Test Sites 2023

Guidelines

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About Test Sites

As one of Australia's cultural capitals, the City of Melbourne has a distinct and unique role to play in the commissioning of public art. Public artwork underpins our vision to be a bold, inspirational and sustainable city.

The City of Melbourne's public art program interprets Melbourne's unique historical, cultural, social and ecological environments. Through extraordinary public artworks, we reveal our city's spirit, culture and liveability.

Since 2016, City of Melbourne's Test Sites program has provided opportunities for artists to explore and experiment with temporary creative ideas in the public realm. It has provided project funding, practical advice and support, as well as workshops for those new to exploring the public realm and spatial practice.

During the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, City of Melbourne and Testing Grounds came together to transform this successful program to a three-month online program called Test Sites Online, with an increased focus on professional development.

Now these circumstances have eased, the program's focus is to support artists to test a bold new public art idea live in the city.

The Test Sites program intends to:

- help local artists test and develop a temporary public art idea by providing permits to work creatively in public space.

- increase local artists' capability and confidence to work in the public realm through creative and professional development, support and mentoring.

- engage with the city, its sites and infrastructures as a place for creative expression.

Test Sites is intended to support artists to develop and test a new public art idea and is not designed to support the production and delivery of a resolved public art project.

The Test Sites 2023 program will be delivered by independent producers Arie Rain Glorie and Jedda Andrews.

Program outline

- Successful applicants will receive funding of $5000 towards costs associated with participating in the program and testing their public art project idea. Funds are not for producing a final public artwork.

- The program has been designed so research, creative development and professional development happen in tandem over a two-month period.

- Artists will participate in a series of workshops with industry experts around the city and join group discussions where they can interrogate their project idea.

- Artists will test their public art project idea in the public realm.

- Independent producers Arie Rain Glorie and Jedda Andrews will provide supportive mentorships throughout the program.

- There will be the opportunity for artists to discuss their projects directly with the City of Melbourne's Creative Urban Places team.

- Artists will prepare content to profile the work-in-development for inclusion on the City of Melbourne website and/or social media channels.

How do I apply?

1. Read the guidelines thoroughly.

2. Preview the application form on SmartyGrants[1].

3. Contact the City of Melbourne with any queries via email publicart@melbourne.vic.gov.au.

4. Complete and submit an online application through SmartyGrants[2] by the closing date – late applications will not be accepted.

Interpreter and translation services

Our multilingual information telephone service provides access to translators[3] and information in different languages.

Accessibility for applicants with disability

Applicants with disability are encouraged to contact staff to discuss any specific needs or additional support that may be required to complete and submit an application. If you are deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired contact us via the National Relay Service on 133 677 (ask for 03 9658 9658).

Technical assistance

Refer to the Help Guide[4] for SmartyGrants technical assistance. The SmartyGrants support desk[5] is open 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or by email service@smartygrants.com.au.

Who can apply?

- Test Sites Online is open to artists and creatives who are residents of Victoria.

- Applications are open to artists and creatives working across all disciplines who want to test out an idea in the public realm.

- The program supports artists with a studio-based practice who wish to experiment in the public domain.

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1 https://melbourne.smartygrants.com.au/TestSites2023Round2

2 https://melbourne.smartygrants.com.au/TestSites2023Round2

3 https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/multicultural-services/Pages/translation-services.aspx

4 https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/

5 https://www.smartygrants.com.au/sg/who/?menuId=7072

What kinds of ideas are suitable?

- Artwork ideas that take place in the City of Melbourne municipality.

- Projects where there is a clear question the artist is asking about their project through testing it, or an element of it, in public space.

- Experimental, site-responsive and process-based projects that have a strong research methodology and interrogate ideas of public space with clear ideas about how to communicate the project.

- Projects in a diverse range of art forms including film and sound works, performance, sculpture, collaborative and interactive work, installation, architecture and other hybrid forms or emerging practices are welcomed.

- The program does not commission street art – see below for further information about street art.

Activities not funded

The following activities will not be funded:

- The presentation of fully developed artworks

- Artworks that have been fully realised or previously presented in the public realm

- Artworks that are in pre-production for public presentation

- Travel and accommodation

- Test Sites ideas that are part of an accredited course of study

- Activities taking place outside the designated sites within the municipality

- Applications made by political organisations

- Activities, projects, programs and events on behalf of a political organisation

- Proposals from City of Melbourne employees

- Capital works, facility maintenance and improvements

- Course fees

- Parking or other infringement fines

- Street art projects that leave a residual trace on site

- Illegal graffiti

- Ideas taking place without the permission of land or building owners

- Ideas funded through other City of Melbourne programs or grants

Assessment process

- Applications are assessed by a panel.

- Unsuccessful applicants are eligible to re-apply in future rounds.

- Applications are kept confidential, and the contents will not be disclosed to any person outside the application and assessment process.

- The City of Melbourne does not seek to correct errors in applications or supporting material. Applications are assessed as they have been submitted.

- The City of Melbourne reserves the right to request further information in considering any application, as well as the right to reject any application that is ineligible or does not meet the assessment criteria.

- All applicants will be notified of the result of their application via email.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed by a panel and scored on the following criteria:

1. Ideas that are compelling and clearly articulated.
2. Ideas that aim to activate the city in interesting and engaging ways.
3. Value of experience for applicant.

Sustainable practice

Applicants are encouraged to ensure materials are sustainable wherever possible, consider lighting and energy use, and encourage collaborators to use public and people-powered transport.

Test Sites 2023 round 2 program schedule

Key dates

Monday 3 July	Applications open
Tuesday 11 July	Online information session
Monday 24 July	Applications close 5pm AEST
Monday 21 August	Successful applicants notified
Saturday 16 September	Workshop 1
Sunday 17 September	Workshop 2
Saturday 11 November	Workshop 3
Monday 27 November	Acquittals due

Stage 1 – Applications

- Tell us your idea! Applications are completed through SmartyGrants[6]. You'll need to outline your idea and other related details.
- Applications are assessed by a selection panel within two weeks of the closing date and applicants are advised of the outcome.

Stage 2 - Agreement and Funding

- Once the contract is signed, you will be paid $4500.
- A $500 retainer will be withheld until the project has been acquitted.

Stage 3 – Project development

Participants will be expected to:

- Attend three in-person full day workshops (9am–5pm) on Saturday 16 September, Sunday 17 September and Saturday 11 November, 2023
- Carry out a one-day project test in the city before Saturday 4 November 2023.
- Discuss the project with the program producers who will provide a supportive mentorship role.
- Arrange for professional documentation of the development and/or testing using the project budget (Documentation is to be submitted to the City of Melbourne during the acquittal stage).

Stage 4 – Presentation

At the end of the program participants will:

- present their project to other participants and the City of Melbourne Creative Urban Places team as an opportunity to introduce their practice
- prepare content to profile the work-in-development for inclusion on the City of Melbourne website.

Stage 5 – Project acquittal

A Test Sites project acquittal report will need to be submitted for the $500 retainer to be paid.

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[6] https://melbourne.smartygrants.com.au/TestSites2023Round2

Terms and conditions

- Program participants will need to commit to three in person workshops held on Saturday 16 September, Sunday 17 September and Saturday 11 November 2023; as well as creative development hours outside of this (at your own discretion).

- Test Sites must not form part of any assessment for an accredited course of study.

- Applications must be submitted online by the published closing date and time. Late submissions will not be accepted.

- Applications must be for research and development of an idea and not for presentation of a project or for a work already intended for public presentation, for example: pre-production support for a festival.

- A maximum of one application per artist or arts organisation can be submitted.

- Applicants must have acquitted previous grants and have no outstanding debts to the City of Melbourne.

Street art

Street art, including stencils, paste-ups and murals, are not supported by the Test Sites program, although ideas that open up a dialogue with existing street art are encouraged. Artists working in this field can plan and produce projects independently with the permission of building owners. Street artists may be eligible to apply for project specific funding[7]. Further information about the City of Melbourne's approach to street art can be found in our Graffiti Management Plan 2014-18.[8]

Controversial content

Artworks in the public realm must take into consideration the experience of a wide range of people who may encounter the work without warning. While patrons may choose to view explicit or controversial art works in theatres, galleries and other indoor spaces, artists must be sensitive to the experience of people who encounter the work unexpectedly in the public realm.

In deciding if work is appropriate for public space, the City of Melbourne will make a decision about the suitability of each work for the public realm using Australia's Advertising Standards Code 12 as a guide. The standards state, 'communications must not portray images or events in a way that is unduly frightening or distressing to children…and must not demean any person or group on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, age, sexual preference, religion or mental or physical disability'.

Applicants must discuss any idea containing potentially controversial content with the organisation.

Funds management

The financial support component of Test Sites will be managed by Auspicious Arts. Successful applicants will enter into an agreement with Auspicious Arts, on behalf of City of Melbourne, who will provide further information about the management of funds.

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7 http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutCouncil/grantssponsorship/ArtsGrants/Pages/ArtsFunding.aspx

8 https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutCouncil/PlansandPublications/strategies/Pages/Graffitimanagementplan.aspx

Program dates

The City of Melbourne reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any component of Test Sites, including application deadlines and the frequency of application rounds. We also reserve the right to invite artists to participate in Test Sites or other programs.

Insurance

Test Sites projects will be covered under Auspicious Arts Public Liability Insurance. Auspicious Arts hold public liability cover to the value of $20 million. Further information about insurances will be provided to successful applicants.

Tax advice

The Australian Taxation Office may consider payments received through Test Sites as taxable income. The tax office can help with information on tax, including GST. Call 13 28 66 or visit Australian Taxation Office[9].

References

Public Art Melbourne.[10]

Public Art Framework 2021 - 2031[11]

Graffiti Management Policy 2021[12]

9 https://www.ato.gov.au/

10 http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/aboutmelbourne/artsandevents/publicart/Pages/PublicArt.aspx

11 http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutMelbourne/ArtsandEvents/PublicArt/Pages/PublicArtFramework.aspx

12 http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutCouncil/PlansandPublications/strategies/Pages/Graffitimanagementplan.aspx

Appendix A

Definitions of artist's experience

Emerging or early career artist

1. Has received recognition for the public presentation of at least one work in an area of arts practice.
2. Is recognised by peers or experts in the artist's area of arts practice, which can include Elders or other people of standing within the artist's community.
3. Has specialised training or practical experience in their area of arts practice – training need not have been at an academic institution.

Professional artist

1. Has acquired advanced knowledge or training in their chosen art form. This includes artists from diverse cultural backgrounds whose artistic or cultural knowledge has been developed through oral traditions; professional artists who are self-taught; and artists of professional calibre who must work outside the arts to generate income.
2. Has received the recognition of their peers through the public presentation of their work in a professional context, this includes publishing, performing and exhibiting.
3. Has a serious commitment to their arts practice and considers it a major part of their working life, rather than a pastime.
4. Has maintained this level of professional practice for at least three years.

Established artist, group or organisation

1. Has recently achieved the successful public presentation of at least three high-quality artworks, events or programs in an area of arts practice.
2. Has endorsement and support for their work from at least two peers or experts in their area of arts practice.
3. Is acknowledged as established in their area of arts practice.