

# Making Space: A conference on art, culture and publics

Friday, March 26, 7:00pm

Saturday, March 27, 10:30am – 5:30pm

'Good Cities' are often judged by the quality of their public life. Public Art and cultural activity can be perceived to be the foundation of a successful, accessible and liberated city and for their citizens empowering engagements.

The processes that produce art and culture in public space are highly contested and the final results are often even more so. What does it mean to create art that infiltrates and attempts to transform the public realm? Who has the capacity and responsibility to decide and build creative opportunities? Should there be ambition to allow artists to engage in dynamic conversations with their site, audience and contexts? Is it important to empower communities, or to push culture in fresh directions? Should public practices – in their wide and varied incarnations – encourage social responsibility? Or solicit community engagement or political action?

Ultimately what is the place of art and culture in the building of a civil 'creative' city and society?

This two-day conference explores the complexity and contradictions implicit in the commissioning, conceptualisation and production of art and culture in the public arena. It aims to build on the wealth of public practices inhabiting the city at the moment, taking as a starting point the interdependency of artists, planners, policy makers, curators and audiences in the creation of contemporary public practices.

\$65 Adults; \$55 Members; \$30 Students (with valid ID). Beginning February 1, please call 604.662.4700 for reservations.

Presented in conjunction with *Fillip*, a contemporary art magazine. Presenting Sponsor: Kasian Architecture Interior Design & Planning Ltd.

## Schedule

### **Friday, March 26**

**7:00pm**

Keynote

**Karen E. Till: Finding Space: Artful Explorations of the Interim**

**Karen E. Till** is affiliate faculty at LAND2, University of West England Bristol, University of Leeds, a U.K. visual arts artist-scholars network, and Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Critical Thought at Virginia Tech. She is the author of *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place*. She will be speaking to the ideas of art, space and their many publics.

**8:30pm**

Reception

At the Vancouver Art Gallery

Presented by **Kasian** Architecture Interior Design and Planning

**Saturday, March 27**

**10:30am – 12:00pm**

Session 1

**Framing Space: Cities, Context, and Structure**

How is public space defined? How do we understand the idea of publics? What are the roles that planners, artists, architects and members of the public play in this articulation? Is it possible or important to promote the idea of democracy? If so, what forms might this take? What are the political, ethical, social and economic frameworks that often stipulate practices? This session will look at the complexities inherent in the term public space and how it is defined by architecture, policy makers and international events.

**Mari Fujita's** design studios and seminars examine the shifting role of the architect in the present cultural, economic, political, and technological climate, as well as emergent forms of urbanism in cities experiencing rapid growth. Fujita's design practice FUJITAWORK pursues a diverse range of projects. She is the recipient of numerous design awards including the Susan Kolarik Underwood Prize for Excellence in Design from Princeton University.

**Karen Henry** is an independent curator and editor based in Vancouver, British Columbia. She has a long association with cultural organizations and institutions on the West Coast and in 2004 received a Fellowship in Canadian Art. She has been instrumental in the recent cultural projects in the city including the Ken Lum project in East Vancouver.

**Michael Maltzan** is an architect and founder of Los Angeles-based firm Michael Maltzan Architecture. His work endeavours to create architecture that is a catalyst for new experiences, infused with optimism for its role as an agent for change. Through a shared belief in the role architecture can play in the contemporary city, his work, from MoMA Queens to Skid Row, creates new connections across a range of scales, programs, and environments.

Moderator: **Frances Anderton** lives in Los Angeles and is the radio host "DnA: Design and Architecture" and the producer of two daily current affairs radios show entitled "To The Point" and "Which Way, LA?." She is also the L.A. Editor for "Dwell Magazine" and a frequent public speaker on architecture and design on the West Coast.

**12:00 – 1:00pm**

Lunch

**1:00 – 2:30pm**

Session 2

**Possible Spaces and Their Projects**

Artists and curators consider how art re-imagines public space, given the frameworks of city, site and context. New approaches art-making, audience and public space determine what can be imagined as possible practices. Is the public realm a place for free and creative expression?

**Tania Bruguera** lives and works between Chicago, Paris and Havana. She is an interdisciplinary artist working on political issues primarily through behaviour art, performance, installation and video.

**Barbara Cole** is a Vancouver based artist, independent curator, educator, project manager and curatorial consultant in public art. She is also the principal of Cole Projects and founder and Executive Director of "Other Sights for Artists' Projects."

**Tamsin Dillon** is the Director of London's Art on the Underground. She is committed to an innovative and challenging practice, developing opportunities for artists to create new work, and for diverse audiences to experience art in contexts both within and beyond the confines of the museum and gallery.

Moderator: **Heidi Reitmaier** is the Director and Curator of Education and Public Programs at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Page 2 of 3

**2:30 – 3:00pm**

Coffee break

**3:00 – 4:30pm**

Session 3

**Changing Space: The Capacity for Political Action**

From the object to the social event, the nature of artistic practices in the public realm has in some ways shifted dramatically? But what of it? Do we need to consider the spectacular versus the pedagogical? When is art in public places considered an act for political motivation or social regeneration? When is it community engagement or transformation? Where might the future of art in the public realm lie?

**Am Johal** is a Vancouver based social activist and independent writer. He is a founder of the Impact on Communities Coalition, initiated the 2010 Homelessness Hunger Strike and is a media coordinator with the Red Tent Campaign.

**Kathleen Ritter** is an artist and a writer based in Vancouver. She is currently an Assistant Curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

**Annabel Vaughan** is an intern architect working in Vancouver and an Adjunct Professor in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of British Columbia

Moderator: **Heidi Reitmaier** is the Director and Curator of Education and Public Programs at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

**4.30 – 5.30pm**

Closing Discussion