien needs to cut a whole sheet of acrylic into the shapes that he needs, then the cutting cost alone will be a few





thousand dollars. With his own machinery, not only can Damien save on production costs through vertical integration (control of the whole production process), but he can also formulate new ideas and conduct experiments, while developing work and also letting other artists use his equipment and training young artists in how to use these machines to produce artwork. This capacity generates flow-on effects and benefits for the wider artistic community through a bottom-up effect.

Damien imagines that, without this equipment, he would probably have to outsource the production of the artwork to other local or overseas companies through an agent. These companies usually charge very high fees, and the artist may only receive a fraction of the total budget. As Damien said, 'We do everything we can in-house and that is the only way to learn to innovate, and I can spread that money and knowledge into the artist community so that creatives can afford to live in this environment.'

### The Neighbourhood

Being located in Redfern is important for Damien. It is close to the city and, more importantly, to the railway station and airport, as Damien needs to work in different places in Australia and to showcase his works overseas. He lives in Glebe in the inner west and can travel to his studio by walking, car or bicycle. Being close to public transport is also important for the young artists, trainees who



work for him, as they do not generally have cars. Damien has noticed the gentrification of Redfern, and a block near his studio has been turned into student accommodation. In fact, Damien is also facing the impact of residential development in the area, as the block where his studio is located, and the one next door, will be developed into affordable housing. Damien will have to move out of his studio when his lease expires.

While considering potential options for his next studio, Damien ruled out the possibility of moving to Western Sydney. One of the major reasons is transport, as he can foresee that his trainees would not want travel to spend just a couple of hours in the studio only to travel back into the city (given that the latter is where they mostly live). Also, it would be hard to get a curator to travel out of the city to participate in the development of work. Damien has an eye on a property in the nearby suburb Alexandria, but considers it too expensive for him to purchase now considering that the price has increased 3 times in the last 4 years.

### Pressure Points

Facing the uncertain future of his studio, Damien admitted that it will have an impact on his future plans and how he organises his work and employees. He would hesitate to upgrade some of the facilities or to install new

equipment in the studio as the installation cost is very high. Despite his stringent efforts, it seems that he is not currently close to finding another suitable studio for his team.

Damien also feels that Sydney's economic environment is not sympathetic for artists. They usually earn very little income, but their studio and other living costs are high. Also, sculptors or installation artists tend to face more constraints in finding suitable studio space than other types of artist, as they have substantial machinery and equipment, and usually require more spacious and specially-designed studios to accommodate safety and noise restrictions when using their machinery. Government programs to support artists' creative spaces usually offer short- to medium-term leases, but these may not be suitable as it is difficult for these artists to relocate their operations.

He wishes that all levels of government could see the importance of supporting artists' experimental works and creative spaces, not only because his machinery can help build knowledge and competence among other artists and trainees, but also because many of his works will end up in the public domain for the wider public to enjoy, thus generating cultural benefit for the wider society that might not be exposed to art in the gallery context.





## GALERIE POMPOM - FORMER MOP PROJECTS

<http://www.galeriepompom.com/>

### Venue Address

39 Abercrombie Street,  
Chippendale, NSW 2008

### General Facts

Galerie pompom is a commercial art gallery located on Abercrombie Street, Chippendale. It is the commercial offshoot of one of the most highly regarded artist-run initiatives (ARI) in Sydney, MOP Projects, which was discontinued in 2016 after hosting more than 400 collective and personal shows over 13 years. MOP Projects was founded in 2003 by George Adams with Kyle Jenkins and Billy Gruner, who were among the first PhD graduates of the Sydney College for the Arts. The idea behind the initiative was

to support young and emerging artists with an exhibition space that could be used as a catalyst to become recognised and, eventually, to find commercial patrons. The founders' university-based network was initially the basis for MOP's immediate success, as they had access to promising artists who were just out of their education careers and could use MOP as a springboard. Many of these young artists, George recounts, have since become some of the best-known painters and sculptors in Sydney.

MOP was originally located on the third floor of a former rag trade warehouse on Elizabeth Street, in the heart of Redfern. The exhibition space was small, and there was no visibility from the road, but the rent was very cheap and this made it possible to start up MOP with week-long shows and very small rent charge to the artists. Despite the lack of street exposure, the initiative was immediately successful via word of mouth within the art community, and

the founders shifted to a more curated calendar of fortnightly and monthly shows. As the years passed, MOP also started hosting mid-career and established artists, recognising and responding to the dearth of non-commercial exhibition spaces in the city.

In 2007, MOP moved to Galerie Pompom's current premises in Chippendale, after striking a deal with a Brisbane-based collector who had opened a commercial art gallery in the building and had gone out of business not long after. The gallerist had signed a 3-year lease and so was looking to sublet to an organisation supporting young artists. George remembers that moving was a difficult decision, because the rent in the new building would have been much higher than in Redfern, even if still below market rate. Moving meant renegotiating also all the deals, including raising rent fees, that MOP had with the artists who were in the calendar for the following year. However, the new location was very attractive because it was on street



level and had a shop-front that would increase the visibility of the initiative, as well as of the artists. That was the main reason for the final decision to relocate, and the artists involved were all excited about the change.

After the end of the subcontract, Galerie pompom took the full lease of the commercial space. This was a great financial undertaking and determined some important changes in the business model of the organisation. With the 10th year anniversary of MOP, George decided to open a commercial gallery on the side — Galerie pompom — with gallerist Samantha Ferris. They felt that cultivating and mentoring young artists, who would then be taken up by other commercial galleries, was not sustainable in the long term, and wanted to maintain longer relationships with the talents that they were nurturing. Initially, Galerie pompom was a small addition, even paying rent to MOP, which remained the main enterprise. Over five years, however, the gallery grew into a sustainable business, and MOP shrunk, also physically, into a



much smaller experimental space, before being discontinued.

Before the end of MOP, the balancing act between the non-commercial initiative, which received support from Arts NSW, and the commercial retail side, was difficult. The main reason for MOP's discontinuation, however, was that the rent had become too high to afford an experimental, non-profit institution in conjunction with a commercial gallery. Nonetheless, George feels that the eventual closing down of MOP Projects was part of its natural trajectory as an ARI. After 13 years, MOP developed into a commercial art gallery which, nonetheless, maintains an experimental side, allowing both emerging and established artists, even when represented by other galleries, to use one of the rooms of the venue to set up their work without thinking about commercial viability. This non-commercial aspect of Galerie pompom is called pompom Projects and, although it is run in the same way as MOP was, with a public call for emerging artists, it no longer receives public funding as it is now part of a fully commercial business.

### The Venue

The Chippendale venue is on the ground level of a multi-storey brick warehouse, which was part of the industrial precinct that supported the operations of Darling Harbour until the early 1980's. It is surrounded by similar industrial buildings, most of which have been repurposed. On the other side of the road, the imposing Central Park redevelopment has replaced abandoned warehouses and a large brewery complex. The venue has a shop-front on Abercrombie Street, with a large window looking into a square-shaped space that the gallery uses to showcase the experimental side of pompom. In the back lane, the building has a loading dock with an overhead door which facilitates the movement of large artworks. The space inbetween is partitioned by walls creating three different spaces: the experimental pompom Projects space on the front, the main commercial gallery in the middle, and office space in the back.

The experimental space was bigger in the original layout of the building, but the commercial needs of the gallery required the expansion of the latter to the detriment of the former. The gallery itself now features two



different exhibition areas so that pompom can host three artists at the same time. The back office is a small space with not much storage capacity. For this reason, the pompom catalogue is mostly virtual, with an online stockroom and store.

### The Neighbourhood

George recalls that both the original Redfern venue and the subsequent space in Chippendale were opened at a time when the areas were considered unsafe, but, at the same time, very attractive for young artists. Over the course of 13 years, these areas have radically changed, creating more business opportunities for the commercial gallery, given the increased pedestrian traffic and the number of residents who have moved into the new developments such as Central Park. The downside of this

shift is that artists cannot afford to live in the neighbourhood anymore, and ARIs are less and less likely to be initiated within the City of Sydney boundaries.

The gentrification of Chippendale, George explains, has not had a bad effect on Galerie pompom, but it did have an impact. The reason for discontinuing the non-commercial ARI, in favour of keeping only the commercial gallery, was dictated by the increasing rents. The new social fabric of the area is good for the business, but led to a reduction of the more experimental side of the original initiative.

### Pressure Points

In George's experience, the main challenge to maintaining a viable ARI at first, and a commercial art gallery now, has everything to do with the availability of affordable space and the capacity

to create a reputation around that space. When he discontinued MOP, he found out that many other ARIs had closed down, and their overall number had significantly decreased over the years. The possibility of shifting from a non-commercial initiative to a commercial art gallery was afforded by the kind of reputation that MOP managed to create. In the contemporary conjuncture of lack of space, high rents, and diminishing support for the arts, George feels that it would be very hard for young artists to replicate now what was possible a decade ago in the City of Sydney.

Although MOP was always successful in receiving support from the State government, George also feels that there is a hindering layer of red tape preventing young artists or enterprising initiatives in the creative sector easily to access public support, both in terms of funding and suitable space. In particular, grant applications, which are necessary to guarantee that funds are distributed on merit-based criteria, take a long time to prepare. Young and small creative operations may not have the human and economic capital to produce a competitive project proposal, meaning that the present system tends to favour more established organisations, or single artists who can afford to take the time to apply for public funds.





## GRUMPY SAILOR

<http://www.grumpysailor.com>

### Venue Address

Suite 1, Level 2, 44-45 Botany Road, Alexandria, NSW 2015

### General Facts

Grumpy Sailor is a multi-disciplinary creative company working at the nexus of design, technology and story. The organisation has been in business for five years and has operated across a variety of spaces: initially out of a kitchen, then desk-surfing for a while at Google, followed by a 2-year lease at Pyrmont Woolsheds and an 11 month sublease from Carbonate at 36 Wyndham St. The company is now based in Alexandria on a five-year lease offered by Dana Holdings Pty Ltd. We spoke to James Boyce, Creative Director and Founder of Grumpy Sailor.

### The Venue

Grumpy Sailor is currently based on the first floor of a building in Alexandria (approximately 220 square metres in size), located on the corner of Henderson and Botany Road, and above FBi Radio. When looking for a space, the organisation wanted to be close to the city and found it difficult to find anywhere affordable or appropriate. For example, Chippendale was enormously expensive for really small spaces, the CBD had only office space with low ceilings in their price range, Newtown/Enmore and other parts of the inner west had access issues for staff, and anywhere beyond was either too expensive or lacked any creative atmosphere. When embarking on their search, the company's requirements were quite specific: a venue to house both their physical technology workshop and multidisciplinary team. Grumpy Sailor does a lot of 'big builds', and so was looking

for separate workshop and office spaces. Ideally, it needed two spaces that could sit next to each other.

The company was happy to find a 'blank-space' place: a neutral, empty area upon which it could imprint its own identity (and could take the risk of setting up infrastructure because business was strong). It is a T-shaped area, with all the designers, project managers and developers in a rectangular, shared area at one end, a closed and open meeting area in the middle, and then a workshop down the other end (where all the experiments, research, development, and builds happen). Grumpy Sailor tried to keep the space as open plan as possible, with meetings and collaborations often scheduled for the morning, keeping the afternoons for more solo-focused work. It also offers a co-working space – currently shared with a film production company and a motion graphics team. This arrangement has the dual value of additional contributions to

the rent and opportunities to collaborate.

Grumpy Sailors' clients span a number of 'blue chip' and cultural organisations, both locally, nationally and around the world (London, San Francisco, Singapore). Currently, it is comprised of 16 full-time and 1 part-time staff, alongside approximately 10 to 15 freelancers, with numbers ramping up and down depending on the available work. The organisation has an extensive national and international network of the contractors, which also expands and contracts, depending on project requirements.

### The Neighbourhood

Proximity to the city, public transport and clients is vital to the organisation. Some staff travel from as far afield as Carlingford in the West and Rockdale in the South, with many travelling from the inner-western and eastern suburbs. What also strongly appeals to the Grumpy Sailor team is the diversity of the community around the neighbourhood, as well as the variety of pubs, cafés and libraries with free wi-fi which provide relaxed, *ad hoc* meeting places. It is starkly apparent to people living and working in the neighbourhood that gentrification of the area is on the rise, alongside increasing rents. The Australian Technology Park was originally intended to be a place of small-medium scale innovative businesses and to be grassroots in that respect. It is largely perceived by both Grumpy Sailor and the wider community that the addition of larger companies, like Channel 7 and the Commonwealth Bank, will destroy the creative and innovative, grassroots fabric of the community (with many smaller companies already moving on from the area).



### Pressure Points

As a new, cutting-edge multidisciplinary arts organisation, Grumpy Sailor is keen to build a sustainable creative business that grows in Sydney. However, there is potential that Sydney-based clients may become fewer and farther between if the challenging landscape of developer-led urban planning in Sydney is not addressed. For example, high rent expectations and inflexible office floor-plans can easily push innovative organisations out in the search for more affordable and flexible spaces. Creativity within an organisation stems directly

from its ability to be part of a community. The urban planning currently underway seems to be unable or unwilling to foster grassroots community spaces, instead favouring wall-to-wall apartment building or 'big-end-of-town' commercial infrastructure (such as the Commonwealth Bank building going up in Alexandria). From the experience of Grumpy Sailor, it is also apparent that short-term leases (e.g. month by month) can sometimes inhibit the innovation and advancement of organisations just starting out. For example, difficulties can sometimes arise in building up business due to the inability to find a fixed space in which to invest.







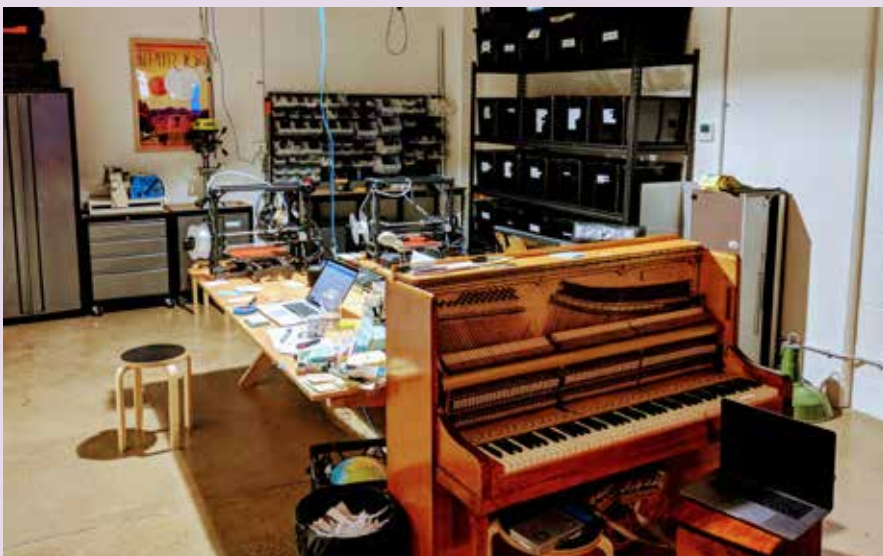
Technical hiccups can still occur as online collaborations become more standard. With virtual and remote collaboration on the rise, many organisations are still not set up to work efficiently in this manner. For example, setting up Skype or Google Hangouts offers spaces for collaboration, yet negotiating the firewalls on some clients' IT systems can drastically inhibit cross-organisational communications. It is sometimes easier to work 'virtually' with companies and organisations in Europe and Asia than those just 'down the road'. Grumpy Sailor has even had government employees 'hotspot off' their personal mobile phones for a video conference rather than be forced to navigate the IT nightmare that stands in

everyone's way.

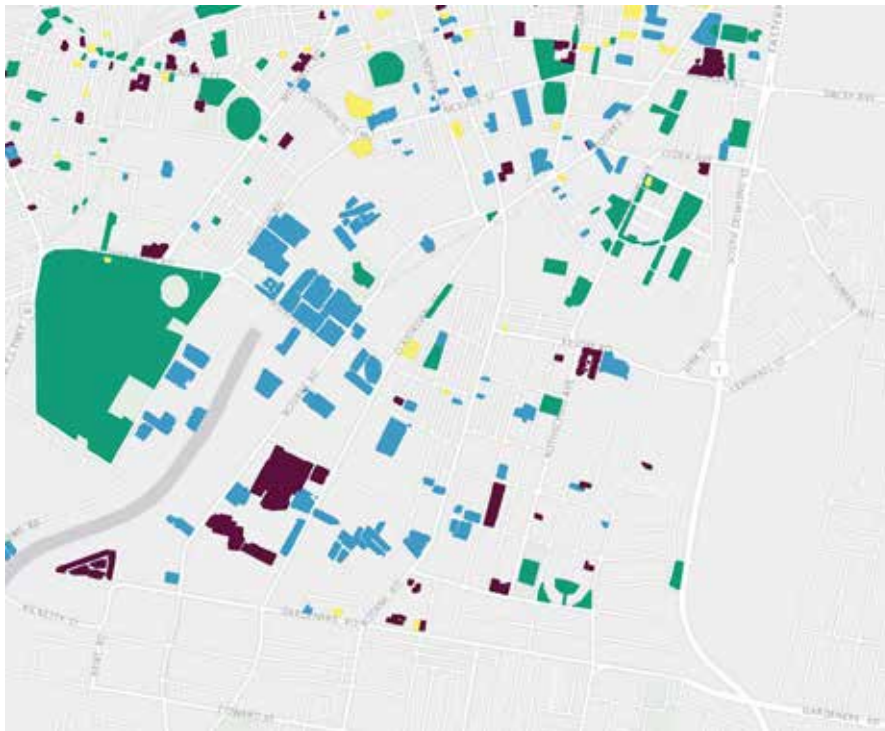
Overall, the company views itself, like any other business, as dependent on relationships, and strongly recognises how much creativity comes from people being together in a room. Its sustainable, creative business model is being built on sharing, collaboration, an agile methodology, and bespoke projects. This approach means that growth stems from investing not only in infrastructure, but also in staff, clients and ideas. It is this long-term investment and commitment which inspires arts and cultural innovation - and is clearly desired and required on a broader, city-wide scale. Grumpy Sailor has mentioned that several things could help to grow and

sustain its business:

- Programmable low-cost public spaces dedicated to creative exploration.
- Collaboration/meetup spaces for creatives to come together.
- Low-cost hire spaces nearby to setup testing environments.
- Unused private space offered as a place to showcase work.
- Online selection programs where creative individuals and small creative teams can be connected with creative companies with unused desks looking to collaborate.
- Limits on how much 'big-end-of-town' infrastructure and development can be poured into the city fringe.







Cultural Venues in Green Square Village from Ang et al., 2016 (● Performance and Exhibition Spaces ● Festival, Event and Public Spaces ● Commercial and Enterprise Spaces ● Practice, Education and Development Spaces ● Community and Participation Spaces)

## Green Square Village Case Studies

Green Square's cultural venues are dominated by 'Commercial and Enterprise' and 'Festival, Event and Public' spaces. Many of the spaces identified as 'Festival, Event and Public' are small or mid-sized parks, such as Waterloo Park on McEvoy Street. Alexandria Park Community School and the Latin Dance House, in the top left of the figure, and Green Square School are the main spaces recorded for 'Community and Participation' and 'Practice, Education and Development'. According to our *Mapping Culture* database, there are no spaces designated primarily for 'Performance and Exhibition'.

Green Square is a very large urban renewal project, and its cultural infrastructure is, on the whole, new or still being developed. To meet the needs of the growing population in the Village, a number of cultural venue and infrastructure projects are currently under construction in Green Square and due to be completed in early to mid 2018. A flagship project is the construction of an underground library and a public plaza in the Green Square town centre. A 7-storey glass building housing community rooms, reading rooms, technology suites and music rooms has been constructed in the plaza. Upon completion, the library and plaza will become an essential public space for festivals and community

## CASE STUDIES

events (City of Sydney 2018a).

Green Square Community and Cultural Precinct is currently developed by the City of Sydney on the site of the former South Sydney Hospital (City of Sydney, 2018b). The former Esme Cahill nurses' quarters have been turned into the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre to provide creative offices, artists' studios, a gallery, jewelry making benches, and co-working space for artists and the creative community. 107 Projects has been selected by the Council to operate the venue. Nearby, the outpatient building of the old hospital has been turned into the Waranara Early Education Centre, while the former pathology building has been transformed into the Banga Community Shed for hosting workshops and a wide range of activities. New public artworks, such as *While I Live I Will Grow* by Maria Fernanda Cardoso, has been commissioned by the City of Sydney.



## CASE STUDIES

- 12. Square One Studios
- 13. aMBUSH Gallery
- 14. The Nest Creative Space
- 15. Studios 301
- 16. Stables Studios



## SQUARE ONE STUDIOS

<http://sq1.net.au/>

### Venue Address

32 Bowden Street, Alexandria,  
NSW 2015

### General Facts

Square One Studios is a creative arts studio complex, housing forty-five artists. It is an independent, self-funded and self-sufficient business. Artists can opt for a short or long-term residency, and current tenants include painters, sculptors, authors and sound artists.

We interviewed the proprietor of Square One, Sean Morris.

### The Venue

The business is split across two

floors of a self-contained section (approximately one-fifteenth) of a large Harvey Norman logistics centre. Front access requires security clearance through a large gate occupying a driveway used by Harvey Norman delivery trucks. The downstairs area is approximately 250 square metres in size, and the upstairs area 650 square metres. The previous tenant was Chubb Security, and the upstairs area includes a fully insulated vault that has been repurposed as a sound recording studio.

Square One relocated from a much larger location in Erskineville, which was suddenly sold and redeveloped into residential apartments. In choosing the current location, Sean wanted to find a lease 'in the heart of an industrial area' to limit the likelihood of a similar situation. While the location is further from cafes and the kind of 'idyllic' village-like streetscape that marked the Erskineville

premises, it is close to a number of supply shops, such as Bunnings and Sydney Art Supplies, and a five-minute walk from Green Square Station.

A quirk of the sub-tenancy arrangement relating to building security is that, in order to gain access, every artist is on the Harvey Norman staff list. The initial lease took 5 months and 4 meetings to negotiate, due in part to the leaser's scepticism concerning artistic use of the space. The lease is a rolling two-year term, and Square One contributes to the site's overheads on a pro rata basis, calculated on the basis of square metres. Since Square One is already a sub-tenant, it offers 'licenses' rather than sub-tenancies to artists, and is operated as a for-profit business. However, Sean suggested the economics of art production - where artists will not pay more than \$10 per week per square metre - means that Square One is a low-margin business and





a 'passion project' for Sean and his partner.

### The Neighbourhood

The surrounding area is a mix of warehousing facilities similar to the Harvey Norman centre, business offices and large retail stores, including The Base Warehouse, a low-cost arts and crafts shop, and Bunnings Warehouse - both convenient for some of Square One's tenants.



### Pressure Points

Square One's current location appears comparatively secure. It is dependent upon the main tenant - Harvey Norman - continuing to use the location as a distribution centre.

In an ideal world, Sean would prefer roller door access and a ground floor location closer to Central Station, with easy walking access to the CBD. He has scouted various locations in Surry Hills, but found them 'really expensive'. While he has considered setting up a satellite operation outside the CBD - and has inspected a space in Hurlstone Park in the inner west, for instance - city access is essential 'for two reasons: because the curators are here, the gallerists are here and you get more credibility being centrally located.'



## AMBUSH GALLERY

<http://ambushgallery.com/>

### Venue Address

4 James Street, Waterloo, NSW  
2017

### General Facts

aMBUSH Gallery is a very active, non-profit gallery which offers a physical exhibition space and other curated programs to emerging and established street artists. Over the last 10 years, the gallery has hosted more than 4,000 artists from Australia and overseas, becoming one of the best-known contemporary art destinations in Sydney.

aMBUSH was founded in 2007 by Bill Dimas and John Wiltshire — who managed their own creative placemaking consultancy, Wiltshire + Dimas Management — with the idea of creating a physical venue for street artists and connecting them to placemaking and other creative programs in which they were involved. The relationship

between the placemaking business and the gallery remains very strong, as aMBUSH is almost entirely financed by the various curatorial and consulting activities that Bill and John's team runs for public and private organisations, in particular for real-estate developers.

The gallery began as an experiment with friends, whereby the founders opened a safe space for street artists at a time when street art was not entirely understood in Australia, and could even be criminalised. Since then, its role in the creative community of emerging urban art has been fully established, consulted for various public agencies in developing arts programs, and eventually being involved in the drafting of the first Cultural Policy for the City of Sydney.

One of the reasons for aMBUSH's success, as explained by Bill, has been its capacity to introduce placemaking and creative space activation in the landscape of real-estate development in Australia, and to use it as a platform to support emerging artists and designers. As he recalls, when he and John started their consulting

program, very few developers were investing in public art, let alone in more holistic and intangible programs of public space activation. A turning point was the activation of Darling Quarter, with an exhibition, a film festival and an interactive public art installation which allowed passers-by to play with the lighting of the building facades. That project was accompanied by other large-scale initiatives, such as Outpost at Cockatoo Island, in 2011, which turned out to be the largest street art festival in the world to date, or the Central Park pop-up gallery, which, starting in March 2015, featured over 200 events over the following 18 months.

aMBUSH is a social enterprise sustained by the public art and placemaking projects that Bill and John curate, manage and run with their own company. Over the course of the years, the founders have diversified aMBUSH's operations in order to enhance the financial sustainability of the gallery. The bigger vision for the future is to develop aMBUSH into a stable operation, a museum-like cultural centre featuring artworks and performances that are not





usually taken up by traditional galleries or museums.

For this research, we interviewed Bill — one of the two co-founders — in their Waterloo office space.

### The Venue

aMBUSH's current venue is a two-storey warehouse on James Street, a dead-end lane in Waterloo, where several industrial complexes are clustered. The post-war building was originally

occupied by Fairfax photographic studios. Initially, Bill and John only took over the ground floor of the building, where they set up their offices. Once they started having more exhibitions, they realised that two different spaces were needed for exhibitions and for desk work. Therefore, they rented the floor above and moved the offices upstairs. Overall, they lease about 200 square metres on the ground level and 150 square metres on the first floor.



At street level, aMBUSH also rents a large garage which fits about four cars. This space is used for storing artwork, but also as temporary studio space occasionally given to artists from overseas or to those who do not have a studio in Sydney. The first floor is subdivided into two main areas: one for John and Bill's team, and the other for Cardinal Spin, a public relations company that is aMBUSH's featured publicist.

Because of its placemaking and other curatorial activities, the operations of aMBUSH are not limited to the venue in Waterloo, with projects spanning the city and beyond. In the past, for example, the founders were planning to open a satellite space in Parramatta. Although that spinoff did not eventuate, John and Bill still see the possibility of relocating, especially to a neighbourhood that needs the kind of creative re-activation that aMBUSH can offer.

### The Neighbourhood

As Bill explains, the location of aMBUSH on a closed lane off busy Botany Road, in Waterloo, means not only that the gallery is easily accessible from the CBD, but also that it can use the lane as a public space. Public transport is also optimal, thanks to the close proximity of Green Square Station just a couple blocks away.

Over the last ten years, Bill and John have witnessed the rapid transformation of the neighbourhood, in particular the burgeoning pace at which new, tall residential blocks have replaced warehouses and other low-rise buildings. This change means that there are many more residents in the area, and more traffic and commercial activities — all positively regarded developments. They see aMBUSH as offering added value to local residents, who can walk out of their units and enjoy the artistic program that they curate. However, the drawback of this



real-estate boom is that profit-driven enterprises leave little space for creative industries, let alone for emerging arts which are never fully profitable. As a result of rent increases, aMBUSH itself may have to leave the neighbourhood in the near future.

### Pressure Points

When Bill and John moved into the warehouse on James Street, they were afforded a very cheap rent because Waterloo was still rather inexpensive, and because the building was owned by a friend who supported their ideas. Since then, the whole building has been sold, and, despite the good relationship with the current landlord, aMBUSH faces two great challenges.

The first is not being able to afford the lease anymore. For many years, aMBUSH paid a below-market-rate rent, until the new owner started applying consumer-price-index (CPI) increases and, eventually, imposed a 15% increase for 2017 and 39% for 2018. After receiving advice, Bill and John realised that they did not have grounds to challenge the rent increases. This rise will put the financial sustainability of aMBUSH at risk, hence they are considering the option of relocating or changing their business model to accommodate the cost hike. However, because their mission is to support young, emerging artists with a free platform, they do not want to transform the core model of the gallery, which does not charge any rent or commission fee to their artists. This decision limits the viable options to maintain aMBUSH as it is, and may entail a reduction in its scope and the number of events, exhibitions and programs.

In addition to the rent increase, recent contracts have all had a demolition clause, meaning that, even if aMBUSH stays and adapts to the new cost structure, the block may still be redeveloped in



the near future, which will entail a forced relocation. As Bill and John's ambition is still to scale-up aMBUSH into a cultural centre for street art, the uncertainty that comes with not knowing the future affordability and availability of the current space is something of hindrance to greater plans, but it is also a challenge that

aMBUSH's founders are eager to tackle.



## THE NEST CREATIVE SPACE

<https://www.thenestcreativespace.com/>

### Venue Address

298 Botany Road, Alexandria, NSW 2015

### General Facts

The Nest is a creative warehouse space run by artists for artists located in a two-level building on Botany Road, Alexandria. One month leases are available for this 24-hour accessible space, with artists and occupants able to choose from a variety of options, ranging from a hot desk to a larger area. We spoke to Melissa Gilbert, co-founder of The Nest.

### The Venue

The Nest Creative have been operating in this two-level space

for three and a half years. Prior to their arrival, the space was leased by a furniture retail store, and before that it was a mechanics/ metal-work space. The space was a blank canvas when The Nest arrived, with it taking two months of full-time work to clean and paint the space. Sourcing the furniture for the space stemmed from making do with what was given or could be found for free. The ground floor space is mobile and fluid, with modular aspects (being able to move and shift working spaces to create smaller or larger areas), while upstairs the offices are partitioned. The Nest is currently occupied by an eclectic range of artists and businesses including a ceramicist, florist, illustrator, graphic designer, painter, jeweller, designer, set-designer, documentary crew, and a french travel agent.

The ground floor of the venue is an open space with a 'no walls' policy, which facilitates collaboration and the cross-pollination of ideas. Melissa described the 'ebb and flow' of

artists in terms of the use of the space having changing patterns, as occupants 'hibernated' at home in the winter months or travelled overseas. The Nest offers month-to-month leases so that people can opt out and don't feel locked in. It also has a number of longer-term residents. People are invested in the space and find it comfortable and endearing, often inviting other artists through word-of-mouth, via businesses and other connections. A policy supports Indigenous artists, as well as any environmental initiatives which that benefit communities, for free.

The space has a home-away-from-home feel. Artists feel that it has a comfortable atmosphere, where they can also be inspired. A communal BBQ every few months enables people both to socialise and air any issues. Feedback forms are also available so that artists can share privately what is working and what might need improvement.





### The Neighbourhood

Located on a busy road, The Nest could easily be missed as it is almost camouflaged among other warehouses and businesses. It does not have a prominent facade and is almost unnoticeable from the street, until visitors step into the doorway, from which an array of creative activities inside is visible. The Nest chose this space as its founders knew that the area was developing quickly and was close to public transport. A key advantage is easy access to Green Square Station, just a five-minute walk away. Many of the artists occupying the 24-hour space travel from Marrickville and Erskineville in the inner west, and Bondi in the east.

### Pressure Points

Short-term leases, tin roofs, developer-led planning and emotional investment indicate some of the pressures involved in setting up and maintaining a community-based creative co-working space. For instance, one



of the main pressure points for The Nest is the precarity of its six-month lease. With the building being on a demolition list there is a genuine insecurity in not knowing if there will be another six months offered. Melissa views a five-year lease as ideal to be able to support longer-term planning. While not interfering with the work taking place, the tin roof does make it difficult to regulate the temperature in winter and summer, demonstrating how organisations must often simply adapt to what is on offer.

A more general pressure on the arts and cultural community in the neighbourhood is the increasing pattern of old buildings being bought to make apartments. With artists often needing to move away to live and work, a sense of community is being lost. A final pressure point is the concern that the knowledge and community built up over time may be lost. This problem is based not simply on economics, but also on the substantial emotional investment

such an undertaking has involved, alongside all that has been learnt along the way.

According to Melissa, The Nest is viewed as a sanctuary for artists to grow, where they can develop and expand their practice - sometimes even leaving and setting up their own co-working spaces. Such nests for nurturing creativity and knowledge-sharing are rare, and there is a need to protect these pockets of artistic support and inspiration. There is much to learn from such community-based co-working spaces: not only what they do, and how and why they do it, but also what needs to be done to protect their cultural and creative habitat.







## STUDIOS 301

<https://studios301.com/>

### Venue Address

3 Ellis Avenue, Alexandria, NSW 2015

### General Facts

Studios 301 is one of the oldest music studios in the world. Formerly EMI, it has been running for just over 90 years, offering a range of recording, mixing and mastering services. The organisation recently moved into a warehouse building in Alexandria and is installing a state-of-the-art recording facility within a custom-built space. At the time of interview (in October 2017), Studios 301 was still mainly a building site, with temporary studios at Pyrmont and Castlereagh Street in the CBD in operation until completion of the renovation in February 2018. Holly Bestic, studio coordinator, was our interviewee.

### The Venue

Studios 301 formerly occupied (for 18 years) a space in Mitchell Road, Erskineville: a character-filled, wood-panelled, multi-complex studio. Echoing much of the current development in the area, the site of the former studio was sold for redevelopment as an apartment block. A key feature that the organisation was looking for in a new site was proximity to the CBD. While buses can be slow and over-full during rush hour, a nearby railway station is



an advantage, as is a new location with more parking capacity. The previous venue had limited parking, with staff often having to leave to move their cars between two- or four-hour restricted parking areas.

The second key research criterion was size, in order to provide the space required for a large recording studio that could accommodate an orchestra. The new space is, as noted, designed with the best available technology and acoustics in mind. After renovation, the space will house three studios of various sizes, as well as a variety of production suites, possibly made available for 'dry hire' or varying tenancy timeframes.

Most of the recording mixing and mastering services were completed remotely while the new studio was under construction. Mastering clients are often local and interstate, with a growing Asian market. Many clients are attracted to Studios 301 because of its heritage, prestige and reputation. The quality of acoustics and control desks is an additional drawcard for sound engineers in based in Sydney, other parts of Australia and in other countries.

### The Neighbourhood

The networking and capacity-building of long-established arts organisations in the area are viewed as important to supporting local musical talent, and contributing to the cultural scene and community by raising awareness of gigs, shows, talks and services. There is an



awareness of a number of more recently established creative enterprises and studios in the area, such as photographers and music producers. However, there is a sense that Studios 301 is a little hidden behind the anonymous warehouse fronts. Once renovation has been completed, there is clear potential for Studios 301 to become a creative hub in the neighbourhood. This sense of community, atmosphere and 'buzz' stems from the feeling that being around other people who are doing the same thing is inspiring: 'Art creates art'.

### Pressure Points

Public transport, technological advances and urban development highlight a range of pressures which impact on Studio 301's access, services and neighbourhood in both direct and indirect ways. In terms of public transport, Studios 301 is relatively close to the CBD, with a range of transport options available: Mascot Station is a 15-minute walk, and Green Square Station not far away. While there are buses all the time to the city, during rush hour these can take some time and be very crowded.

Recognising changes in music production processes, as well as maintaining its niche in the music market, shows how Studios 301 is evolving. For instance, while some technological advances mean that people can record from home and might not need a studio, other innovations give an edge to Studio 301, as it can offer a quality of audio and mixing which can simply not be produced

elsewhere. Gentrification is also viewed as an issue, with more apartments on Gardeners Road going up, potentially leading to change in the demographic and functional mix of the area. When spaces for live performance close down, this change clearly impacts on the buzz and atmosphere of a place.

The opportunity to explore

how cultural and economic developments could co-exist more effectively is viewed as a key concern: building not only revenue, but the cultural community as well. One suggestion is for new developments to include an independent creative director, who could balance development needs and cultural heritage values. The move to Ellis Avenue

started a new phase for this music production venue, and Studios 301 is envisioning a future which will inspire the next generation of producers of music.



## STABLES STUDIOS

<https://www.facebook.com/Stables-Studios-669174363141355/>

### Venue Address

Unit 2, 11 Collins Street,  
Beaconsfield, NSW 2015

### General Facts

Stables Studios is an interdisciplinary studio and artistic space that has operated in Beaconsfield since 2009. It is part of a larger venue known as The Barn, which also includes shared housing accommodation. Our interviewee, James Nichols, took over the lease from its previous tenants, having operated a similar larger space in Marrickville. James recently passed on the lease himself, and this year another lease term was negotiated until 2020.

Stables Studios has hosted a

range of cultural practitioners since its inception, including sculptors, media artists, screen printers, jewellers and artisan craftspeople.

### The Venue

According to James, the venue was originally a stable, and prior to its conversion into a creative space was used for a machine shop and other light industrial purposes. The building's owner operates a neighbouring picture framing factory next door and, while maintenance has been minimal, he has been supportive of Stables Studios. In James' view, the proximity of the factory meant that the owner has been disinclined to redevelop the space, since new residential or commercial tenants might complain about noise or other amenity issues caused by the factory. However, he thought such redevelopment would be inevitable at some point in the future.

The venue is approximately 200 to 250 square metres in size, and supports 8 to 12 individual studios at an approximate cost of \$80-90 per week. Unusually, it includes 'ground level loading dock access', and its condition allows for oil prints to be used - two features lacking in Sydney's other studios. James also commented that such old industrial stock was both ideal for creative industries and increasingly hard to find. In contrast, he thought new commercial retail spaces, developed on the ground floor of apartment buildings, were much less suitable for most kinds of artistic production.

### The Neighbourhood

Surrounding Stables Studios is a mix of light industrial businesses (shopfitters, carpet suppliers) and newer residential apartments. As with other areas of Sydney, apartment developments are increasingly common, thereby reducing the availability of low-cost industrial spaces similar to





The Barn/Stables Studios.

### Pressure Points

The venue experiences the pressures common to other venues in our study. In James' view, studios are heavily dependent upon local networks of artists, and their most significant challenge involves managing the various personalities sharing the space. The cost and time of regulation compliance, including the hurdles of applying for



Development Applications (DAs), also threaten the long-term viability of venues like Stables Studios. Even though rent is comparatively cheap, the venue operator and tenants are aware of the likelihood that the owner will sell or redevelop the property. Shared housing cooperatives also provide unintended competition with studios for use of old industrial buildings. Finally, practical but relatively minor issues include poor electrics and comparative distance from Green Square Station.



## Creative Space Located Elsewhere in the City

### CASE STUDIES

17. Matchbox Pictures

18. Claypool





## MATCHBOX PICTURES

<https://www.matchboxpictures.com>

### Venue Address

1 Munn Street, Millers Point, NSW 2000

### General Facts

Matchbox Pictures is one of the major commercial TV production companies in Australia. Founded in 2008, it is now owned by NBCUniversal and has offices in Melbourne and Sydney. The company produces a diverse range of programs, including TV drama, children's programs, factual, entertainment, animation and feature films. Its Sydney office has 20 employees and is located in a heritage-listed warehouse in Millers Point.

We spoke with Kali Reid, script development coordinator, and Cathy Amies, production coordinator of the company, about two essential but very different creative processes in the TV industry that also represent the diverse needs of creative space in the industry.

### Scriptwriting

#### The Venue

According to Kali, there are two types of creative space required by television screenwriters: 1) collaborative short-term meeting space; and 2) individual writing (desk) space. Television script development usually starts with a workshop, when a team of writers is assembled to work on a story or idea for a program for a few days at a time. After the workshop, writers work individually on their own specific segment/episode. Collaborative workshops vary in duration, being generally around 2-5 full days in length, and require a quiet, boardroom-style space. Depending on the length/nature of the script, there will be a number of collaborative writing workshop sessions. Between workshops, writers usually work individually from home or from their offices.

As Kali pointed out, the TV industry is heavily dependent on freelance workers. Most creative workers are employed on a temporary contract basis, come from different places in Australia and are involved in different programs. Except for full-time employees like Kali, freelance script writers do not have an office at Matchbox, but there are boardrooms available in the building for creative writers

to meet and work during the collaborative writing phases. On occasion the company hires an external hotel conference facility for short workshops, which may also be held at a writer/producer's house.

When scriptwriters work separately, they tend to work at home, at their studio or office (if they have one) or in public places such as libraries or cafés. There are no fixed or specific requirements for a writing venue; rather, they depend on different people's writing styles. Some need quiet space, others prefer active spaces or a combination of both. Long phone calls may be needed at times, as well as silent rooms for reading and reflection. Access to printing facilities and other services are also sometime required. Matchbox has been planning to relocate to another commercial building in George Street in the Sydney CBD. While the new space will be able to cater better to the needs of workshops and office staff, Kali feels that the arrangements for their freelance writers will remain as before.

### The Neighbourhood

As Matchbox's scriptwriters are based in different parts of Australia, they only come to Matchbox's building for meetings as required and the company will generally pay for the flight and accommodation for them in Sydney. That said, as Kali pointed out, a decent hotel in Sydney's CBD is expensive (on average \$180-350/night for a 3-4 star room), as is hiring extra working space for freelance writers at a boardroom in a hotel or co-working space, which may cost







\$200 to \$600 per day, depending on the type of venue.

Kali lives in Redfern and finds that the rent and living costs are rising as a result of the housing boom. In her words, 'artists can't afford living in Redfern anymore, unless they're in a place that they've been in for a really long time and they've managed to hold onto it.' While she acknowledged that creative writers do not necessarily need to be based in the city, she understands the reasons why people prefer to be there. She said, 'I suppose it's because you have the community in the inner city, there's inspiration from other cultural activities and other people to bounce off. That's really important.'

### Pressure Points

The first problem is that scriptwriters, like other creative workers and artists, often do not earn sufficient disposable income to afford a house in the City of Sydney, let alone rent additional space for their writing work. This means that many of them work from home, not infrequently from suburban or rural locations, and only go to the city during the collaborative phases of script development.

The second problem is that, even when they can afford to live closer to the city, there is a dearth

of affordable workspaces that are suitable for creative writers, because each person has their own needs in terms of space. Creative writers are rarely able to afford the kinds of multiple and flexible arrangement offered by private commercial co-working spaces. Public spaces like cafes or libraries are possible locations for them to work, albeit not really being ideal writing venues. Desks are not always available in public libraries, and working from a café is not a sustainable option. Kali noted that writers often also prefer to write at home, so affordable housing is important.

Kali feels that current artist-in-residence programs that award a space for 6 or 12 months are not always the most suitable for writers, who instead may need more flexible and less structured spatial arrangements, such as one that, given the intermittent and short-term temporalities of scriptwriting in the TV/film industry, can allow them to 'drop in and drop out'.

### TV production

#### The Venue

According to Cathy, Matchbox Sydney was originally located in an 1880's warehouse owned by one of the founding partners. As its output grew the company was

acquired by NBCUniversal, moving into the company's current site shared with Universal Pictures and Universal Networks. Inside the building are office space and meeting rooms, as well as a small theatre for showing inhouse TV or film productions. There are neither indoor TV studio nor post-production facilities in the building.

Cathy explained that, when Matchbox films a show, there are many extra office staff and crew members, so a separate production office is needed for each project. When a production starts, it hires an external production office, which is usually at Fox Studios or Callan Park Film Production Services. While the rent could amount to up to \$5000 per week to use these facilities, it is more economical to hire an indoor studio than purpose-build one. Building and operating a studio/production space in Sydney is extremely expensive. Since Matchbox usually produces several shows a year and then spends a couple of months on post-production, it makes sense to hire the space as needed.

In terms of location filming, Matchbox uses different sites depending on the storyline of the show. Currently, Matchbox produces most of its work in Melbourne, with the rest of its productions spread around the country. As with script development, Matchbox employs many freelance crew who work on each show in production and post-production. This creative workforce includes those specialising in camera, lighting, grips, sound, props and costumes, etc., and is mainly based in Sydney. According to Cathy, companies in the screen industry have generally good relationships, sharing resources and crew from time to time. For example, Matchbox could purchase costumes, props or construction pieces from another TV project that has ended, and crew members could work for other production companies on



different projects.

### The Neighbourhood

Matchbox's Sydney office is located in Millers Point at the end of Barangaroo Reserve. As noted, NBCUniversal is relocating the whole company to a commercial building on George Street, as the current building is too small. Cathy likes the current location because it is quiet and close to a park, but she also sees the advantages of relocating to George Street—it is in the middle of the city and is more accessible to different places. For example, getting to Fox Studios, where Matchbox does a lot of production work, will be much easier. While she agrees that cheaper and larger office space would probably be available in Western Sydney, she prefers to be located in the city because it is 'easier to get in and out' and is 'close to the airport'.

With regard to location shooting, Cathy does not have a preference for particular sites, and site selection depends on the needs of each show. She added that Western Sydney is becoming more attractive for location shooting as it has less traffic, larger spaces, and some of the local councils are very supportive of location shooting crews.

### Pressure points

One of the problems that Matchbox faces is the rising expense of TV production in Australia, due mainly to the increasing cost of living, wages, materials, and so on. As funding from NBCUniversal or from local broadcasters alone is often not sufficient to cover the cost of production, it has to apply for grants or loans from Create NSW, Screen Australia or other funding bodies to make up the shortfall. As a result, all production companies have to follow the funding bodies' schedules instead of their own. For example, it takes 8 weeks for Screen NSW to review a funding application and make a decision. During this period, Matchbox usually cannot start a production until the funding is secure, which creates problems in seeking to organise studios or crews.

There are also issues concerning the general filming environment in NSW for the screen industry. Cathy feels that, in general, there are a lot of restrictions regarding filming in NSW (such as shooting drone footage), not to mention the often-expensive council fees for location shooting and the red tape involved in getting a location shooting permit (although, as noted, this may be less of a constraint in parts of Western Sydney and other places in the state where location shooting is encouraged). In contrast, Queensland's large studios are readily available and the government offers a payroll tax rebate as an incentive to attract international film companies to shoot there. To be eligible, though, a project must spend more than \$3.5 million in Queensland. As Cathy points out 'the way the film and TV industry functions is very specific', and she wishes that the NSW government would have better understanding of the TV and film industry and provide a more supportive environment for creation and production in Sydney.



## CLAYPOOL

<http://claypool.com.au>

### Venue Address

1605 Botany Road, Botany, NSW 2019

### General Facts

Claypool is a private company that runs a collective pottery studio in the City of Botany Bay, which is south of the City of Sydney LGA. Established as a limited partnership in 2013, Claypool was initiated in response to the need for professional pottery artists to find studio space. The original founders believed that there was a real shortage of facilities for pottery professionals coming out of university or other education pathways. They themselves were looking for a studio after a pottery facility run by the UNSW Union had closed. In particular, community colleges and night classes at the time were in decline, and the reform of TAFE made pottery courses very expensive. Therefore, after Claypool was started, in a warehouse that they shared with another artist-run initiative (Square One), it soon gathered traction and reached full capacity. The founders believe that they tapped into the needs of pottery artists who could not afford their own studios but wanted a more stable and professionally viable

arrangement, when compared with the more 'amateur' facilities offered by community art centres, or learning facilities such as the City-of-Sydney-owned Pine Street Creative Arts Centre.

Today, Claypool is owned by 3 of the 5 original partners, who are now the company directors and take turns in managing the studio. Their aim, since the inception of Claypool, was to create a financially sustainable community around a shared studio which would offer more than just space and equipment, but also a networked support and enrichment. To cover the cost of the studio — mainly rent and the utilities — Claypool's business model is based on a membership scheme. The main revenue stream comes from the members, who pay fees to use all the facilities, with the exclusion of the kiln. Firing fees are paid as additional charges depending on use of the kiln. Non-members, however, are also allowed to use the studio facilities by paying a daily rate, undergoing induction training, and observing the

community rules of the space. The directors do not receive any compensation from the company, as all additional revenues go to the purchase of new equipment, but their in-kind work is rewarded with free use of the space and of the facilities.

### The Venue

Claypool's original venue was a warehouse in the City of Sydney, a space that the pottery studio shared, as noted, with Square One (close to Sydney Park). The lease in the original location could only be secured for 2 years, and with a demolition clause that was eventually actioned. Having to move out of the warehouse, Claypool sought to identify another location within the city. As it catered to the needs of people who lived in the central areas of Sydney, a space that was both suitable for light industrial uses and easily accessible with public transport was required. Claypool's founders could not find an adequate space within the city boundaries, and had to relocate to the City of Botany Bay, where rents were cheaper. As the founders recall, while searching for a venue in the city, all warehouses that would have been within their price range had a demolition clause: for this reason, even if affordable temporarily, the cost of moving out and relocating again would have put Claypool at risk of closing.

When they moved into the







new space, Claypool's directors believed that they had a long-term arrangement, as Botany had not yet been affected by the wave of urban renewal that was being experienced in other suburbs. Not long after, however, the warehouse was sold, and then bulldozed to build apartments. By that time, fortunately, the very first member of Claypool had received an inheritance and decided to buy a warehouse with the idea of giving it to the company on a long-term lease. The new space was restored and customised with the kind of spatial and infrastructural arrangement needed by a collective pottery studio (in particular, with three-phase electricity for the kiln). Moving, as the founders explain, was not without cost, both in terms of members who could not afford the move, and in monetary terms, as the relocation was only made possible by an investment of \$40,000.

The current venue, on 1605 Botany Road, is a bright, spacious warehouse facing the main commercial parade in the suburb, with a shopfront that can be used to showcase Claypool's artefacts. The rear of the building has a loading area and small car park that directly links to the kiln room. The main space is subdivided into several small studios that members can 'personalise' in accordance with their needs. The wheels and the glazing facilities have dedicated spaces, which the directors believe is a great improvement to the previous venues, as they now have a larger capacity.

### The Neighbourhood

Botany, immediately south of the City of Sydney, is dotted with warehouses that used to be industrial or storage facilities connected to the port. Claypool is located in one of these industrial buildings on the commercial stretch of Botany Road, which links the neighbourhood to the City via Green Square and Redfern.

As the founders explain, moving out of the City to the first ring of suburbs, like Marrickville or Botany, is a trend that responds to two contemporary processes: the increasing rent and the decreasing number of warehouse spaces, which are being bulldozed and often transformed into apartments. Such suburbs still have a large warehouse stock, which is often not used for industrial purposes anymore, so it is suitable to house light manufacturing activities such as pottery and other crafts. Moreover, the accessibility of the suburb via car was an important element in the decision to relocate to Botany. Other warehouses were not chosen because they did not have convenient parking facilities, an important factor given that some pottery products cannot be easily transported on public transport. Botany also afforded a sufficient degree of safety. As many Claypool members also have other jobs, the venue needed to be perceived as sufficiently safe after office hours and at night, which they thought was not the case in some industrial precincts in the Green Square area.

### Pressure Points

Over its 4 years of life as a community pottery studio, Claypool faces the challenges of being a creative organisation that does not generate enough disposable income to afford a large space in the City of Sydney. As the founders argue, they could have increased the membership fees to become more profitable and so stay in the City, but this decision would have gone against the core mission of Claypool, which was to provide a community studio both to established and emerging pottery artists.

Moving out of the City, however, was not without challenges, as the wave of redevelopment has spread well beyond the boundaries of central Sydney. In fact, the studio's survival was helped, as noted, by a fortunate occurrence - receipt of an individual inheritance. In particular, the close relationship between Claypool and the owner of the building, who is a member, has allowed a longer-term arrangement which is quite unusual in the current rental market, especially as far as warehouse space is concerned. This setup gives Claypool the prospect of a viable future and the possibility of investing in dedicated facilities. However, small creative crafts, which are challenged by lack of suitable space and by the closure of many learning institutions and related facilities, remain in a perilous position.

# Discussion

## Emerging Trends

Outlined below is a series of trends impacting on cultural creation and production in Sydney, which can be distilled from the case studies: commercialisation of cultural production and space; gentrification of the inner city; privatisation of cultural infrastructure; casualisation of cultural workers and 'flexibilisation' of workspace, and the diversification of creative space. In combination, these trends are contributing to pressures on the availability, suitability and affordability of creative spaces in the City of Sydney. These complexities help to illustrate the major contextual issues and challenges relating to creative space identified in the following section.

### Trend 1

#### Commercialisation of cultural production and space

An *emerging* trend is the commercialisation of the modes of production of creative work, driven partly by the difficult environment in which artists and cultural practitioners seek to survive and sustain themselves. On one hand, there has been growing evidence of artists and cultural practitioners failing to establish themselves in the workforce of the 'creative economy', due to the oversupply of creative workers and

diminishing job opportunities (Morgan & Wood, 2014; Stevenson et al., 2017). On the other hand, gentrification and rising property prices are forcing artists and cultural practitioners to move outwards because of growing rents (both for accommodation and workspace), demolition of industrial buildings and the re-zoning of industrial land for residential development (Curran, 2010; Shaw, 2013).

In response to the widespread market failure inimical to the survival of artistic and creative enterprises, some cultural practitioners adapt by learning to become 'entrepreneurial' (Morgan & Nelligan, 2018), while others are compelled to pay more attention to making a living rather than to their passion for arts and culture:

*If you can't sell the work, if you're not making it for a commercial show, then the work will not become a reality because you can't produce something, or you can't sustain yourself. (Pia van Gelder, former operator of Lanfranchi's and Serial Space)*

Molotch and Treskon (2009, p. 518) also note in their study of New York City that galleries can avoid displacement from Manhattan's SoHo if they can enhance their capacity to pay higher rent by increasing the 'revenue that art selling can yield'. This strategy provides an explanation of the commercialisation trend manifesting in the operation of

several of the creative spaces in the City of Sydney that we examined. Not only has the number of 'community' galleries (i.e., those run by artist collectives) dropped significantly (our interviews indicated that only 9 out of 23 artist-run initiatives started in 2003 are still operating), but also the operators are changing their curatorial policies and the type of artist exhibiting at their galleries. For instance, Galerie pompom's predecessor MOP Projects was an artist-run, not-for-profit gallery with the objective of showcasing experimental works from emerging artists. However, with the increasing rent and operating cost, MOP Projects has had to adapt its business model to incorporate a more profitable revenue stream — Galerie pompom, a commercial gallery that is the commercial arm of MOP Projects. In the end, the operator had to discontinue MOP Projects because it was no longer financially viable, while the commercial Galerie pompom has continued to function:

*I discontinued [my experimental gallery] at the end of last year because I decided that the time had come... because the space also became so expensive so we couldn't really get experimental younger artists to pay rent anymore. (George Adams, Galerie pompom)*

A similar situation is faced by aMBUSH Gallery, an art gallery with a remit of not charging artists any commission fee.



The redevelopment of Central Park in Chippendale was mentioned several times by our informants, both as an example of good urban renewal and as a cause of sustained rent increases in the area. Source: see photo credits.

The operators used to cross-subsidise the Gallery via their consulting business. However, facing a significant rental increase, they have had to find alternative means to maintain the sustainability of the Gallery:

*So we found another way to support the gallery, which is to do public art projects and festivals and then we just channel the money back into aMBUSH Gallery. (Bill Dimas, aMBUSH Gallery)*

aMBUSH Gallery is currently applying for development approval for the exhibition space downstairs so that it can generate extra income by renting out the space for corporate events and functions. As creative space operators are increasingly forced to engage in more commercial initiatives, the danger is that new, experimental or risky work, especially by emerging artists, is squeezed out, potentially leading to a less diverse and equitable cultural scene in the City.

## Trend 2

### Gentrification of the inner city

Like many other cities in the world, Sydney is undergoing a 'third wave of gentrification' characterised by a spatial expansion of areas under gentrification (especially inner-city neighbourhoods and beyond), the involvement of large developers, decline of community opposition, and increasing involvement of the state in the process (Hackworth & Smith, 2001). In the City, this rapid gentrification is evident in a number of inner-city suburbs such as Surry Hills, Chippendale, Redfern, Waterloo, Alexandria and Green Square covered by our study.

Gentrification is a complex and diverse process (Shaw, 2008). The resurgence of Sydney's CBD as a major financial and services centre since the 1960s, and the de-industrialisation of the CBD fringe and inner city in the 1970s, were the precursors of gentrification (Hutton, 2010). However, the current gentrification process in Sydney

has been accelerated by the NSW State Government's urban consolidation policy (pursued by both major political parties), as exemplified by its 'Metropolitan Strategies' since late 1980s, which has encouraged the rezoning of old industrial precincts in the inner-urban areas such as Pyrmont-Ultimo and Green Square to develop new residential dwellings (Searle & Filon, 2010).

This period coincided with rapid population increase and demographic change in Sydney, including the increasing number of small, young and dual-income households (Bounds & Morris, 2005). These people, especially those employed in the business services sector and the so-called 'creative class', have been attracted by the growth of employment, services and other activities in the CBD. They prefer to live in the city centre and its surroundings in order to be closer to work and to enjoy an urban lifestyle (Hu, 2014; Florida, 2002), including an advanced night-time economy that offers both leisure and work



opportunities (Rowe & Lynch, 2012).

While this gentrification trend largely continued throughout the late 1990s to 2000s, since 2010 there has been evidence of an intensification of high-rise apartment development throughout Sydney, particularly in Sydney's CBD and its inner city (Shoory, 2016). The latest data show that the number of building approvals for medium- to high-rise dwellings in the City of Sydney LGA has increased over 13 times in the recent real estate boom phase between 2002-2017 (Profile id, 2018e).

Our two case study areas, Green Square and Redfern, are major targets for intensive redevelopment and gentrification under the prevailing urban consolidation policy. Green Square was identified as one of the four major industrial sites subject to redevelopment as early as 1995, and the Redfern-Waterloo Authority (the predecessor of UrbanGrowth NSW) was set up in 2005 by the State Government to oversee the 10-year urban renewal projects in this inner city suburb (Searle, 2007). In Green Square, massive residential buildings have now been constructed on the old industrial land around Green Square Station. In Redfern, redevelopment and gentrification are currently underway under the 'Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Strategy' led by UrbanGrowth NSW. It includes building private housing on land formerly devoted to public housing, revitalisation of streets and activation of public space (UrbanGrowth NSW, 2016).

In contrast to the second wave of gentrification in the 1970s in which the artistic and creative community was regarded as a key agent in 'aestheticising' a neighbourhood and laying the foundation for more intensive developer-led gentrification (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Ley,

2003), currently that community is being squeezed out of its inner-city neighbourhoods. In his new book *The New Urban Crisis*, Florida (2017) admitted that the rise of the 'creative class' in places like New York, London and San Francisco has led to growing urban wealth and income inequality. Property speculation and surging home prices have caused mass displacement of the poor and working class (Wetherell, 2017), with largely economically marginalised artists (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Morgan & Wood 2014) also falling victim to this process.

The rapid gentrification process in the inner city has had significant implications regarding the availability of creative space. Some well-known creative spaces in the City, such as Lanfranchi's and Serial Space in Chippendale, became victims of the gentrification process and ceased operating because the buildings they occupied were sold and turned into other more profitable outfits (i.e., a well-appointed co-working office and a yoga centre). The gentrification process also led to the gradual disappearance of old warehouses and factory buildings which were commonly used by artists and the creative community. As one of our interviewees described it:

*The entire street of warehouses, to the government and perhaps investors, those spaces are disruptive to residential. So for investors, it's beneficial to get those spaces cleaned up, wiped out. To them, it looks like dirty, grotty, you know, old buildings full of, you know, riff-raff that cause noise. (Melissa Gilbert, The Nest Creative Space)*

Equally problematic is the assumption that the artistic and creative community can simply migrate out from the centre to the margins (Gibson et al., 2017) after losing the spaces to live/work/display their works. As Shaw (2013, p. 338)

noted, under-capitalised artists or creative enterprises 'have little room to move'. Alternative location options are limited, if not decreasing largely due to the constraints of 'cultural policies and funding arrangements, inequitable planning practices and inadequate provision of affordable housing and work and performance spaces' (p. 338). The lack of infrastructure and public transport in the outer suburbs also reduced the attractiveness of moving out of the City (Shaw, 2013).

Another interviewee, who had run creative spaces that had been forced to close, pointedly raised the issue of the conflict between creative culture and real-estate oriented place making in the City of Sydney's own property holdings:

*my two cents to the City of Sydney is you own buildings all over the place and I think you have to make a decision. Do you want to be facilitating like ambitious creative practice or are you interested in place making to develop your real estate portfolio? Because they're two absolutely different things and they don't work in the same category; you can't play to both objectives. (Pia van Gelder, former operator of Lanfranchi's and Serial Space)*

### Trend 3

#### Privatisation of cultural infrastructure

Traditionally, support for cultural development has been the province of the public sector, either through various funding schemes or provision of subsidised cultural space to individual artists or organisations. A key trend that was registered in this research is the growing involvement of the private sector in supporting cultural infrastructure development in the City.

Philanthropy has played an important role in addressing the gap left by the reduction of public funding. For instance, the current \$15 million redevelopment of the State Library of NSW (including the addition of a new gallery) was funded by private benefactors (Taylor, 2017). Other examples of recent philanthropic intervention in cultural infrastructure and development include the founding of White Rabbit Gallery and James Packer's donation of \$60 million to art organisations after receiving approval to build the Barangaroo casino resort on the fringe of Sydney CBD. Some of the case study creative spaces have also received philanthropic support. For example, Square One Studios has received a donation to set up its residency program, while 107 Projects and Performance Space received around 30% of their funding from private donors and other support groups.

Property developers are also increasingly involved in the provision of creative space for interim and long-term use. For instance, property developer HPG Australia has recently partnered with the City of Sydney to provide one of its transition sites (that has not yet commenced construction), a 7,000 sq metres warehouse space in Alexandria, as a temporary hub for the Sydney Fringe Festival to host performance, exhibition, screening and live music during the Festival (Jefferson, 2017).

In terms of longer-term usage, property developer Lendlease has embarked on a 'place making' model on its Darling Harbour redevelopment project 'Darling Quarter'. Apart from apartments, office buildings and other professional and entertainment facilities, a budget has been allocated for public space activation, public art exhibitions and outdoor festivals. One of the case study participants, aMBUSH Gallery, currently runs a pop-up art gallery called 'Open' there, organising six to eight public art

exhibitions each year.

A more recent approach to encourage the private sector's long-term investment in creative space is through voluntary planning agreements (VPAs). A VPA is an agreement between the City Council and the property developer on the integration of space for community use in a development, such as a library, swimming pool or community hall. An instance of private sector commitment to creative space involves the Greenland Group, the developer of Sydney's tallest residential building, the Greenland Centre, currently under construction at 115 Bathurst Street in the CBD. The site was a former Sydney Water Board Building and this new 66-storey residential tower will incorporate 5 floors of creative space to be used for subsidised artist accommodation, dance studios and music rooms (City of Sydney, 2014a). The Planning Controls Unit of the City of Sydney manages such VPAs.

The VPN as a public-private partnership model may offer mutual benefits in terms of easing the pressure on provision of creative space by local government and helping property developers to brand and market their housing projects. But the model can also be criticised on various grounds, including of its tendency to narrow the range of artistic options and of the level of public utility and value. Some have also suggested that the model may be outmoded following the Global Financial Crisis (Greve & Hodge, 2013), calling for public institutions to restore their leadership role.

#### Trend 4

#### Casualisation of cultural workers and 'flexibilisation' of workspace

A major characteristic of the cultural economy is the heavy use of decentralised

production networks and flexible subcontracted labour (Gibson & Kong, 2005; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Stevenson et al., 2017). A recent study by Throsby and Petetskaya (2017) calculates that only 56% of artists in Australia are able to work full-time in the arts (i.e., in creative work and in arts-related jobs such as art teaching). Cultural workers, they found, are prevented from engaging full-time in their creative work because it generated insufficient income and because of a shortage of work in their art occupations (Throsby and Petetskaya, 2017).

Casualisation of creative labour has also become commonplace among creative businesses in Sydney, such as TV production and digital services, which are now largely dependent on freelance workers. Kali, a production manager of a TV production company, described the operation of freelance script writers thus:

*It's the way the industry works: the whole industry runs on freelancers, predominantly... And also it's not full time work necessarily...a writer might take three weeks to write a script and then another week to sort of do notes and a review and then they might wait and then in another two months write another one. (Kali Reid, Matchbox Pictures)*

Digital services is another creative sector predominantly based on freelance workers. An interviewee from Semi-Permanent, a digital event company, said of the operation of freelance workers in his company:

*I mean it's certainly the way we see things going with this sort of creative industries, there's more freelancers, more people working on their own and that's where Semi-Permanent [is] in this fortunate position where we work with so many different people on our events*

*over the years that we can tap into a world of freelancers. We probably don't envision having a staff of 50 people here, working on bits and pieces and we bring in freelancers for certain roles. (Luke Wood, Semi-Permanent)*

Casualisation, impermanence and precarity have long been characteristic of cultural and creative work. However, even in those areas that have previously provided relative security, it is apparent that contract and freelance arrangements are now more common, thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of the workforce. Research by Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010) has pointed to the negative impact of casualisation on creative workers' emotional health and well-being, their study revealing feelings of victimisation and anxiety among casual creative workers due to their job insecurity, as well as various

forms of exploitation such as low/no pay and long working hours.

Another consequence of this trend is the increasing difficulty of living and working in the expensive urban spaces that predominate in cities like Sydney that, ironically, celebrate their cultural and creative sector. The City of Sydney (2018c) has compared mean weekly artist income (based on a series of economic studies of professional artists in Australia conducted by researchers from Macquarie University between 1990-2017) to median rent of a single bedroom in the City of Sydney (See Figure 1). The results revealed that artists spent 60% of their weekly income on housing in 2014-15, among other costs such as life necessities, materials and consumables for their creative work. The enormous housing stress facing artists and creative workers, and their frequent reliance on family support to

continue their artistic careers, is explained by these statistics (Morgan & Wood, 2014; Throsby & Petetskaya, 2017; Stevenson et al., 2017).

The casualisation of creative workers has implications for creative space needs. While most interviewees acknowledged a need for physical space to work, either independently or cooperatively, they do not necessarily need workspace all the time. This intermittent employment/work pattern, coupled with the growing rents for workspace, has led to increased shared or co-working spaces in the City.

Sydney is experiencing a trend of increasing 'shared' and 'communalisation' of workspace (O'Neill & McGuirk, 2003). This trend, which we call here 'flexibilisation', is evidenced in the declining work-space ratio (WSR) in the City between 2007-2012 (City of Sydney, 2012b), meaning that the workspace of each worker has been reduced. One of the manifestations of this 'flexibilisation' trend is the emergence of co-working spaces, where a large workspace is shared among artists and creative practitioners.

According to Colliers International's (2018) *Flexible Workspace Outlook Report*, flexible co-working space is a growing global trend, although its take-up in Australia is still lagging behind of other countries. The report showed that there are 52 professionally managed flexible workspace centres in Sydney, with an average monthly cost of about \$650 per desk. In the CBD alone, flexible co-working workspace only accounts for 2.6% of total workspace, but further growth is expected due to major new developments, such as York Butter Factory and Hub Australia in the city fringe in 2017, and the recent lease signed by Jobs NSW to open the Sydney Start-Up Hub in the CBD (Colliers International,

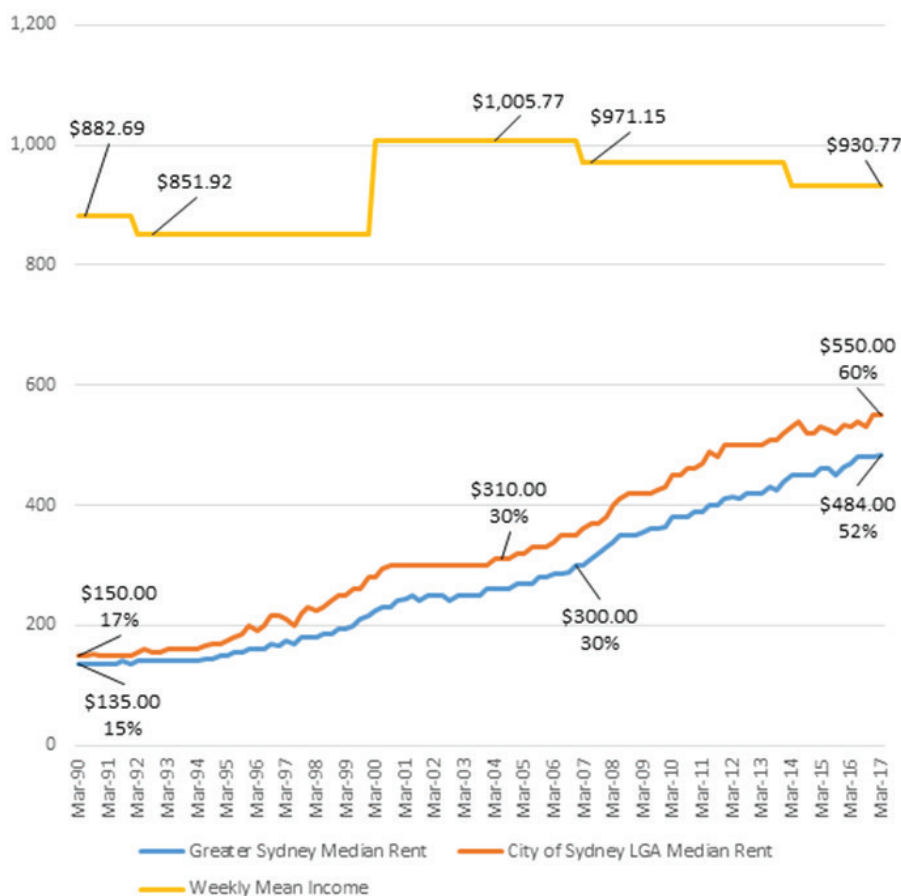


Figure 1. Mean weekly artist income compared to median rent (Source: City of Sydney 2018c, based on longitudinal research by David Throsby between 1990-2017)



2018, p. 35).

In addition to the above mentioned professionally-operated coworking workspace centres, in this study we have come across two types of co-working space. The first is the artist-run, community oriented shared artist studios, where the operators acquired a whole warehouse and divided it into smaller studios for individual artists to rent. Examples among our case studies are Duckrabbit, The Nest Creative Space, Square One Studios, Stables Studios and Claypool. Such venues are usually set up by artists in response to the urgent need for affordable space for artists and creators to do their work, and generally operate on a not-for-profit basis or with operators barely managing to break even on their operating costs.

The second type of co-working space is the more commercially

oriented venue, including hot-desking offices set up by creative companies or those, like Grumpy Sailor, aMBUSH Gallery and Semi-Permanent, who share their office space with other companies in order to reduce the pressure of their rent. Like the shared studios, the operators usually acquire an open-plan office in a commercial building and rent out desks (partitioned) or bench space (for hot-desking) to individual creative workers or companies on a short-term basis. This type of commercial co-working space has grown in popularity among freelance digital services workers or has been used as a temporary off-site office for TV/media production companies.

As James, an operator of a co-working space, pointed out, co-working space not only helps creative companies to lower their operating costs by sharing the rent and utility expenses, but also generates essential networks and

synergies:

*It [having the co-working space] was the only way that we could justify the rent, yeah. So we had to make a decision to make it bigger and better with the rent and build a space that other people might want to use as well .. we want to create a space where we could expand and contract and also have a whole bunch of collaborators in there that we might be able to work with. We don't want to own their business, we want them to run their own clients and fill their own gaps, but we want opportunities to cross-collaborate... (James Boyce, Grumpy Sailor)*

This relatively new form of co-working arrangement also has implications for its operators who curate the space. In addition to the management space and rent, one interviewee who has substantial experience of



A multi-media art exhibition in the downstairs of aMBUSH Gallery. Source: see photo credits.

managing a co-working space highlights the importance of managing tenants who are sharing the space:

*I mean you've got to manage personalities in creative spaces because it's about a small community and [that's] the first job of anyone running a space like this is to ensure that as a community it works. (James Nichols, Stables Studios)*

Sharing a similar view, the interviewee from the Nest Creative Space uses a less formal method, such as a communal barbecue, as an opportunity to develop relationships and to obtain feedback from her tenants.

While flexible co-working space has become increasingly popular, and for big corporations as well as freelance/casual worker, Colliers International (2018) warned that co-working space risks losing its 'creative vibe' because many large companies are simply attracted by the benefits of flexible contracts and cost savings offered by these spaces, and have no interest in collaborating with other tenants (Cheung, 2018). Besides, the practice and culture of co-working space may not suit every artist or creative worker. For instance, participating in a co-working environment requires self-

management and entrepreneurial skills, because a tenant (mostly a solo entrepreneur or independent contractor) needs to pay for their own workspace, deal with short-term contracts and embed themselves in dense networks. Therefore, those lacking these skills or the necessary sociability will be ill-suited the co-working environment. Casualised creative workers may also feel isolated and unsettled in a co-working space in cases where they are less connected to colleagues and are working in an environment with a high number of transient workers (Pendrill, 2016).

### Trend 5

#### Diversification of creative space needs

Our case studies exhibited several emerging differences within the cultural and creative industries. Notably, there is a widening distinction between for-profit, digital, office-based and service-oriented organisations (such as advertising and media production agencies, architects, film and television) and not-for-profit or profit-for-purpose, light industrial craft-based and product-oriented organisations and practitioners

(like artists, collectives, 'makers', and musicians) in their creative space needs, affordability and preferences regarding location, tenure, and building type. While the distinction is far from hard and fast, it highlights quite different requirements with respect to building stock, equipment, access, costs, security of tenure and development approvals.

For instance, the spaces at technology start-ups and firms tend to be open plan, with minimal equipment, a common table for individually seated workers operating laptop computers or involved in discussions with colleagues. Easy access to public transport (e.g. train) and to cafés (which can also be used as wifi-enabled working spaces) is preferred and, while proximity to business partners and clients is desirable, relocation would not appear to be a major inconvenience.

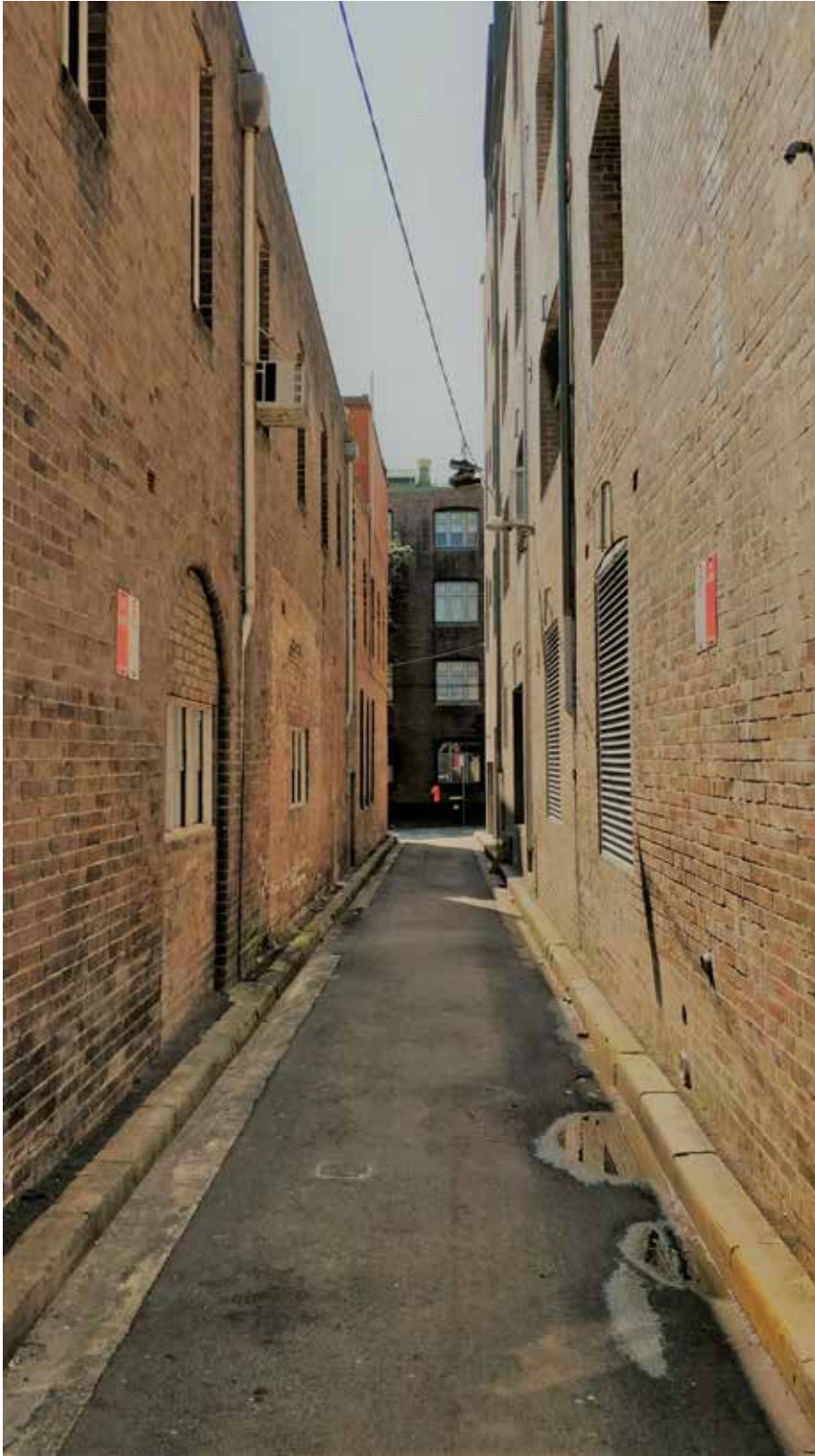
In contrast, many of the collective studios have quite specific requirements regarding transport (such as moving materials and equipment) and working on materials and finished products, and had further concerns about either surrounding noise or the noise that their own activity generated, especially if located in a mixed-use zone. Ideally, they would prefer high ceilings, high doorway and to be located on the ground floor (no staircase) with a roller door - a specific feature important for some co-working artist studio operators or craft-based artists who need to move large artworks in and out of their studios. Protecting warehouse building stock for the use of light-industrial based artists is necessary because of intense competition from property developers and even from creative businesses attracted to a modish industrial aesthetic.

Such differences are, of course, not new: advertisers, architects, copywriters and publishers are



A high-rise building under construction in Green Square. Source: see photo credits.





examples of older office-based businesses included within our and other common definitions of the cultural and creative. The transition of these businesses towards increasingly digital modes of operation, along with the emergence of new media industries, throws into stark relief the difference between their high adaptability to spatial context and form, and the comparative spatial fixity of less 'weightless' cultural activities. As many of our participants have indicated, the removal, modification or upgrading of industrial building stock has a differential and disproportionate impact on arts and cultural activities dependent on specialist types of space.

*Most of the industrial stock surrounding Galerie pompom in Chippendale has been converted to residential units. Source: see photo credits.*



## Major Issues

In the City of Sydney's *Creative City Cultural Policy and Action Plan* (2014b), access to creative space has been identified by the artist community and creative sector as one of the major challenges that they have been facing:

*The key challenges continue to be access to space: affordable places for artists and creative workers to live, affordable spaces to work and develop their art-form practice; and sustainable spaces for artists and creative teams to showcase their work—in galleries, theatres, cross-disciplinary, flexible spaces or in non-traditional environments and the public domain. (City of Sydney, 2014b, p. 57)*

This study has confirmed the persistence of these challenges: the need for affordable creative space was repeatedly emphasised by almost all the interviewees. As one interviewee said:

*...the need for affordable creative space and community, neutral non-institutional community space is as much in demand as it was then. (Jess Cook, 107 Projects)*

Below we summarise the key issues in relation to access to creative space which have emerged from this study.

### Issue 1

#### Availability of affordable creative space in the City

Affordability of creative space emerged as one of the major concerns of our informants. Sydney has been experiencing a property boom in the past two decades. The affordability problem has become more acute since 2012, as property values in Sydney have increased by nearly 70% in the past five

years (CoreLogic RP Data, 2017). Demographia, a US-based think tank, ranked Sydney's property prices as the second least affordable out of 92 major cities in the world in 2017 (Demographia, 2018). One of the major effects of the real estate boom has been a sustained increase in property rentals both for housing and other functions.

The issue of affordability of creative space is compounded by the fact that artists usually earn a modest income and cannot afford expensive rents. According to an economic study of professional artists in Australia, in 2014-15 the average gross income of professional artists was only \$48,400, while about 60% of artists made less than \$10,000 per year from their creative work (Throsby & Petetskaya, 2017). As a result, rental increases have put enormous pressure on artists working and living in the City. As two of our informants put it:

*Real estate prices tend to put huge pressure on that ... and so I know a lot of creative people have just moved out of the – they're just gone.... You know people, they can't afford to buy or even rent anymore, so lots have moved to the Blue Mountains or beyond. (Huge Ramage, Duckrabbitt)*

*Like the city itself, everyone I know is being forced out. So that's one thing: people can't afford to live, especially the artists, and anyone else who doesn't earn enough money. (Samuel Hodge, Clothing Store)*

According to Marnie Jackson, Cultural Projects Manager at the City of Sydney, this affordability crisis requires attention to the definition of 'key workers' in housing affordability policy. Generally, key workers are defined as people such as teachers, nurses and police, for whom affordable housing in the inner city should be provided. It would be useful, she suggests, to

include creatives and artists in this list as well.

### Issue 2

#### Suitability of creative space and suitability of tenure

Another major issue faced by many of our informants is the difficulty of finding 'suitable' creative space. The definition of suitability varies because different types of creative practice have their own spatial requirements due to specific creative processes, production systems, labour conditions, and consumption/usage patterns. For instance, there is a perception that empty shop fronts in the City can be used by artists or creative enterprises on a temporary basis. However, this kind of 'pop-up' space can only work for certain types of activity, such as small creative retailing. It will not be suitable for artists or creative enterprises which involve heavy equipment or require special fitting out of the space, such as a sculptor, radio station or a music studio, which generally prefer a longer-term space due to the high installation and relocation cost of equipment. The difficulty of finding appropriate buildings has been mentioned by many participants in the study.

The City of Sydney's Creative Spaces Program receives requests or inquiries for individual artist studios for 'messy' work (painting, welding etc.), including spaces that need to be light and have adequate ventilation. There is also unmet demand for spaces for light- industrial activities such as welding, metalwork, woodwork, prop-making, etc. The City's program doesn't currently adequately provide for these kinds of space. There is also unmet demand for theatre and performance space. As Marnie Jackson, observes:

*A lot of small independent theatre groups are looking*

*for space to rehearse and are looking for space to perform from. Generally, we're mostly contacted by people who are looking for space to rehearse from. It's really difficult to find space for block bookings, somewhere they can come in and book out for three weeks, leading up to a performance. (Marnie Jackson, City of Sydney)*

Another aspect of suitability is related to the terms of tenure. Appendix 3 shows that about half (8) of our informants have a lease for their creative space of 2-3 years, which is shorter than general commercial leases which usually last for 5-10 years. In some cases, artists are given very short-term leases, such as 6 months to 1 year (or even less), with no guarantee that their leases can be renewed. Such short tenure causes a lot of insecurity and impedes effective planning.

*We were in George Street, yeah. We got kicked out of there because that was going to get turned into a gym - so we were only on a short-term lease there. Before that, we were on Broadway at Central Park on a very short-term lease there as they were building the Central Park Shopping Centre. (Matt Branagan, Work-Shop)*

*...with artist studios like this, you only get short leases. So what they would do is we get kicked out and then if they continue, a whole new group of artists will come in and take our place... it's not ideal either because it takes a good six months to settle in and to start... and so you have to be careful about how much work you make sometimes. (Samuel Hodge, Clothing Store)*

Another problem is posed by leases containing development or demolition clauses. In this study, about one third of the leases discussed with interviewees had a development clause, which is quite common for creative spaces



*Redevelopments in Green Square often involve replacing industrial buildings with new residential blocks. Source: see photo credits.*

located in old warehouses or in former factory buildings. While such leases usually come with discounted rentals, they create enormous stress due to the uncertainty concerning how long tenants can stay and the need to quickly relocate once time's up.

Many informants also feel that they are too dependent on landlords, who have the power to impose significant rent increases, and it is difficult (and costly) to challenge such decisions.

### Issue 3

#### Disappearance of industrial buildings

Industrial buildings, especially old warehouses, are important creative space for artists and creative enterprises in the City. This study showed that 15 out of 18 case study venues are located in industrial buildings or in former industrial sites such as old small warehouses, closed factories and rail yard. Industrial buildings were once common in the harbour area and in the southern suburbs of the City of Sydney (Redfern, Waterloo, and Alexandria). Many of the interviewees recalled that these warehouses, having lost

their industrial purpose in the late 1970s and early 80s, had become desirable destinations for artist-run initiatives, shared studios and other creative enterprises due to their large unimpeded spaces, relatively low rents, and proximity to the CBD and public transportation links.

As mentioned earlier, many of these industrial buildings and small warehouses are disappearing due to gentrification. While some interviewees welcome the improved safety and the new audiences brought by recent residential developments, there is a shared understanding that these processes are also endangering — if not seriously impairing — the sustainability of Sydney's creative scene. Apart from the growing rents driven by the increase of property values in the neighbourhood, many interviewees also share a concern that the City is losing its creative community and even its diversity, because people who cannot afford to live in the neighbourhood are being squeezed out. As two interviewees put it:

*'I think what's problematic is when some of the Indigenous communities and the*

*artistic communities that have long had their bases here are threatened by that gentrification. (Jeff Khan, Performance Space)*

*Even when we first came to Redfern, probably over this side, you know, sort of Darlington area, there would have been another three or four buildings that had artists and kind of, you know, arty types. [...] All those, they're all gone, they're all gone. (Hugh Ramage, Duckrabbit)*

#### Issue 4

##### Diminishing creative clusters in the City

There has been a perception that the creatives can easily move out of the City and find alternative spaces in other parts of metropolitan Sydney. However, many interviewees said that they are unwilling to move away due to the presence of a strong creative community in the City:

*You still need to have a central Sydney base for two reasons: because the curators are here, the gallerists are here and you get more credibility being centrally located. (Sean Morris, Square One Studios)*

Apart from the advantage of easy transportation, more than one interviewee told us that being in proximity to major cultural institutions in the City, such as the ABC Radio's headquarters or Carriageworks, bring huge benefits to them:

*Being in the Carriageworks precinct, we get all the curators from Carriageworks [who] bring in lots of other curators, international curators, through to the studio. So you get exposure.... this experience of meeting curators who normally don't really get access directly in this way. (Samuel Hodge, Clothing Store)*

Others have emphasised the importance of local networks to their operations. For instance, a City-based sculptor may share their machinery or equipment with other local artists as a way to contribute to the creative cluster's local production system, 'it's actually direct injection into the creative industry from the bottom up' (Damien Butler, Studio Damien Butler). Another interviewee added that partnering with the university nearby enables his art company to access the university's theatre and facilities for practice and rehearsals:

*We don't have a space ourselves ... So as a result of that ... we tend to use spaces that we can [have] partnership through across the City... we run residency projects with some of the universities that have studio and rehearsal spaces, and with organisations like Critical Path who have a space in Rushcutters Bay. (Jeff Khan, Performance Space)*

Artists or cultural organisations based in the City also play an important role in serving local audiences and communities. Liza-Mare Syron, director of an Indigenous performing arts company, talked about its presence in Redfern:

*We're a Redfern company; we came out of the community; we need to stay in the community and we need people to offer us space in the community.... Redfern is historically a meeting place for Aboriginal people across the country and we can't lose that and we need to make a footprint here that's economic, social and cultural. (Liza-Mare Syron, Moogahlin Performing Arts)*

Informants also said that the special vibe or 'creative milieu' (Camagni, 1991) in the City has been constructive for their creative process and businesses. As two interviewees put it:

*Yeah, I mean the value of it is that people can – well, it's convenient for one thing and it just has an atmosphere, I suppose. Like I'm an artist myself – I'm a singer/songwriter and musician – and if you feel like you're around other people that are doing the same thing it's inspiring. Yeah, it's a buzz, I suppose. (Holly Bestic, Studio 301)*

*I think we could do what we do here from an office in Wollongong or Newcastle or Byron Bay or wherever it happened to be, but certainly I think there's still a big element of businesses like ours which is built on relationships and, you know, nothing is like sitting with someone and having a coffee or whatever it is; it's face-to-face doing that... I think because it's so much of the business is built on authentic, genuine relationships and trust, that it's important to actually go and see people. (Luke Wood, Semi-Permanent)*

#### Issue 5

##### The need for targeted support and funding programs

The City of Sydney has in place several initiatives to help address the needs for creative space in the City. It runs a Creative Spaces Program, which includes an Accommodation Grants Program, which offers a community portfolio of buildings and properties to grant recipients at no charge or reduced rent, the Oxford Street Creative Spaces Program, a Creative Life/Work Program, offering residential tenancies for artists for affordable living in the city, and the Short Term Empty Properties (STEP) Program, which aims to activate properties which are vacant for a time due to a gap in a lease or due to works required. The City has also recently established a separate Cultural Venues Unit, which will manage some large,



purpose-built cultural venues. These are multipurpose buildings which will be tenanted by a variety of occupants. To date, two such cultural venues have come on line, the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre and the Joynton Avenue Creative Centre in Green Square.

In spite of these efforts, some of our interviewees believe that these programs have, so far, been insufficiently extensive, and the support that they offer is patchy and serendipitous. For instance, the Creative Life/Work Program has attracted 60 applicants each year, but there are only seven resident spaces available. The STEP program is also seen by artists as potentially unsuitable. As one of our informants explained:

*Like using creativity to fertilise or place make an area, I think can be problematic in that operating an actual creative practice in say a shopfront is sometimes for some people not conducive [for concentrated work], having people stop in, "Oh, what are you doing there?" You are literally working, so you don't have time. (Pia van Gelder, former operator of Lanfranchi's and Serial Space)*

Marnie Jackson agrees that the sites that the Creative Spaces Program has on offer are not always ideal because they are not specifically designed for cultural creative use:

*Lots of the properties that we get, we just inherit and make do... Then the commercial buildings that we might get access to might be C grade office space... So we're offering something a bit cheaper than we think our start-up creative community are interested in working in. (Marnie Jackson, City of Sydney)*

Some informants are also put off by the lengthy and uncertain grant application processes and choose

not to apply for public funding. As two informants explained:

*I mean I've never been a big one for chasing funding. There is some kinds of funding out there but I actually have always really valued my independence and being able to just do things the way I want to do them. (Hugh Ramage, Duckrabbit)*

*We don't seek – grants programs are quite tedious. You can't forward plan on the idea that you might receive a grant, therefore we don't apply for one...rather than spend weeks writing a grant, applying for a grant, and then the money in the grants are very minimal. (Bill Dimas, aMBUSH Gallery)*

For those cultural organisations dependent on public funding from the Australia Council and Create NSW, the deterioration of the funding environment has generated further pressure on them. Affected by the recent funding cuts, some cultural organisations have scaled back their operation or even moved out of their creative venues. An informant also pointed out that the current State Government's cultural infrastructure policy tends to put more emphasis on high-profile, large-scale, iconic cultural infrastructure rather than small/medium-sized cultural space. For instance, the State Government has injected \$244 million into the refurbishment and upgrading of the Art Gallery of NSW (Nicholls & Power, 2017), but the funding needs of smaller cultural organisations and creators have been overlooked. In his words:

*We're about to enter an era in State Government here in New South Wales where huge amounts of money are going to be injected into cultural infrastructure and I think unless there's a corresponding increase into investment in the creation of work, there's going to be a big problem down the track. (Jeff Khan, Performance Space)*

## Issue 6

### Planning issues and building controls

Building controls can be another hurdle. As has been noted, many creative venues are located in former industrial sites, such as old warehouses, former factories or even abandoned buildings. Obtaining a development approval (DA) to turn these buildings into a creative space is a very complicated and expensive process, especially if it involves re-classification of a building, such as from a former warehouse (class 7) to an assembly building (class 9b) for social gathering. Under the Building Code of Australia (BCA), the noise and safety requirements for each function are very different, requiring considerable investigation and assessment from various building experts and planning consultants. One informant, who is currently applying for a DA for his venue, explained the costs involved in the process:

*It's going to cost \$2,000 just to get a surveyor. Then the application's going to cost, I don't know, anywhere between \$1,200 to \$2,000, so that's \$4,000. If we need to do any modifications it can go to anywhere between \$10,000 to \$20,000, so that's another cost now on top. (Bill Dimas, aMBUSH Gallery)*

According to building specialist, Peter Conroy, 'over the years, the [building] codes have got more stringent'. For instance, Jess Cook from 107 Projects has spent five years going through three DA's between 2011-2015. Her venue was initially permitted to operate under capacity and noise restrictions until she obtained the approval for all the DA's and Section 96s (under EPA Act 1979) to modify the existing building consents. She believes that the 'evolving' nature of the space which leads to changes of the building design and the fact that the building itself incorporates

multiple uses have contributed to the problem:

*A lot of it was back and forth and back and forth and dealing with five different departments...it was just a struggle because we didn't fit into a box and if you don't fit into a box, you have to spend a lot of time explaining what you are and why you exist. (Jess Cook, 107 Projects)*

The complexity and cost of the DA process leads some creative space operators or artists not to submit a DA at all, but to do things 'under the radar'. However, avoiding a DA may cause even more problems, especially now that many creative spaces in the City are located in mixed-use zones surrounded by residential buildings. For example, some chemicals used in oil painting are highly flammable and can potentially cause a fire if they are not properly handled or stored. Fire safety and noise restrictions are especially problematic for non-purpose built venues, with creative spaces located in mixed-use zone required to meet even stringent safety and noise standards to limit risk or nuisance to the residents.

For instance, 107 Projects has installed sound-absorbing panels on the building's rooftop to prevent the noise from the venue affecting the residents at the nearby apartments. To ensure the safety of the neighbourhood, 107 Projects is also not allowed, according to its license, to sell or serve liquor without showcasing the art or to host large entertainment or nightclub activities.

### Issue 7

#### Unsuitability of a 'one size fit all' approach to creative space planning

Given the diversity of cultural and creative practice, planning for creative spaces is an inherently problematic process. There is no

'one size fits all' solution to the problem of lack of affordable and/or suitable space. For example, a newly built, sanitised creative space with state-of-the-art facilities might meet the needs of a commercial gallery or more high-end creative enterprises, but may not be suitable for light-industrial creative production such as pottery or sculpture, which generally require a more factory-like environment. Many informants found the spaces they currently occupy by serendipitous means.

Similarly, there are also differences in tenure requirements. While most interviewees prefer longer tenure to give more occupancy security, shorter-term leases may work better for emerging artists or creative start-ups, as one interviewee explained:

*It's always testing grounds for artists and can they afford it and six months down the track whether they can or can't and that creates ebb and flow too. But generally we like to keep people as long as possible because it creates the community in here and it's awesome, but also we only give month-to-month leases so people can opt out, which is a sacrifice for us as well because it's a quick response to fill spaces...It's really hard on us to balance but it also allows people to not feel stressed out about being locked into something. (Melissa Gilbert, The Nest Creative Space)*

Another interviewee emphasised the need for flexibility of space provision to match the rhythms of the cultural creative and productive process, as:

*a lot of people, you know, we have to have a dynamic schedule, so people want things at different times.... How about we just do what we can and overseeing the curation of those spaces, if you want to call it*

*that, or the provision of those spaces based on merit could be a start and how about need as well, a combination of merit and need. (Pia van Gelder, former operator of Lanfranchi's and Serial Space)*

Alicia Talbot, a strategic cultural planner, describes some of the more intricate dilemmas of creative space provision:

*I'm just currently feeding back on the Greater Western Sydney, the district and the metropolis plan – and they talk a lot about shared creative facilities. And I think an issue in the pragmatics of it is occasional one-off bookings, you know, that might happen for a ballroom dancing class or a dancer taking two paid classes, or even someone who's working for a couple of hours at a time, juxtaposed against an ongoing studio or a space that is available to book in an intense period of 5 days, 10 days, 20 days, you know, like for a rehearsal period. Those two time uses are quite hard to think – you know, the one space actually doesn't often allow the mechanics of different artistic practices. (Alicia Talbot, City of Parramatta)*

Size requirements are also highly variable. As Appendix 3 shows, there are huge differences in terms of the size of creative space, ranging from 1700 square metres to about 10 square metres. The required size of a creative space is dependent on specific needs (e.g., whether equipment is used or the number of workers required).

Cost per square metre is also difficult to assess. Rents are generally conditioned by a large number of factors, such as the location of the venue, the nature of the building (newly built or old/vacant building, facilities provided etc.), the terms and conditions of the lease (e.g., whether a development/demolition clause is included, length of the tenure), what tenants can

afford (e.g., commercial creative businesses versus non-profit art-run initiatives), and even the relationship between the landlord and the tenant. That said, one of informant who has five years experience of operating a co-working artist studio said that cost seems to be the biggest concern for artists, and that they are willing to compromise on the quality of the creative space as a consequence.

*Typically artists or creators are always going to go for the biggest possible space that they can afford and it's always some sort of unrenovated industrial space and so there's always some sort of problem like this and/or negligent landlord who doesn't really care about or maybe doesn't know it and, you know, it just kind of fell by the wayside so it's cheap and where artists can afford. (James Nichols, Stables Studios)*

Another informant, who has four years experience of managing a co-working artist's studio, gives an indicative price that artists can generally afford:

*The thing with artists is there's a threshold where they won't pay and as soon as you cross the \$10 per square metre per week threshold, i.e. 10 square metres, 100 bucks a week it stops; people don't pay. It doesn't matter where the location is or anything, just don't do that. (Sean Morris, Square One Studios)*

## Issue 8

### Limited space availability in outer metropolitan Sydney

There is a common assumption that the lack of affordable and suitable creative space in inner Sydney can, to some degree, be mitigated by the compensatory availability of such spaces in the broader metropolitan area, such as Western Sydney. This is something of a misconception

(see also Stevenson et al., 2017).

First, affordable space is not always available in other parts of Sydney. One interviewee had considered renting a property in Hurlstone Park (a suburb in the inner west) for his co-working artist studio, but 'it was more expensive than [inner-city] Alexandria' (Sean Morris, Square One Studios).

Alicia Talbot, Senior Strategic Project Leader in the City of Parramatta, also addressed the creative space shortage Parramatta CBD in The West:

*They're building all these new premiums. The sort of spaces that have been taken off line, such as the Town Hall or the community rooms at the back of it haven't necessarily been replaced in the CBD... [Parramatta] city actually doesn't have the spaces to rent either on a sliding scale of commercial or not. (Alicia Talbot, City of Parramatta)*

Besides, the demand for cultural space from artistic and cultural communities in Metropolitan Sydney is already intense. According to Talbot, applications for the Parramatta artist studios have risen by over 400% in recent times. These applications mainly come from a distinctive group of artists who have grown up in Western Sydney and have close ties with the local community (Stevenson et al., 2017). These artists also require the support from their local councils for creative space:

*There is a growing sector of artists who are born to first- or second-generation migrants to Australia, forcibly or not, who speak multiple languages, who have a knowledge of multiple cultural practices and they draw on that knowledge of multiple cultural practices, both traditional to contemporary practice... they're not moving from the Harbour City out*

*because they can't afford it, they have grown up in the area, they understand the areas and they're moving in and around the region. (Alicia Talbot, City of Parramatta)*

Jeff Khan from Performance Space added that moving to Western Sydney would not only involve physically bringing its productions to a new location, but also would require new connections to make sense of the new context:

*Working in Western Sydney for us needs to be about connecting with a particular community where we feel that we have something to offer or working with a particular like-minded organisation, or working with artists who are based there or artists who are working there. So there has to be a reason and there has to be a sort of rationale for us as an inner-city organisation, not just parachuting the work that we do in the city to Western Sydney but doing work that's really meaningful in that context. (Jeff Khan, Performance Space)*

In short, inner-Sydney artists and creators cannot easily relocate to the outer metropolitan region, especially Western Sydney. Not only is suitable space in Western Sydney not as readily available as is often assumed, in Western Sydney itself (and other parts of metropolitan Sydney) demand for such space is rising from local artists and creators who tend to operate in quite different networks and cultural ecologies from those of their inner-city counterparts.



# Considerations and Conclusions

There is a clear need for a more balanced and sustainable approach to planning cultural infrastructure in the City of Sydney. A diverse and multi-layered strategy is required which takes into account socio-cultural, environmental and economic factors relating both to the present and future. A useful way of conceptualising immediate demands, as well as longer-term considerations, is a 'place-keeping' approach (Dempsey & Burton, 2012), which is defined as:

*long term management which ensures that the social, environmental and economic quality and benefits the place brings can be enjoyed by future generations. Place-keeping relates to what happens after high-quality places have been created. It means maintaining and enhancing the qualities and benefits of places through long-term management (p. 13).*

While originally applied to the study of public and open spaces, we propose that the term has strong resonance with our findings - and, therefore, propose a 'place-keeping approach to urban cultural planning'. This concept foregrounds immediate needs, as well as longer-term considerations, which are necessary to ameliorate the problems and accommodate the emerging trends identified in this report.

An increasing number of municipalities aims to establish what has been termed an 'urban creative ecosystem'

(Jeffcutt, 2004), which is a spatial, regulatory, temporal, and cultural environment within which the arts, cultural and creative industries flourish. A constellation of intersections, processes and activities highlights the need for cultural planners and policy makers to engage more closely with the complexities of these 'ecosystems' in order to provide, or facilitate access to, inner-city creative space in ways that will contribute to the sustainability of the cultural enterprise, the local neighbourhood and the broader city. Such a task for governments involves examining city by-laws, zoning and local regulations to ensure that the regulatory environment fosters a broad range of creative activities and provides effective opportunities for the effective use of urban space (both new and existing).

The following recommendations arise from the specific concern that creative spaces are diminishing in the City of Sydney, with multiple repercussions for artists, organisations and creative clusters. Our recommendations point to particular areas requiring attention (visibility, volume, processes), as well as potential actions (inversion, pooling, protection, collaboration and cooperation), which would benefit diverse constituencies. As outlined below, these recommendations illustrate some of the possible dynamics involved in adopting a 'place-keeping approach to urban cultural planning', and are aligned with the emerging trends and key

issues raised earlier in the report (see Appendix 4).

**VISIBILITY & CITY-WIDE COLLECTIVES: Promote better use and visibility of existing space in City of Sydney, as well as explore the potential of more expansive initiatives offering creative space across the Sydney metropolitan region.**

A key issue identified was the availability of affordable creative space in the City of Sydney being impacted on by encroachments of commercialisation, privatisation and gentrification. The need for *visibility* is based on enhancing awareness that there are some available spaces, and that more effective promotion of these opportunities is required. While it is clear that promotion of available creative space does take place, some participants still indicated the need for greater awareness of space availability. In relation to this matter, the visibility of co-working initiatives could be enhanced to highlight potential opportunities for sharing light industrial spaces. This approach would highlight the multiple benefits of co-location (knowledge sharing, financial savings, etc.), plus offer advice about setting up such initiatives. Access to existing venues in the many educational institutions within the City of Sydney was also raised as an option. Identifying the enablers of, and constraints on, 'leveraging' these spaces could also contribute to better use and visibility of existing space. In a study of a partnership program

involving small and large cultural organisations, Ostrower (2004, p. 13) noted that ‘if the challenges are squarely addressed, such partnerships can be enormously worthwhile’. Furthermore, *city-wide collectives* could be explored regarding the City of Sydney and other local councils. Examples of such initiatives in the UK include Acme (2018), an artist’s housing association, which ‘provides affordable non-residential studio space for fine artists who are unable to afford to rent workspace on the open market’. They currently manage ‘over 582 individual non-residential studio units across 16 sites, 15 in Greater London and one in Cornwall’. Another example is SPACE (2018b, p. 3), an initiative which ‘runs 18 artist studio buildings across seven boroughs’, manages ‘240,000 sq ft of creative workspace’ and ‘hosts over 700 artists and creative micro-businesses in affordable workspace’.

### **VOLUME & POLICY LEVERS: Increase supply of diverse creative space and advocate for alternative policies.**

The lack of suitable creative space and tenure was recognised as another important issue. Increasing the *volume* or amount of diverse creative space is proposed as a way to address this problem. Participants clearly indicated that, even with knowledge of available creative spaces, some were not suitable for a variety of reasons (such as lease, size, location, etc.). The need for greater spatial and temporal variety is, therefore, central to this recommendation (e.g., a broader range of spaces and scale, from small to medium to large; plus a range of short-, medium- and long-term leases). Volume could also be increased by the City of Sydney expanding its residency and creative space programs, utilising vacant buildings and empty retail space in Paddington, and exploring

the usage of buildings during transition periods (when venues are not being fully utilised). Encouraging property developers to engage with the Voluntary Planning Agreement would help to contribute to expanding the cultural and creative amenities, services and infrastructure for community use across the City of Sydney. Furthermore, a significant barrier to expanding volume is that existing policy levers cannot deliver the required diversity of space. This obstacle means that it is necessary to advocate for alternative planning controls so as to enable such larger scale reform to take place. The UK has examples of more progressive levers: for instance, Section 106 secures ‘planning obligations, developer contributions, planning contributions or planning agreements’ (TCPA, 2013, p. 27); and the Community Infrastructure Levy is ‘a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area’ (GOV. UK, 2018). Precedents in Australia include the revision of Victorian planning controls, where rezoning requires developers of new buildings to ‘devote part of their first four floors to culture’ (Cuthbertson, 2018). There is an opportunity to leverage the emergence and interest in such planning reforms so as to advocate for similar changes in NSW, thereby increasing the volume of much-needed creative space.

### **INVERSION & INVESTMENT: Map and save remaining industrial buildings for cultural investment, as well as activate more general space suitable for creative enterprise and affordable housing.**

The disappearance of industrial buildings is a key issue which stems from the de-industrialisation and gentrification of the inner city. The recommendation of *inversion* means reversing the decrease of such available spaces. One

way to do this is to map the industrial buildings still available in the City of Sydney, which could then be earmarked for purchase or lease (Gibson et al., 2017). Furthermore, this strategy aligns strongly with the ‘place-keeping approach to urban cultural planning’ introduced earlier: that is, privileging heritage and public space needs by keeping such buildings accessible to enable cultural communities to flourish. The City of Sydney would also benefit from further property *investment*: expanding and diversifying its property portfolio and connections. There is a clear need for more space suitable for cultural and creative enterprise, ranging from large industrial buildings to medium and small spaces. Looking abroad can also provide inspiration for action. For instance, some cities in the United States are making strong statements by embedding within them affordable housing infrastructure and spaces for artists. For instance, dedicated affordable housing and workspaces for artists in New York supported by the city government; philanthropic grant-funded live-work spaces in Nashville; as well as developer-led artist-lofts in Minneapolis (Stephens, 2015). City of Sydney can also look to San Francisco for inspiration, where ‘18% of all new housing stock in SF is meant to be set aside as affordable housing, which is important considering the median rent for a one-bed in San Francisco is currently the highest in the country at US\$3,370/month’ (Mak, 2017). Notably, these examples show how multiple sectors (government, not-for-profit, and private) can all lead the way in supporting inversion and investment for affordable space and housing for artists. Sydney has an opportunity to learn from these initiatives and to lead the way in transforming the opportunities available for creative spaces and initiatives.



Hub Sydney on William Street, Darlinghurst. Source: see photo credits.

### **POOLING: Support knowledge-sharing among creative clusters to generate collective resources, workspace and advocacy.**

Diminishing of creative clusters was identified as an issue that relates to the pressures from commercialisation, privatisation and gentrification. Furthermore, the flexibilisation of creative workspace was identified as a trend, associated not only with reducing costs due to intermittent employment, but also with its deeply valued capacity to act as a source of rich networking and learning opportunities. *Pooling* is a process of sharing knowledge and infrastructure within a particular community of practice. Brokering pooling opportunities (such as meetings and networking events) may have multiple benefits: in the short term, sharing resources, spaces and skills; and, in the longer term, collective ideas and action for advocating change. For instance, many research participants indicated the value of creative clusters and the cooperative atmosphere that they foster. That is, a sense of pride and the energy associated with creative clusters was often what drew them to a particular area. However, there was also a concern that these clusters were diminishing for two main reasons: the insecurities associated with a lack of suitable creative space, and the increasing casualisation of cultural workers (leading to

organisations and artists moving elsewhere). The value of *pooling*, then, is to maintain and enhance existing creative clusters across the City of Sydney.

### **PROCESSES: Innovative planning, administrative and communicative procedures to overcome barriers.**

Restrictions imposed by planning issues and building controls was another crucial issue. The purpose of focusing attention on *processes* is to refine planning, administrative and communication procedures which limit or deter the take-up and use of creative space. Reducing unnecessary red tape (which, obviously, can cause time delays) and initiating a more flexible approach on building regulations (such as with regard to the low-risk category - Design Collaborative, 2015) are among the steps that could be taken to expedite creative initiatives. In addition, being able to have a single point of contact in local government (to answer queries and to develop connections with the creative community) was viewed as valuable by research participants. Furthermore, a more proactive approach to processes is required, for example, by introducing more flexible lease options (as noted with regard to *volume*) to reflect better the diverse modes of cultural production. Focusing on *processes* requires becoming more aware

of the diverse needs of tenants, as well as adapting or inventing processes to help support these requirements.

### **CULTURAL SECTOR PROTECTION & COLLABORATION SUPPORTED BY MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT: The need for all levels of government (national, state and local) to increase investment in the sector in order to obtain more suitable spaces, foster small-medium scale initiatives, as well as to embed creative brokers who are pivotal in enhancing ongoing collaboration.**

The limitation of a 'one size fits all' approach to creative space planning, and the cultural sector more generally, was raised as a major issue. As the sector rapidly diversifies, alongside the casualisation of cultural workers there is an imbalance in terms of how much artists and cultural organisations are able to contribute to and to voice concerns about urban planning initiatives. The scarcity of targeted programs and investment in space indicates that there is a clear lag in the quantity and diversity of offerings across the cultural sector. Multi-level government investment and action is, therefore, required to address the lack of support felt by many participants. For instance, a longer-term view of program and funding offerings is needed to address sectoral sustainability and support of emerging artists and organisations. The act of *protection* should be viewed as a longitudinal, strengths-based strategy aiming to ensure that there is sufficient 'corporate memory' to allow venues and infrastructure to safeguard the capability of emerging artists and smaller-scale organisations to test, experiment and explore creative possibilities. Furthermore, another way to approach the design and delivery of future programs and funding opportunities is to develop these initiatives with



representatives from the cultural and creative community. This approach would ensure that obstacles or oversights would be addressed prior to any roll-out of programs and initiatives. It means enhancing more diverse *collaboration* between different City constituencies so as to combat a universalistic or uniform approach. We suggest that there exists a significant opportunity for the City of Sydney to identify and train creative brokers - these are facilitators who can communicate and actualise venue and infrastructural needs and aspirations on behalf of artists, organisations and creative clusters. In one version of this role, the creative broker liaised with artists, Council, and businesses to organise short-term pop-up spaces (Empty Spaces, n.d.). The contacts, knowledge and remit of such a role could help translate cultural issues and concerns for a broad audience of urban decision-makers: businesses, planners, policymakers and developers. Rather than being developer-led, this role could contribute to a broader, socio-cultural approach. Identifying and training creative brokers could, therefore, advance the process of collaboration and facilitate much more diverse and flexible planning processes based on the needs of the many as opposed to the few.

### **COOPERATION: Foster a metropolitan Sydney perspective and cultural planning approach.**

The prospects, difficulties and disadvantages of relocating to other parts of metropolitan Sydney were highlighted by many artists and cultural organisations. With available spaces reducing, rents rising, and creative clusters diminishing in the City of Sydney, the idea of moving outside the area tended to be viewed as 'last resort'. This perspective reflected stereotypes about particular regions, the understanding that spaces were becoming expensive



*Parramatta often features as a potential alternative destination for the City of Sydney's creative workforce, but Greater Western Sydney experiences a similarly intense demand for space from local artists. Source: see photo credits.*

and difficult to obtain almost everywhere, or assessments of the advantages of centralisation (for example, the quick, easy movement of curators or visitors across clustered exhibition venues). The recommendation of *cooperation* points to a clear opportunity for the City of Sydney to converse with the relevant representatives of other Council areas across metropolitan Sydney. This dialogue would raise awareness concerning contacts, sites and opportunities across multiple spaces, and highlight synergies and possibilities for cross-fertilisation and collective action. Such exchanges between Councils could richly inform urban cultural planning: recognising that similar trends and issues apply in nearby and surrounding areas means that collective approaches might be identified and adopted to mutual advantage.

In conclusion, we suggest that a 'place-keeping approach to urban cultural planning' provides a useful framework for recognising the immediate demands and longer-term responsibilities which are necessary to support artists, cultural practitioners, organisations and culture across the City of Sydney and the whole metropolis. Because of the complexity of emerging trends and issues, the recommendations above should not be read as a linear list of isolated solutions. Instead, they should be viewed as a repertoire or toolkit on which the City of Sydney can draw in the difficult task of prioritising multi-layered attention and actions to safeguard and nurture cultural creation and production in the city.

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## Photo Credits

All photographs were taken on the days of the interviews (see appendix 1) unless otherwise specified here.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - List of Interviewees

CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS					
	Space categories	Organisation name	Name of interviewee	Date of interview	Place of interview
1	Art gallery & studios	Duckrabbit	Huge Ramage	11-Aug	Redfern
2	Multi-purpose venue	107 Projects	Jess Cook	18-Aug	Redfern
3	Artist studio (visual artist)	Artist at Carriagework Clothing Store	Samuel Hodge	25-Aug	Redfern
4	Live events & digital production	Semi-Permanent	Luke Woods	31-Aug	Redfern
5	Development space	Work-Shop Sydney	Matt Branagan	31-Aug	Redfern
6	Workshop for sculptor & installation artist	Studio Damien Butler	Damien Butler	1-Sep	Redfern
7	TV production (creative writing)	Matchbox Pictures (script development)	Kali Reid	2-Sep	Redfern
8	Radio production	FBI Radio	Clare Holland	4-Sep	Redfern
9	Multi-purpose venue	Performance Space (resident company at Carriageworks)	Jeff Khan	7-Sep	Redfern
10	Art gallery & studio	Galerie pompom	George Adams	21-Sep	Redfern
11	Multi-purpose venue	Moogahlin Performing Arts (resident company at Carriageworks)	Liza-Mare Syron; Lily Shearer; Ali Murphy-Oates	22-Sep	Redfern
12	Multi-purpose artist studio	Square One Studios	Sean Morris	29-Sep	Green Square
13	TV production	Matchbox Pictures (TV production)	Cathy Amies	3-Oct	Millers Point
14	Digital production & co-working space	Grumpy Sailor	James Boyce	5-Oct	Redfern
15	Multi-purpose artist studio & office space	The Nest Creative Space	Melissa Gilbert	16-Oct	Green Square
16	Makerspace	Claypool	Brett Stone; Sally Cooper; Cherie Peyton	16-Oct	Botany



## CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

	Space categories	Organisation name	Name of interviewee	Date of interview	Place of interview
17	Art gallery & venue for hire	aMBUSH Gallery	Bill Dimas	19-Oct	Green Square
18	Music rehearsal & production	Studios 301	Holly Bestic	20-Oct	Green Square
19	Multi-purpose artist studio and residences	Stables Studios	James Nichols	24-Oct	Skype

\*One interview with an architectural firm was not reported as the participant did not wish any data from it to be published.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

	Space categories	Organisation name	Name of interviewee	Date of interview	Place of interview
20	Creative space program organisers	City of Sydney	Lauren Simpson; Marnie Jackson; Jemma Watson	13-Sep	Sydney CBD
21	Parramatta creative space & cultural policy	City of Parramatta	Alicia Talbot	14-Nov	Parramatta
22	Discontinued creative space	Lanfranchi's/Serial Space	Pia van Gelder	22-Nov	Sydney CBD
23	Building specialist	City of Sydney	Peter Conroy	27-Nov	Sydney CBD
24	Urban planner	Design Collaborative	James Lidis	7-Dec	Sydney CBD

## Appendix 2 - Outline of Interview Questions

### Case study interview guide

This interview guide was used for interviews with people who operate/manage cultural venues in our case study location (i.e., Redfern and Green Square Village areas).

### CHECKLIST OF KEY FACTS

#### Physical nature of venue

1. Name of owner/tenant organisation
2. When moved to the location
3. Total floor space of the venue (sq metres)
4. Capacity (no. of people)
5. Special features (e.g. ceiling height)
6. No. of people who work in this building (full time/part time)

#### History of building

7. How old is the building?
8. Do you know who was here before?

#### Tenure conditions

9. Do you own or rent the building?
10. How much is the rent per week/month?

11. How long is your lease?
12. Does it have a renewable option?
13. Does it have a development clause?
14. Are you able to sublet space to other tenants?
15. How much is charged for renting this space/different spaces (per week/per hour)?
16. Does your lease have unusual leasing conditions?
17. If yes, could you briefly describe these conditions?

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (60 minutes)

The interview has three sections:

**Section 1:** spend 10 minutes walking around the venue to discuss the interior venue spaces (e.g., how it's used, by whom, features, most utilised areas, underutilised areas etc)

**Section 2:** 35-40 minutes sitting down

**Section 3:** 10 minutes walking around the block of the venue to discuss the suburb (e.g., location, proximity to public transport, ambience, etc.)

*Interviewee will be given a participant information sheet and consent form to sign.*

*INTRODUCTION: Thank you for taking time to be part of this interview. As outlined in the*

*Participant Information Sheet, this interview is part of a Western Sydney University project called **Planning Cultural Creation and Production in Sydney: A Venue and Infrastructure Needs Analysis**. The interview will be audio-recorded and used to develop a venue-specific case study about [insert name]. The purpose is to understand why the venue and location was chosen, the advantages and disadvantages of the interior space and venue surroundings, as well as future plans and ideas. Please let us know if you need to stop or pause the interview at anytime, and feel free to skip any question which you do not wish to answer. We will start recording now.*

#### 1) Can you please briefly introduce yourself and describe your role in relation to this venue?

- What does your role entail? How long have you been in the role?

#### PART 1: Interior walking interview (10 minutes)

**As we walk through the interior of the building and you show us around, could you please tell us a few details about?**

- What are the different types of space available in the venue? (e.g. studio, gallery, shared facilities, performance space)
- How it's being used – and by whom (e.g., who are the

- current users)
- Interesting features; internal organisation/fit-out; availability of open space
- Is there sufficient space for the venue to operate productively?
- Most utilised/under-utilised areas
- Could you describe the interior structure of the venue (whether the space is partitioned or open plan, whether it includes soundproofing, specific equipment, unusual materials, furnishings and decor etc)?
- Please describe any constraints or limitations that the available space imposes on the venue's operations.

## **PART 2: Seated interview (35-40 minutes)**

### **2) Could you describe how and why this venue and location were chosen?**

- Can you tell us why you chose this location/venue?
- How easy or difficult was it to find this venue?
- What were your specific requirements? (e.g., high ceilings, sound insulation)
- Did you have to modify the building to make it suitable for your requirements or to conform with council building regulations? (wheelchair access, fire exit, noise, car park etc)
- Have you considered alternative location(s)? Where? Why you didn't go to that location?

### **3) Can you explain the operation of this venue?**

- The logic behind your operation (e.g., why did you choose to have a studio here?)

- Financial model of the venue operation (profit, non-profit, social enterprise)
- Income stream/state of funding
- How do you manage the operating cost (rent/overheads) of the venue?
- Do you receive subsidies from government or private donation? How much?
- How are issues of multi-tenancy (lease payment, utilities and rates, maintenance, shared-use facilities) negotiated and managed among tenants?

### **4) Who is using this venue, what is the range of their activities, and where are they mainly travelling from (including locals)?**

- People:
  - Who are the major users of your space? To which cultural sector do they belong? (e.g., music, film, design, architecture, visual art)
  - Please tell us something about your customers and suppliers (if applicable)
  - What has drawn them to use this specific venue? (e.g., inexpensive, good lighting, easy transport, café next door, etc.)
  - What is the geographical range of where they travel from?
- Activities:
  - What are the concrete activities taking place in your venue (e.g., rehearsals, commercial/non-commercial creative works)?

### **5) What are the main advantages or problems faced by your venue?**

- What are the main advantages of this venue (please list no more than 3)?
- What are its main disadvantages?
- What are the main problems faced by your venue? (e.g., increased/decreased demand, development proposals, noise complaints, safety, increasing operating cost/rents)

### **6) Can you tell us about any changes to the venue and neighbourhood over recent years?**

- Venue (e.g., usage of space, staffing (increase/decrease/turnover), renovations)
- How has the lease changed over time? (rent, renew options)
- Neighbourhood (e.g., development plans, artists moving out of the city)

### **7) What plans and ideas do you have for the future of this venue?**

- What are the current barriers/restrictions for meeting your major users' needs for creative space?
- Could the venue be better situated with respect to your users (if applicable: customers, staff and suppliers)? If so, please briefly describe how.
- Please tell us something about your future plans, and how they might impact on your requirements for space.
- If the current venue is less than adequate for the business's or operation's plans, please tell us how things would need to be improved (e.g., extra space,



renovation, redevelopment/relocation).

- If not in your venue, where in the greater metropolitan Sydney area do you think the current users of your venue prefer to go? Why?
- With respect to Sydney overall, how well situated is the venue (e.g., close to or far away from related cultural venues, precincts, audiences)?
- What are your thoughts about the relationship between your venue and other cultural venues in the City? (i.e., in terms of clustering or proximity to the CBD)
- What are your thoughts about the relationship between your venue and other cultural venues in other parts of Sydney/NSW (e.g., in Western Sydney)?

**9) With respect to the local neighbourhood, how well is the venue situated?**

(e.g., prominent main street versus side street)

**10) Can you describe some of the impacts of your venue on the surrounding neighbourhood?**

(e.g., entrance arrangements, vehicle access, provision of car park, noise management, safety/fire hazard, cleanliness/sanitary facilities/alcohol use)

**11) How important is the neighbourhood in terms of proximity to other venues, place, cafes, parks, amenities etc?**

(e.g., how valuable is the neighbourhood atmosphere/buzz, local community, residents)

**PART 3: Exterior walking interview (10 minutes)**

**As we walk around the exterior of the building and nearby areas:**

**CONCLUSION:** *That was the final section of our interview. We appreciate your time and thoughts. We will now formally close the interview and stop recording.*

**8) Could you please tell us a few details about access, street interaction and transport regarding the venue?**

- How many door entrances does the venue have (both public and private)?
- Does the venue have vehicle access (for service deliveries etc.)?
- How accessible is the venue by public transport? By what kind of public transport?
- Do your customers come to the venue? How accessible is it for them?
- Do your suppliers come to the venue? How accessible is it for them?

## Appendix 3 - Profile of Case Studies Venues

REDFERN STREET VILLAGE CASE STUDIES					
Name	107 Projects	Clothing Store	Performance Space	Moogahlin Performing Art	Duckrabbit
<b>Artist/ Organisation</b>	Multi-purpose creative venue	Visual art studio X 8	Art festival curating company	Performing art company	Visual artist studio & gallery
<b>No of year in current venue</b>	2011 (6 Yrs)	Apr 2017 (less than 1 Yr)	2007 (10 Yrs)	2014 (3 Yrs)	2001 (16 Yrs)
<b>Type of building</b>	Former workshop/ shelter for disability people	Old warehouse (former uniform storage for City Rail)	Old rail yard and blacksmith workshops (Carriageworks)	Old rail yard and blacksmith workshops (Carriageworks)	Old warehouse (former shirt factory)
<b>Floorspace</b>	1,700 sq meters	54 sq meters per studio	-	30 sq meters	180 sq meters
<b>Weekly rent (\$AUD)</b>	\$0	\$60 per space	-	\$168 (\$730 per month)	\$575 (\$30,000 per annum)
<b>Owner of building</b>	City of Sydney	UrbanGrowth/ Railcorp	NSW Govt/ Carriageworks	NSW Govt/ Carriageworks	Esperanto Society
<b>Subsidies for venue (Y/N)</b>	Y (City of Sydney accommodation grant)	Y (venue managed by Carriageworks)	Y (resident company of Carriageworks)	Y (resident company of Carriageworks)	N
<b>Tenure (length of lease)</b>	2021 (10 Yrs)	May 2018 (1 Yr)	2018 (3 Yrs, currently negotiate for renewal)	2021 (recently renewed for 3 Yrs)	Informal lease
<b>Rental increase per year</b>	NA	-	Y (May face bigger increase in 2019)	2% (CPI)	5% (CPI)
<b>Development/ Demolition clause (Y/N)</b>	N	Y	N	N	-

Work-Shop	Semi-Permanent	FBI Radio	Studio Damien Butler	Galerie pompom	Grumpy Sailor
Creative classes, exhibition & retailing	Multi-media & digit event company	Radio production	Sculpture & installation artist studio	Commercial art gallery & project space	Multi-media digital company & co-working space
2014 (3 Yrs)	2014 (3 Yrs)	2003 (14 Yrs)	2012 (5 Yrs)	2007 (10 Yrs)	2012 (5 Yrs)
Warehouse	Industrial building	Commercial building	Old warehouse (depot for storage of farming machinery)	Old warehouse with retail space	Commercial building
550 sq meters	75 sq meters	-	380 sq meters (gross)	-	220 sq meters
-	-	\$385 (\$20,000 per annum)	\$100 per sq meter per annum	-	\$120 per space
-	-	-	City of Sydney	-	Dana Holding
Y (City of Sydney STEP program)	N	Y (small public fund)	Y (City of Sydney)	N	N
2019 (2 Yrs)	Informal lease	2019 (3 Yrs can extend for 3 more years)	2017 (1-2 Yrs, current lease under negotiation)	5 Yrs	5 Yrs
-	-	Y (% not disclosed)	-	5%	-
Y (demolition)	-	-	Y	-	-



GREEN SQUARE VILLAGE CASE STUDIES					
Name	Square One Studios	aMBUSH Gallery	The Nest Creative Space	Studio 301	Stables Studios
Artist/ Organisation	Co-working artist studios	Visual art gallery & programme space	Co-working artist studios	Music studio	Co-working artist studios
No of year in current venue	2014 (2.5 Yrs)	2007 (10 Yrs)	2013 (3.5 Yrs)	Jan 2017 (1 Yr)	2009 (8 Yrs)
Type of building	Industrial building (Harvey Norman logistic centre)	Industrial building	Old Warehouse (former furniture store)	Warehouse building	A former stable/factory
Floorspace	900 sq meters (gross) (40 studios)	800 sq meters (gross)	500 sq meters	-	200-250 sq meters (8 studios), 10-12 sq meters each space)
Weekly rent (\$AUD)	(\$220 per sq meter per annum), \$100 per space	\$1,342 (\$70,000 per annum)	\$50-\$165 per space	-	\$80-90 per space
Owner of building	Harvey Norman	-	Gascorp	-	Factory owner next to the building
Subsidies for venue (Y/N)	N	N	N	N	N
Tenure (length of lease)	3 Yrs (renewable for another 2 Yrs) (min 1 mon per studio)	May 2018 (2-3 Yrs) (currently negotiate for renewal)	6 mons (min 1 month per studio)	-	2020 (3 Yrs)
Rental increase per year	-	15% increase in 2017, may face 39% increase in 2018	-	-	Y (CPI)
Development/ Demolition clause (Y/N)	N	Y	Y (demolition)	N	-

OTHER CASE STUDIES		
Name	Matchbox Pictures	Claypool
Artist/Organisation	TV production	Pottery studio
No of year in current venue	2011 (6 Yrs)	Sep 2017 (less than 1 Yr)
Type of building	Heritage listed warehouse building	Warehouse building with retail space
Floorspace	-	-
Weekly rent (\$AUD)	-	-
Owner of building	-	A member of Claypool
Subsidies for venue (Y/N)	N	N
Tenure (length of lease)	2017 (will move to George Street in 2018)	3 Yrs (can extend for 3 more years)
Rental increase per year	-	-
Development/ Demolition clause (Y/N)	N	N

Notes:

1. Due to the sensitivity of financial information, some interviewees declined to disclose their tenancy information (e.g., name of landlord, rent per week, length of tenure and rental increase) Missing data are denoted as '-'.  
 2. Rent per week is calculated according to the method recommended by the Tenants' Union ACT (Tenants' Union ACT, 2018). The figures are indicative only.

## Appendix 4 - Summary of Trends, Issues and Considerations

Emerging Trends	Issues	Considerations
<b>Trend 1: Commercialisation of cultural production and space</b>	Availability of affordable creative space in the City	Visibility & City-wide Collectives: Promote better use and visibility of existing space in City of Sydney and across metropolitan Sydney
	Suitability of creative space and tenure	Volume & Policy Levers: Increase supply of diverse creative space and advocate for alternative policies
<b>Trend 2: Gentrification of the inner city</b>	Disappearance of industrial buildings	Inversion & Investment: Map and save remaining industrial buildings for potential cultural investment, activate general space for creative enterprises and affordable housing
	Diminishing creative clusters	Pooling: Support knowledge-sharing between creative clusters to combine resources and advocacy efforts
<b>Trend 3: Privatisation of cultural infrastructure</b>	Restrictions arising from planning issues and building controls	Process: Innovative planning, administrative and communicative procedures to overcome barriers
<b>Trend 4: Casualisation of cultural workers and flexibilisation of creative workspace</b>	Need for targeted support and funding programs	Cultural Sector Protection & Collaboration: Initiate more residential programs and funding opportunities for emerging artists and smaller-scale organisations
	Unsuitability of 'one size fits all' approach to creative space planning	Cooperation: Support initiatives through multi-level government cooperation, identify and support creative brokers to facilitate long term collaboration between cultural community and government
<b>Trend 5: Diversification of creative space</b>	Limited space availability in outer metropolitan Sydney	Cooperation: Foster a metropolitan Sydney perspective and cultural planning approach by enhancing dialogue among council areas



# Researcher Biographies

Lead consultant

## Distinguished Professor Ien Ang

Professor Ang is one of the leaders in cultural studies worldwide, with interdisciplinary work spanning many areas of the humanities and social sciences. She has collaborated extensively with partner organisations including the NSW Premier's Department, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Special Broadcasting Service, the Australia Council and the City of Sydney. She also recently chaired an Expert Working Group on Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture, for the Australian Council of Learned Academies' Securing Australia's Future program. She has published a number of consultancy reports including the latest one with Dr Philip Mar entitled *Promoting diversity of cultural expression in arts in Australia* for the Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney. She is currently working on a book with Prof Kay Anderson, Prof Donald McNeill, Dr Andrea Del Bono and Dr Alexandra Wong on the transformation of Sydney's Chinatown in the Asian century (to be published by Rowman & Littlefield International).

Lead consultant

## Emeritus Professor David Rowe

Emeritus Professor Rowe has published extensively on the transformations in contemporary cultural life, especially in the key areas of cultural citizenship, sport, media, urban leisure, artistic practice and the politics of the public sphere. He is a Fellow of both the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, and in 2015 was Western Sydney University Researcher of the Year. He is an Honorary Professor of the University of Bath and a Research Associate of SOAS, University of London. Professor Rowe has been a research consultant to several government departments, local councils, professional organisations and community groups. He has been a Chief Investigator on ten Australian Research Council projects. His latest book is the co-edited *Making Culture: Commercialisation, Transnationalism, and the State of 'Nationing' in Contemporary Australia* (Routledge, in press). Professor Rowe's work has been published in many languages, including Chinese, French, Turkish, Spanish, Italian, Korean and Arabic.

Lead consultant

## Professor Deborah Stevenson

Professor Stevenson is a Professor of Sociology and Urban Cultural Research in the Institute for Culture and Society whose research activities and interests are focused in particular on arts and cultural policy, cities and urban life, and place and identity. She has published widely on these topics including the recent books, *The City* (Polity), *Cities of Culture: A Global Perspective* (Routledge) and *Tourist Cultures: Identity, Place and the Traveller* (co-authored, Sage). Her research program has been supported by external funding from a range of sources, and she has been a Chief Investigator on seven successful ARC grants with her two recent projects being 'Recalibrating Culture: Production, Consumption, Policy' and 'Australian Cultural Fields: National and Transnational Dynamics'. Professor Stevenson has worked as an advisor and consultant to all levels of government including most recently as a member of the Ministerial Reference Group for the NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework.

Technical advisor and Research analyst

### Dr Liam Magee

Dr Magee researches and publishes in the areas of urban development and digital technology, examining innovative ways software, databases, maps and networks can improve our cities. He has worked in the US, South Africa, Cambodia, Australia and India on urban and technology projects with World Vision, Accenture, Microsoft, FujiXerox and the City of Melbourne. Prior to his PhD, Dr. Magee worked as a software developer, manager and consultant in a number of start-ups and small businesses. Dr Magee is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society currently working on a number of ARC funded research projects, including the one entitled 'Antarctic Cities and the Global Commons'. His latest book *Interwoven Cities* was published by Palgrave Macmillan, UK in 2016.

Project manager and Research analyst

### Dr Alexandra Wong

Dr Wong is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society. She is experienced in project management, as is evidenced in her successful completion of two large-scale Australian Research Council-funded projects, entitled 'Developing Criteria to Help Solve Australia's Urban Crisis' and 'Sydney's Chinatown in the Asian Century' between 2010 and 2015. Her research explores the interplay of innovation/creativity, culture and urban theories, covering a wide range of topics such as cultural economy, knowledge cities, migration, housing, multiculturalism, innovation and entrepreneurship. She is currently working on an ARC-funded Discovery Project concerning the heritage corridor between Australia and China and a consultancy project about

the educational experiences of refugee students in partnership with the New South Wales Teachers' Federation.

Research analyst

### Dr Teresa Swist

Dr Swist is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society. She has been a research consultant for the Department of Communications and the Arts, as well as for the Commissioner for Children and Young People. She has been an investigator on a number of projects including 'Mapping Kolorob' which examine ways to improve access to services in low income areas in Dhaka, Bangladesh using mobile technology and 'Gapfiller', a commissioned research by the Penrith City Council to explore barriers and opportunities to sustain employment at Penrith Business Park. She has published widely in the areas of digital place-making, curation and creativity. Her research interests span participatory design and the intersections between community, technology, innovation, mapping and social change.

Designer and Research analyst

### Mr Andrea Pollio

Mr Pollio is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Culture and Society currently working on the last phase of his doctoral thesis. Between 2012 and 2013 Andrea collaborated with the European Union project Peripheria, working in a team to design an interactive participatory service for a neighbourhood of Milan. At the Institute for Culture and Society, Andrea has participated as research assistant in a number of ARC-funded grants, and, most recently, was part of the team involved in the *Mapping Culture* report for the City of Sydney.







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