

Arts Manifesto

Adopted March 2013



This Manifesto is intended to guide an approach to artistic endeavours developed and presented at the Abbotsford Convent. The nature of the Convent will remain fluid, organic and adaptable but these basic guidelines inform the selection and curatorial process that develops and presents art across the site.

During its Strategic Planning day in 2012, the Board identified four principle strategic themes. The third theme is integral to this Manifesto:

BETTER INTEGRATION OF OUR ARTS AND COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Achieving better coherence and integration between the community objectives and the arts objectives identified in the ACF's vision statement and increasing arts activities which engage with the community. This may include;

- (a) identifying and developing appropriate performance spaces
- (b) increasing arts activities in the evenings
- (c) targeting key artists or artistic groups for engagement in the convent's activities
- (d) engagement of artists in residence
- (e) greater artistic influence and leadership as a result of a lively and influential artistic community within the ACF

WHAT WE GIVE PRIORITY TO:

- A vibrant, changing program of arts activities supporting robust contemporary thought through a wide range of ideas
- Elements of artistic vibrancy in works and processes
- Artistic quality or excellence
- A diversity of approaches to audience engagement and stimulation
- A fresh approach to the preservation or development of art forms
- Artist development
- Community relevance
- Projects with curatorial vision
- Work that celebrates the Convent's site, space and place; its location, architecture, environment, people and history
- Work from multi art forms
- Developing a series of 'integrated interventions and activations' across various art forms; works that bring new perspectives, interpretations and exchanges between people
- Providing rehearsal/training/dreaming spaces for artists; to offer a sanctuary
- Remaining adaptive and responsive to what is happening around us
- Community projects that have strong artistic outcomes and offer cross pollination opportunities
- Work that pushes creativity beyond the traditional visual and performing arts
- Projects that bring good artistic practice to the Abbotsford Convent
- Ideas that are 'future driven' and offer new thinking and experimentation

WHAT WE DO:

- We create interesting and unique arts experiences
- We provide gathering spaces for forums that enrich dialogue, encourage research, encounters and collaborative arts practice
- We help artists to connect
- We offer a mix of tenant and non-tenant works
- We encourage external engagement with the site inviting regional, interstate and international practitioners to participate in the arts program.
- We work with the ACCR, Asialink, Res Arts and other global organisations to develop visiting artist programs
- We offer 'value in kind' support through free venue use and marketing initiatives
- We acknowledge creative and artistic processes within the broader context - eg: design
- We respect an environment of multidisciplinary work
- We push the CoD approach – Collaborate or Die
- We protect the site's PoD – Point of Difference

HOW WE WORK:

- We take risks
- We take a long-term approach
- We establish meaningful partnerships
- The words organic, evolving and responsive are critical to our approach
- We accept failure as an important element of artistic practice
- We are always open to new ideas