

Speech notes for Lord Mayor Clover Moore prepared by Barbara Flynn, 28 July 2014

Realising a work on art on a large scale is as complex as putting up a building. It is no surprise, then, that the ten shortlisted artists are among the greatest artists working in the world today.

The three successful artists

The three winning artists are the three who most distinguished themselves in the context of a shortlist this spectacular, with the visual intelligence and capacity for invention to have come up with artworks that are exciting, original, excellent in every way, robust and the best possible fit with a city as forward-looking and progressive as Sydney.

The credentials of the three successful artists speak for themselves: each of them has represented their countries at the pre-eminent testing ground for new art and architecture, the Venice Biennale; Emin was only the second woman in the history of the British Pavilion to do so; and Ishigami took out the coveted award, the Golden Lion for Best in Show in 2010 at barely 36 years of age.

In making our decision, care was taken to select three works that would be complementary to one another. One is monumental and awe-inspiring (Ishigami); another is human-scale, handmade and sensitive (Emin); the third, ingenious, irreverent and witty (Armanious).

Taken together, the three works will activate the entire central city from north to south and east to west.

The three works are permanent. The *City Centre Public Art Plan* called for creating a legacy of public art that we thought would be best achieved through commissioning permanent works. Permanence allows people to develop familiarity over time and in some cases deep attachments with works of art. Temporary art will continue to be promoted by the City, with all the initiatives that have come to be loved, such as laneways and *Art & About*, moving from strength to strength and continuing unabated.

Tracey Emin's work, *The Distance of Your Heart* is comprised of 68 handmade bronze birds placed above doorways, on lighting poles and viaducts the length of the East-West Connector formed by Bridge Street-Grosvenor Street-Lang Park. Emin's work refers to Australia's distance from the rest of the world. The work evolved over the course of Emin's many visits to Sydney over the last ten years.

Hany Armanious' work, *Pavilion* is an oversize milk crate scaled up to 42:1. The artist's aspiration is for the sculpture to be used by people, as a familiar and popular meeting and gathering place. The sculpture is ingenious and intentionally irreverent. It plays with our tendency to poke fun at ourselves and to 'de-monumentalise' our monuments – think: Big Banana. It is quintessentially Australian – a work for everybody – 'nothing fancy', while remaining special in its own unique way. Hany is Sydney-based and has kindly joined us today.

Ishigami is widely recognised to be one of the great new forces in art and architecture today, credited with creating a new form of art and architecture. This new form expresses itself in *Cloud Arch*, Ishigami's creation for Sydney, through a construction that will appear to be lighter than air, floating, like a cloud. This sculpture couldn't have been made when the Opera House was built, it couldn't have been made even ten years ago – it is a product of new thinking and 21st century technology.

[basic description of artwork as animation is playing:

- *Arch of painted steel in the shape of a cloud, enfolding the public space in front of Town Hall.*
- *Matt white colour emphasising the lightness and immateriality of the sculpture.*
- *55-75 meters high – exact height to be determined at the design development stage.*
- *Changes its shape depending on the vantage point from which it is perceived, inspiring the viewer's imagination.*
- *Artist has located Cloud Arch at the very heart of the city centre at Town Hall Square and at the midpoint of the newly pedestrianised George Street.*
- *The visibility of the sculpture in all directions will help it to become the new icon for Sydney]*

Conclusion

Sydneysiders can be reassured by the data that shows that contemporary art that is well-selected increases in value over time. For example, one of the works of art already part of our city landscape, the stabile by Alexander Calder, *Crossed Blades* (1967) at Australia Square, in the year 1999, thirty years after it was made, was demonstrated to have increased in value at 30 times the rate of the building value.

With public art it really is as straightforward as just looking at it. There is no rule for evaluating public art. There is no one right or wrong answer or opinion about it. How the artworks of Ishigami, Emin and Armanious will compare to other artworks in the Sydney public realm is a question for everyone personally to decide. That is one of the special qualities of art: that it invites commentary and open discussion. Artists today embrace that sort of discussion and the fact that people will bring their own personal histories and views to the works they have made. In that way, art today is truly participatory.

This media conference is one of many avenues there will be to share our knowledge of the work of these artists with you. The artists, the City and those of us on the Evaluation Panel, invite and look forward to the public discussion about these artworks.