

# Art Strategy Outline Sydney Fish Market (SFM)

*(2nd draft, August 2019)*

*The following strategy outline is based on in depth conceptual dialogue with 3XN/GXN in Denmark and Sydney regarding the implementation of art in SFM. In addition to that, Wallner Weiss, did a site visit in Sydney talking to the main stakeholders in UrbanGrowth NSW.*

*The purpose of the strategy is to establish a flexible white paper stating the main values and principles guiding the implementation process.*



# 1. VALUES

## At SFM Art Connects Places, People, Past, and Present.

In developing the Art Strategy for SFM six primary points of interest have been identified as central strategical focus points.

The art at SFM..

1. ..should reflect directly on the proximity to water and the unique **historical heritage** and cultural significance of the site, emphasising the rich culture of Aboriginal art. It is key to the project, that the artists involved will be thoroughly briefed on the context and conditions of the this particular site, and understands the cultural depth and meaning of the local history.
2. ..will engage the public, the art being both **playful, informal, and accessible**. As a future major cultural destination, it is important that the SFM art is able to support the big flow of people with very different backgrounds and knowledge of art. SFM is not a museum, it is af venue for both everyday life and cultural events, and the art chosen for this project will reflect the diversity of users.
3. ..should support **way finding** (supporting logistical functions) and create meeting places in public space especially along the harbour promenade connecting the surrounding harbour areas. With the new fish market an entirely new urban space and context is created, and along with the landscape design the art has the role of helping people understand the area and create a spatial identity unique to SFM.
4. ..will be specifically commissioned for the fish market, and will be **adapted to the architecture and functionality of the specific place** whether landscape or interior. The architecture of SFM is spectacular in itself. The art strategy proposes an integrated approach to art, where artists work with the architects to enhance and support the main architectural concept. Visibility, light effects, and materiality that elevates the design even further.

5. ..is grounded in a feasible art strategy, promoting and examining the possibility of **involving both local and international artists**. It is key to the strategy that the art represents a diversity of art and artists in terms of cultural background, age, and gender. It is further important to combine both locally based artists and international profiles, setting up collaborations .
  
6. ..should **fully complement the ideas and ambitions of the architectural concept** and reflect the vision of SFM to create a fish market and public space second to none when it comes to outstanding life quality and experiences. The art interventions should be planned in the context of the buildings and the architecture and should preferably have an integrated function as an architecture-enhancing element or as a means to differentiate between functions.

The art concept and function could be summarised in the following terms:

- Art to increase the perceived quality of the building
- Art as support in the everyday experience and activities of the building and context
- Art as visual attraction & experience
- Art with an integrated function
- Art as support in way-finding.

### **1.1 SFM Aligned with existing city cultural and art strategies**

The project implementation should be aligned with the principles and aims expressed in the City of Sydney – Creative City, Cultural Policy and Action Plan 2014 – 2024, and the direction of the Plan’s six priorities:

1. Precinct distinctiveness and creativity in the public domain;
2. New avenues for creative participation;
3. Sector sustainability: surviving and thriving;
4. Improving access, creating markets;
5. Sharing knowledge; and

## 6. Global engagement.

Furthermore, the art at SFM should be aligned with the vision of the **City of Sydney – City Art Strategy (2011)**, long term public art plan. This includes, the support of the ambitions expressed in:

‘Excellence, innovation and diversity in keeping with the aesthetic and cultural significance of the city’s public domain and with the dynamic and experimental nature of contemporary art practice.’

And

“The Public Art Strategy aims to embed public art into the fabric of the city to reflect Sydney’s unique history, its diverse communities, its creativity, its innovation and its energy. Providing opportunities for everyone to participate, including artists with a disability, it aims to create experiences that are universally accessible to all people”.

### **1.2 Beyond SFM - Blackwattle Bay**

The SFM strategy confirms and speaks into the overall narrative for Blackwattle Bay that extends beyond the boundaries of the SFM site as the Blackwattle Bay Arts and Cultural strategy is being developed. The SFM site is part of the Sydney Harbour Walk: a harbour-side pedestrian journey from Farm Cove to Blackwattle Bay and initiatives should be coordinated with the public art projects and way-finding currently being developed along its length - the City of Sydney, Property NSW, Sydney Opera House.

## 2. The WHAT, WHEN & WHY?

**Tentative priority projects, developed in collaboration with 3XN will provide a background for discussions and evaluation on the implementation of art at SFM and the public domain.**

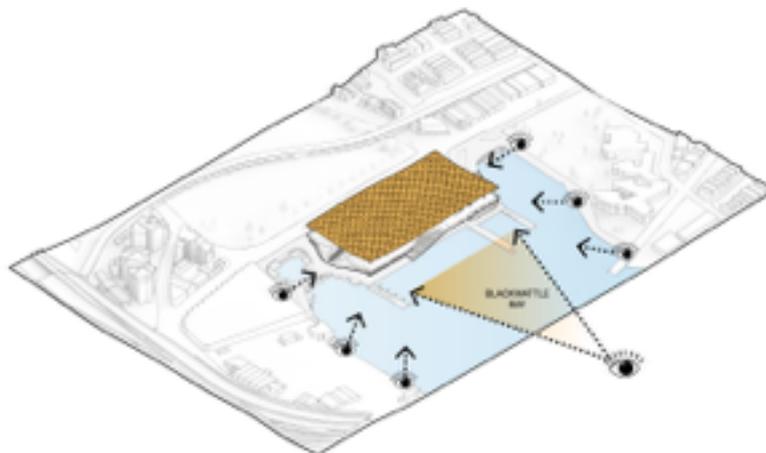
To stimulate a broad interest in the art at SFM, the strategy outline proposes to explore a combination of three typological levels.

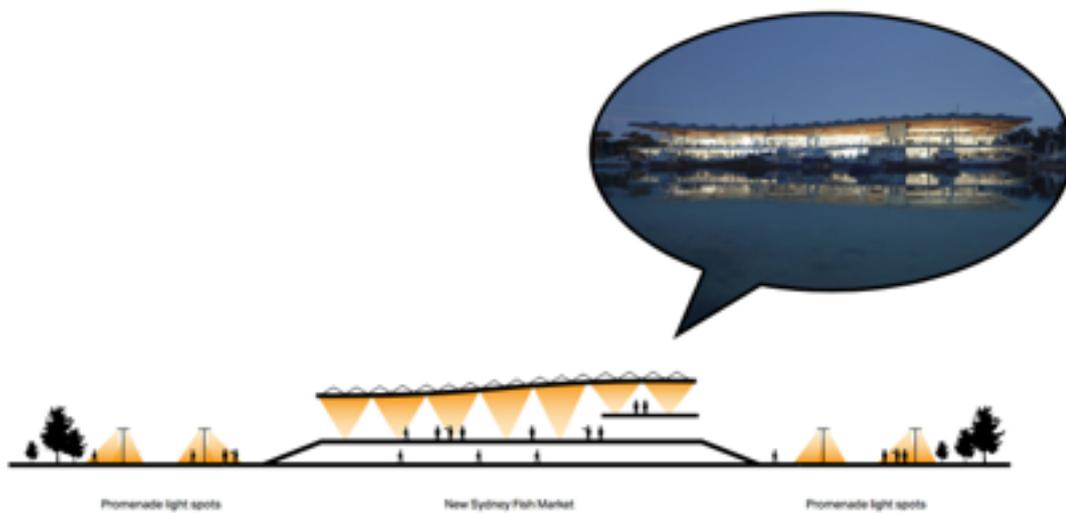
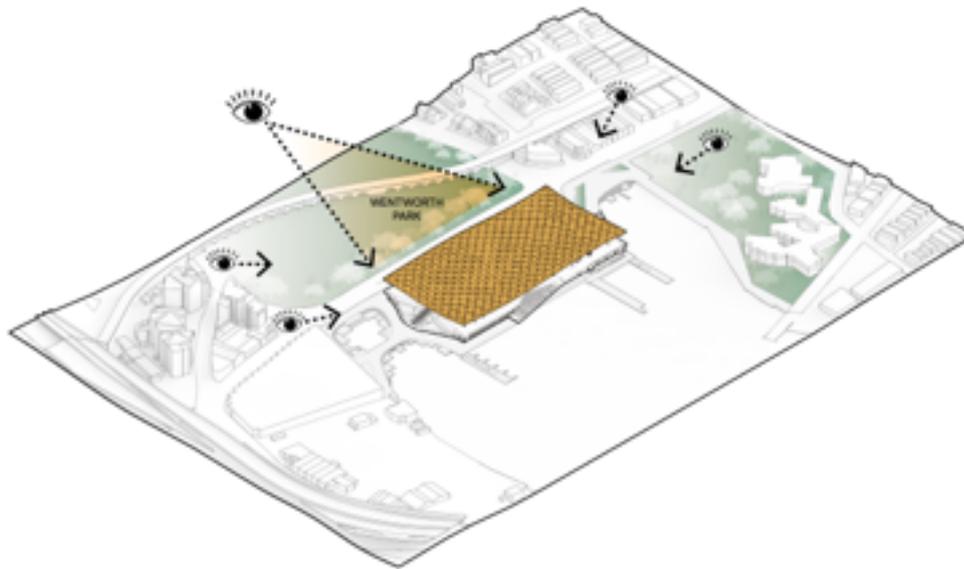
They include

- 1) Large scale public art works located on the promenade leading to and from SFM
- 2) Building integrated art working to emphasise the conceptual and architectural qualities
- 3) “Functional Art”.

The projects are:

- **Two to three major landmark public art projects** will create visibility access points, meeting places and moments of pause in the plazas and landscape around SFM. The projects express the values of Creative Sydney, the historical and cultural heritage, and the connection between water, harbour and urban fabric.





- **Three building integrated projects**, emphasising sustainability, way finding, and sound on the building. Working with building surfaces, acoustics, and functionality related to

sustainability performance.

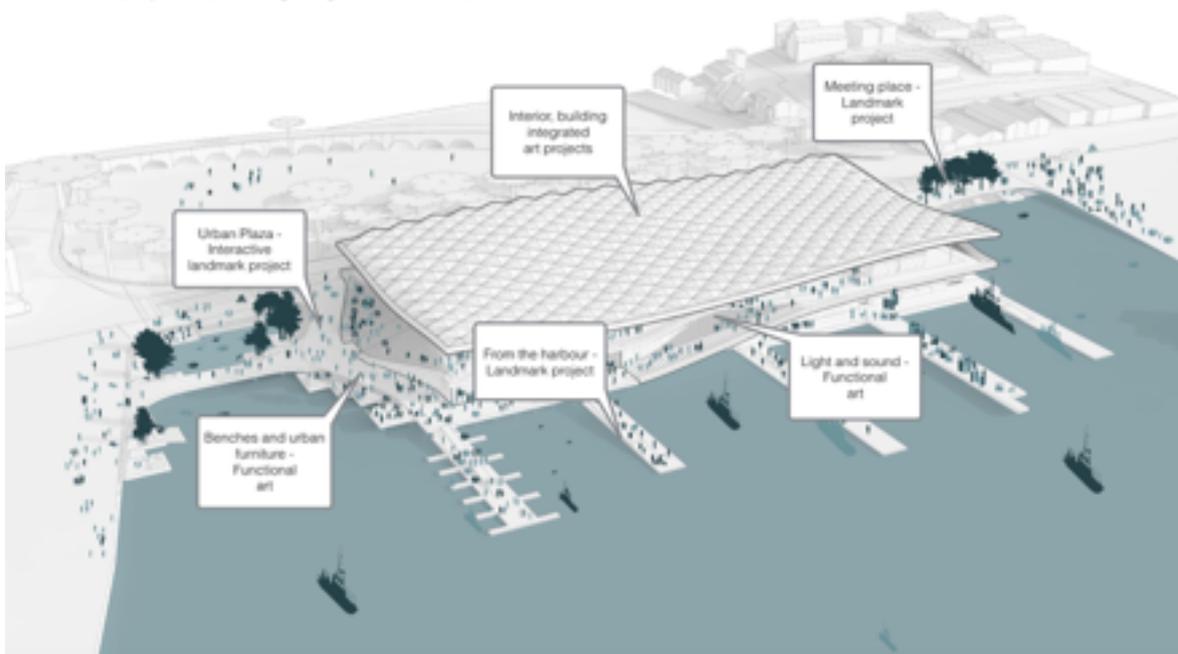
- **Small scale functional art projects**, like urban furniture, benches, lighting, and signage. The projects relates to the everyday function of the building and the need of the many visitors and employees.

## 2.1 Evaluation Criteria

When assessing possible art works, the above values, principles, and strategy is taken in to consideration. To sum up the evaluation criteria in the process of selecting art for SFM should include:

- Does it meet functional requirements?
- How is the strategic fit on the typological level?
- Does it support the architectural vision?
- Does it support the SFM functional requirements and identity?
- Does it have a direct relation to well-defined user needs?
- Does it contribute to the broader place vision and cultural identity for the whole of Blackwattle Bay?

**Tentative overview of potential art interventions, three categories:**  
1) Landmark projects, 2) Building integrated art, and 3) Functional art at SFM



### 3. The Site - Art in the Context of Cultural Heritage

**Along with the above established evaluation criteria the art works must be sensitive to the specific requirements and cultural context.**

The SFM site is characterised by post-industrial urban typologies, such as the coal loader, the existing harbour industry, and adjacent industrial facilities. The recreational facilities such as the rowing club, the harbour promenade, and the park situated behind the site adds to the complexity - and possibilities. In addition to that the water itself represents a spatial and recreational feature, that should be activated in the art programme. The public art should be highly to be site-responsive and enhance the future and past character of the site.



Art has the potential to bring together all the different elements constituting the site. The site conditions underlines the importance of doing a strong public programme, activating public space. The rich history of the SFM site stretches way beyond the industrial era. For centuries the site and general harbour area has been an important historical site for indigenous culture. Representing the rich cultural heritage of the site, spanning the different eras , is a cornerstone in the art strategy. The purpose is creating a vital link between past and present through art, and giving a strong voice to the long, diverse history of the harbour front area.

The strategy therefore propose to do the following key interventions in relation to the specific site conditions:

- **Giving the Aboriginal culture a strong voice** is key to the strategy. Prioritising artworks from Aboriginal artists is instrumental to achieving the connection between present and past, and highlighting the profound and important contribution to Sydney's history and culture.
- If possible **re-use and integrate industrial cultural heritage** elements existing on the site today, such as timber from the coal loader. Elements is transformed into art works and thereby linking the history to the present. Elements from the current fish market, such as mural works, hold a big potential as part of the future development.
- Existing efforts to create a **public promenade around Sydney harbour should be supported** by the SFM art strategy. Helping build a strong connection between the last parts of the promenade will ensure that the flow of people visiting SFM in the future will experience an exciting public space.
- **Activating and strengthening the spatial connection between water and land** as a key resource. Water management is a key feature of the architectural concept, and the art strategy should support that effort.



### 3.1 Art and culture as an engine in the development of the promenade

The proposal aims for a longterm development of the promenade, which includes an art and culture strategy that unfolds integrated with architecture and landscape design.

The art is functional in the sense that artists contribute to the design of urban space fixtures such as benches, lighting, facade work in the form of mosaics and murals, coatings, planting on carefully designated places and areas on the cultural promenade. The works thus have both a very high artistic level and a practical function as furniture in the urban space that can be used both in everyday life and in connection with cultural events. One example is the artist Jeppe Heins benches, which have a double function as both sculpture and bench.



The art on the promenade...

1. ...must contribute to creating new places (urbanism) with strong identity, meeting places for physical development, cultural empathy and involvement of the city's citizens in the creation of culture.

2. ...is used purposefully to stage the city's space and create visibility in attracting new user groups
3. ...not only adds urban space to a unique identity in relation to historical references but creates high-level spaces and passages of recreational facilities and urban spaces.



The incorporation of art as an integral part of the city's space will over the years create a completely unique character for the area. The art will be a clear marker for anyone who visits SFM. It will consist of both permanent contributions in the form of urban space furniture, but also facilities for conducting temporary art and cultural events.

The art and culture of these spaces play a mediating role, creating a focal point, facilitating new meetings across generations, interests and culture. It happens through surprising or provocative elements that make people stop, which appeals to visitors' curiosity and encourages them to interact with art and each other.

### **3.2 Art and urban megatrends**

At SFM there will be a high demand for an updated take on implementing art to the benefit of the many. There are certain mega trends when working with art in public space relevant to SFM.

These include:

1. **Multi functionality in art and urban space.** Multi functionality is about the possibility that different cultural activities can unfold throughout the year within the same location. Multi functionality can help create a vibrant and dynamic urban space and attract diverse user groups with widely differing needs and expectations. The multifunctional urban space can contribute to an increased social inclusion and attention between groups of citizens who do not normally have an opportunity to meet.
2. **Changeability.** Changeability focuses on how urban space can constantly realign itself. If the layout of SFM's urban space is to be future-proof it must make room for new trends, temporary and spontaneous use. It must facilitate and provide space for new activities.
3. **Cross Culture.** Cross-cultural qualities are about creating spaces that integrate and include diverse user groups and breaks down the boundaries of how we experience and interact with art and physical space.
4. **Interaction / involvement.** Today users will no longer just stand on the sidelines and passively look at the art. The digital revolution has influenced the user to such an extent that there is a clear expectation of being involved and of being able to participate and interact with the environment. The degree of interaction and involvement obviously depends on the context and can be expressed in many different ways as a direct invitation to participate in various formal or informal activities
5. **Strong visual identity.** Focusing on visual identity will help define the use and activities of the urban space by creating a specific framework and mood that can open up the users' imagination and creativity.
6. **Recreational qualities.** The recreational urban space with the culture in the centre creates a space for both mental and physical recreation. An upgrade of the

recreational facilities, combined with a progressive art strategy, should make a significant contribution to the experience of space as usable and relevant.

7. **Meeting places.** Creating room for exchanges between people are a cardinal point in the project. The art can play a special role, both in the design of urban space furniture such as benches and lighting, and as a direct occasion for creating dialogue and attention to the urban qualities.
8. **Integration of urban space and building.** Urban space and building integration ensures that the urban space is bound together with the context in which it is a part, and relates to the transitions between outside and inside and to the accessibility of building from urban spaces and vice versa.
9. **Season.** The Sydney climate is a crucial parameter in the efficient utilisation and activation of the urban space. It is for example the possibility of shelter and heat in the autumn and winter, and shade and cooling in the summer.
10. **Urban space as a scene.** Meeting art in public space is often spontaneous. Art works at best as a social mixer. It acts as a facilitator for the exchange between people. For the same reason, phenomena such as art playgrounds with spaces for physical development for children, staged by artists, have gained widespread popularity