

Media Release

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Spectacular new artworks to transform the city centre

An elegant cloud-shaped arch that soars more than 50 metres above George Street outside Sydney Town Hall is one of three exciting new public artworks to be installed in the city centre as part of the transformation of George Street and its surrounding streets, laneways and parks.

Cloud Arch will be constructed of steel plates tapered and curved in two directions, and will act as a gateway to the newly pedestrianised section of George Street, with the light rail passing underneath it.

Changing shape depending on the viewer's vantage point, it will be visible from many parts of the city centre and is set to become a landmark meeting place for Sydneysiders and visitors alike.

The unique new symbol for Sydney is the design of visionary Tokyo-based architect and artist **Junya Ishigami** – winner of the coveted Golden Lion for Best Project at the 12th Venice Architecture Biennale and visiting professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

By using the latest construction technology, *Cloud Arch* will be so high and light it will seem cloud-like.

Adding a new dimension to the southern end of the city, a pavilion in the shape of an oversized milk crate will be installed in Belmore Park next to Central Station. Designed by Sydney-based, Egyptian-born artist **Hany Armanious**, *Pavilion* will be 13.7 metres high and offer a new public gathering space with seats and lighting.

At the city's northern end on Bridge and Grosvenor streets and through the refurbished Kent Street underpass, *The Distance of Your Heart* will comprise 60 delicate handmade bronze bird sculptures by acclaimed British artist **Tracey Emin** perching on poles, above doorways and awnings, enticing walkers along the thoroughfare.

The three new artworks were chosen by an evaluation panel, which included members of the City's Public Art Advisory Panel, following the City of Sydney's biggest-ever international public art callout that attracted nearly 700 entries from 25 countries.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the artworks would change the face of the city centre and shine the international spotlight on Sydney.

"During the consultation we did for Sustainable Sydney 2030, for Sydney Open and for our Cultural Policy, we heard the public loud and clear say they want more public art in Sydney, the Lord Mayor said.

"The transformation of George Street with light rail and a pedestrianised boulevard gives us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to re-imagine our city.

"The artworks selected by our expert evaluation panel will cement Sydney's reputation as a capital of culture and creativity.

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"We're delighted to announce such an exciting group of artworks by some of the world's leading artists. I have no doubt they will become iconic landmarks of our city for today and future generations.

"The City has a strong track record of delivering engaging public art, both temporary and permanent, that draws people into our city, attracts visitors and supports local businesses."

The artworks are the first three projects of the City's \$9.3 million city centre public art plan that was unanimously supported by all City councillors and developed by Sydney-based international curator Barbara Flynn in mid-2013.

"There is a role in cities today for both monumental-scale works of art that are strong and bold, and small – even delicate – works of art that add texture to the urban experience," Ms Flynn said.

"With this selection of three of the greatest artists working in the world today, the City of Sydney achieves a balance of monumental and human scale in these artworks that will inspire people and add meaning to their lives."

The plan is part of the City's \$220 million contribution to the NSW Government's light rail project, which will transform the city with major public domain upgrades, including new paving, lighting, trees, street furniture and light rail stops throughout the city centre.

The final three works were chosen unanimously by a evaluation panel comprising Ms Flynn, City Design Director Bridget Smyth and four members of the City's Public Art Advisory Panel: Director of Carriageworks Lisa Havilah, Professor of Architecture at UNSW Richard Johnson, artist and visiting fellow at the College of Fine Arts Janet Laurence, Curator of C3West for the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia Anne Loxley.

In reaching its decision, the panel said: "These works all rise to the most challenging brief to bring a focus, distinction and richness to Sydney's vision for its prime civic spaces through the creativity of the world's best artists.

"Together, the three form a rich tapestry that will add memorable contemporary works of art that are unique to place and time."

The City will now begin a thorough design development process for all three works, including extensive consultation with local businesses and residents.

All works are expected to be installed from 2017, in line with the implementation of the CBD and South East light rail line. Once complete, they will become part of the City's growing public art collection, City Art.

The project budgets, including design, construction, installation and delivery are \$3.5 million for Ishigami's work; \$2.5 million for Armanious' work; and \$2.1 million for Emin's work.

Ms Flynn said the shortlist featured 10 of the most imaginative and accomplished artists working in the world today, hailing from eight nations and ranging in age from 40 to 79.

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The five shortlisted artists for the George Street work were:

- Bill Culbert, born in New Zealand, now living and working in the UK and France;
- Song Dong, China;
- Mikala Dwyer, Australia;
- Ugo Rondinone, born in Switzerland, now living and working in the US; and
- Junya Ishigama, Japan.

The five shortlisted artists for the East-West Connectors works were:

- Hany Armanious, born in Egypt, now living and working in Australia;
- Tracey Emin, UK;
- Kimsooja, born in Korea, now living and working in the US;
- Josiah McElheny, US; and
- Pipilotti Rist, Switzerland.

Ms Flynn said the City relied on artists of this calibre to participate in its tender processes: "The panel commends all the artists – the decision was a difficult one."

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