

**Submission
No 374**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Organisation: Art Pharmacy Consulting

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Art Pharmacy / Culture Scouts Night Time Economy Submission

Our team here at Art Pharmacy Consulting and Culture Scouts is a great cross section of Sydney's creative landscape. We come from all walks of life and creative practices. We live across Sydney, from west to north to inner city, and practice across a range of creative disciplines including illustration, painting, music, comics, and graphic design, as well as having our very well established business sense. We wish to raise a range of opinions and suggestions, and have our ears very close to the ground.

We understand the City of Sydney are already making changes across this by extending trading hours and creating cultural precincts like the Bathurst Street Creative Hub. But we think that more can be done, and should be done. One of our main concerns is moving away from the very alcohol centric culture of Sydney, and offering people more arts and culture focused alternatives when socialising outside regular business hours. And of course, always offering more and more opportunities to local creatives across a range of practices.

Community Safety

- **Using Public Art as a Way of Making People Safe**
 - Public art can be aesthetically pleasing, but also have a practical use. [This example](#) from Bristol based artist, Zoe Power, shows how simple a fix can be, and how it can be met with an immediate reaction and result. Zoe was fed up of cycling in the dark, and took matters into her own hands. With funding from the local university, Zoe created a mural that is not only gorgeous in the day time, but provides a sense of safety and comfort to those using the cycle path at night.
 - [Jason Wing's *Between Two Worlds*](#) in Haymarket is a Sydney based example of this, commissioned by the City of Sydney.
- **Ensuring People Feel Comfortable on a Friday/Saturday Night**
 - As part of my dream for Sydney, I'd like somewhere that I can go on a Friday or Saturday night with both my 5 year old son, and my grandmother who's on a walker in her 90s. There are not enough places in the CBD and surrounds that all people, regardless of age, religion, ability, or culture, can access and feel comfortable and relaxed.
 - With the current state of Sydney and the current alcohol centric culture, this isn't always a possibility.
- **Activating neglected spaces**
 - I want to activate neglected spaces with things like temporary street furniture, or practical, yet beautiful public art that lights up space, making it safer. An example of a neglected space with so much more potential is the public toilets around Taylor Square.
 - Or even the space where the light rail will run out the front of Town Hall, which I can already see people using such as buskers and street performers.

Individual and Community Health Outcomes

- **Extending Trading Hours**
 - By implementing a 24 hour economy in Sydney's CBD, and allowing cafes, shops, hairdressers, whatever it may be, to be open much later than the regular 5 or 6 pm, we're giving people an alternative to going to bars and clubs to socialise.
 - This would be a conscious push against the alcohol centric culture that plagues Sydney.
 - It would also be a huge boost to Sydney's economy.
- **Options for Evening Activities that isn't Based Around Drinking or Eating Out**
 - While this ties into the last point a fair bit, it also leaves space for more creative events to be held. These could be in already established art venues, but I'd love to see book shops holding poetry nights, or after work art workshops in gallery spaces. The opportunities for this are endless.
 - More funding for dedicated art venues, such as 107 Projects in Redfern, means that there's the option for live music to move away from bars and clubs.
 - This means that the focus is placed on the music or art event, rather than a bar/club booking a band only to bring people in to sell drinks. It would also create a safe space for people that don't always feel comfortable in bars and clubs.

Appropriate Balance of Existing Regulatory Arrangements

- **Review Of Noise Complaint Policies/Laws/Etc**
 - It's a shame that great music venues are closing down (as well as bars and clubs) due to neighbour's complaints. This is a delicate issue, and I want the local residents to be happy, but I don't think closing down venues is always the answer, especially when residents move in next to already established venues.
 - We can look to Melbourne and their *Agent of Change* policy which seems to have given a few little wins to venues.
 - The Inner West Council have recently introduced a *Good Neighbour* policy which suggests mediated meetings between venues and residents making complaints to discuss long and short term goals, and practical solutions to the problem. This makes the process more personable.

Enhance Sydney's Night Time Economy

- **Vivid**
 - Vivid is a wonderful example of "build it and they will come." It shows that people are willing to come into the CBD outside of regular business hours to engage with art and culture, and most likely pour money into the economy by using public transport, visiting restaurants and bars, etc.
 - Vivid appeals to everyone, bringing people into the CBD that wouldn't normally be there on a Friday or Saturday night, or even mid-week, including families with children.

- The wonderful music and arts program appeals to a demographic that may not normally want to come into the CBD to battle the crowds, or just simply targets the people that generally aren't interested in seeing the light show.
- It would be great to see more events such as this all year round. Obviously not all on the same scale as Vivid, but smaller events that bridge the gap between people, catering to the masses. Vivid shows that this works!
- **Extending Trading Hours**
 - As already mentioned, by extending trading hours, we'll be boosting Sydney economy.
 - It means offering alternatives to people to socialise outside of regular hours that doesn't revolve around bars or restaurants, and more importantly, alcohol.
- **Continued Activation of Community Hubs**
 - We'd love to see Sydney's creative hubs such as Newtown's King Street, Redfern's Redfern Street, or Darlinghurst's Oxford Street, continue to be activated as community hubs and main streets.
 - A great initiative in Newtown is the King Street Crawl, in which almost every music venue on King Street and Enmore Road puts on a concert, creating a street long festival.
 - Mini-Mart in Petersham holds semi-regular night markets that stretch along a few businesses on Stanmore Road. It would be great to see similar things elsewhere!
- **Activation of Empty Storefronts**
 - Creating incentives for small, independent retailers and boutiques to open up in empty storefronts in and around the CBD.
 - This could be subsidised rent, shorter lease terms, breaking down the barriers, etc.

Any Other Directly Relevant Matters

- **Development Of New Communities**
 - With the drastic change of Sydney's landscape with constant construction, it would be great to tackle many of the issues plaguing Sydney from the get go with the birth of these new communities, or the re-development.
 - For example, ensuring that venues are sound proofed as they're built, or if new developments are constructed near already existing venues/pubs/etc, sound proofing the development (people can't move next to a noisy venue and then complain about it, see Melbourne's *Agent of Change* policy).
- **Building on the Already Existing Creative Community**
 - An artist's job is to think outside the square and to solve (society's) problems. We need to employ Sydney's artists to help tackle all the issues facing Sydney. This **creative arts culture already exists in Sydney!** We don't need to start from scratch, we just have to build on that.
 - New South Wales released *Creative Industries Economic Profile* in June 2013 estimating cultural industry value add of over \$36 billion to the NSW economy.

- Part of what we do is take people on art and culture tours around Sydney, so I'm there on the ground, seeing the already rich and vibrant **community that already exists**.
- Many of the problems facing Sydney and the night time economy can be solved through engagement with the creative community who is affected by the rising property prices, pushing creatives out of the inner city (another really important issue).
- We want Sydney's creatives to be able to make a living of what they're doing, so that they stay in Sydney and don't have to move interstate or overseas to survive.
- **Changing our Language**
 - We can **start to change the way we talk** about these issues. By definition, using the term **economy** makes the conversation about **money** and the production of goods. By talking about the **ecology** of Sydney puts the emphasis on the **people** and the environment.
- **Creating Performance Specific Venues**
 - We love the idea of creating performance specific venues (such as 107 Projects in Redfern) to help **move people away from alcohol centric venues**.
 - This shifts the focus to the artist/performer, rather than the artist/performer being used by the venue to bring in patrons and sell alcohol.
 - It will also allow for people that normally wouldn't feel very comfortable in pubs and clubs to attend art and culture events in a different environment, which could also mean all ages events.
- **Public Transport**
 - One of the main issues with the lock out laws were that people were removed from venues at a certain time, and had no way of getting home, which meant they lingered on the streets for longer.
 - The night bus is an uncomfortable experience, which doesn't always create a feeling of safety.
 - While Ubers and taxis are an option, not everyone can afford to get one from the CBD to their home.
 - **This should be a priority.** Regular and safe trains throughout the evening (even if they're every half hour) would mean that the majority of people would have a safe way to get home.
- **Artists Residencies**
 - Offering more accessible art residencies to creatives, whether that means physically more accessible, or financially, or taking risks with less established artists.
 - Working alongside bars/pubs/retail spaces/etc. to offer partnerships in residencies/living spaces for artists, perhaps subsidised by the government.

Emilya's General Ideas and Notes

- **Street Furniture:** A simple start with temporary street furniture that can be easily packed away at night, perhaps in a locally housed shipping container. We could have small creative hubs with buskers, live artists, or workshops, and chalk boards to tell

to the local residents what to expect that day/night. We want people to congregate and enjoy the outdoors, this spills onto the evening. These temporary furniture areas should be done near cultural institutions and smaller galleries. Some places we could activate with this method; Darlinghurst Public Toilets, Hyde Park, and Central Park near Eddie Ave.

- **Underpasses:** Activate the spaces with lights and bright murals. Another great and quick fix for dark, unwelcoming underpasses. I understand that this has already been done a fair bit, but we can push it further.
- **Artistic Light Orientation:** Employing artists to design light identifiers for aspects of the city (cultural food areas, Circular Quay, etc.) like what's been done in Lyon, France. Also creates a sense of security, both with better lighting and offering simple visual cues to those unfamiliar to the area.
- **Areas where 'Pedestrian is King':** Sydney is crying out for this! The areas along George Street between Park Street/Druitt Street and Market Street, as well as the space in front of Town Hall, where the Light Rail will soon be implemented have become wonderful hubs for pedestrians. I've seen plenty of buskers out the front of Town Hall with very large crowds on a regular basis. Pitt Street has this happening along the mall area, but it would be great to see more. These areas need to be accessible to all. Spice Alley is another great, smaller version of what is possible (cheap eats, high-end degustations, galleries, retail).
- **Busking:** As mentioned before, dedicated busking areas, but also websites and programs offering high-quality and accessible music for the general public. Once this is established, surprise the public with larger scale bands!
- **Free Games/Public Activities:** Test out areas with smaller activations, could correlate with previously mentioned street furniture activations. A second benefit is that Sydney is so expensive, and offering free activities is always a plus.
- **Cheap and Easy "Quick Wins":** Also mentioned previously, having quick and easy activations to test what works in each area. Examples include moveable galleries in shipping containers, gallery hoardings, public/live art, moveable constructs, and temporary furniture.
- **Fee-Free Dining Areas:** Removing the fees and red tape for small restaurants/eateries who want to put out street furniture to encourage their patrons to eat outside in public spaces.
- **More Funding for Emerging Entrepreneurial Businesses:** Currently, funding is very top heavy and concentrated for non-for-profits. Having different categories for different people, advertising the opportunity. Not just artists, but musicians, event managers, galleries, local food and drink, etc.
- **Tours and Tourism:** Tourism and art often go hand in hand, so why not build up Sydney as an art centre? We have such a rich and colourful history that needs to be built upon. By creating an impression of a continuing legacy, make people excited to come back and see what's happened since they last visited. Melbourne does this very well, and I think that Hobart is an interesting example with MONA and Dark Mofa
- **Creative and Cultural Entrepreneur Summit:** Not just about artists and musicians. We need a more collaborative and cross-disciplinary approach in the way we tackle art and culture. Artists/musicians can gain a lot from local businesses, and vice versa.

Our Blog Posts

I also regularly update our blog, "[The Australian Art Curator Blog](#)", with articles exploring many of the issues faced by Sydney in the world of art and culture. We had a recent focus on Sydney's Night Time Economy. Find links to relevant articles below;

- Sydney's Night Time Economy Focus
 - [Sydney's Community Problem](#)
 - [Night Time In Sydney](#)
 - [Future Trends and Where We Should be Steering Sydney](#)
 - [Interview With Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore](#)
- Other Articles of Interest
 - [How To Avoid "Plonk Art"](#)
 - [How To Introduce Creative Play In Mixed Use Spaces](#)
 - [What Is Place Curation?](#)
 - [Talking Place Making and Community](#)
 - [An Argument For Artworks in Outdoor Spaces](#)

Contact Details

These issues are something that we all feel very passionately about here at Art Pharmacy and Culture Scouts, and it's always something that we're happy to discuss. If you have any questions on anything raised here, or would like further clarification, please feel free to get in touch! We'd be more than happy to chat, call us on 1300 776 042 or send us an email at;

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