

# Melbourne Art Streets, Australia

Kristi Park & Emily Slotnick

Artful Streets



Melbourne's visionary approach to art enlivens the streets and has gained worldwide attention.

photoartcredit:

Left: [http://farm4.static.flickrcom/3017/2954266896\\_2b9f664c50.jpg?v=0](http://farm4.static.flickrcom/3017/2954266896_2b9f664c50.jpg?v=0)

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## Embracing Street Art

The City of Melbourne has ignited an international buzz with creating a successful and unique policy to allow street "graffiti" to become street art. Artists from all over the world apply for permits with the City of Melbourne to activate blank facades with lively murals, cultural statements and color.

For the last decade, the City of Melbourne has decided to embrace street art rather than ban what is traditionally considered graffiti. The City has benefitted not only from an artistic community expression viewpoint, but in creating one of the largest draws for tourists to visit the city.

Additionally, the art seems to be well embraced by the residents. The backdrop of wedding photos often features the street art and residents identify with their neighborhood by some of their favorite pieces.

Perhaps the most interesting idea from a design/planning perspective is the concept that a vibrant urban character can be created without changing the existing building facades. The treatment of expansive blank facades don't require intensive urban design or architectural solutions.

In the case of the City of Melbourne, all it takes to create a sense of place, cultural identity and international sensation is a relatively simple permit process and some imagination.

"The City of Melbourne recognises the importance of street art in contributing to a vibrant urban culture. Melbourne's street art has become internationally renowned and has become an attraction for local and overseas visitors experiencing Melbourne's creative ambience. Council takes a strong stance against illegal graffiti and has a number of measures in place to ensure that the city stays clean."

Source: City of Melbourne website Jan-2010

# Artistic Streets vs. Graffiti - The City of Melbourne Approach

## City Statistics

**City Population:**  
- 89,759 residents

**Greater Metro Area:**  
- 3,892,419 residents

**Urban City Area:**  
- 37.6 km<sup>2</sup>

**Governing bodies:**  
- City of Melbourne

**International Visitors:**  
- 1,076,600 annually

**Residents:**  
- 41.7% born internationally

## Melbourne's Street Art Policy Overview

"The City of Melbourne has conducted research and community consultation which revealed that most people do not like graffiti 'tagging' (person writing their graffiti name or 'tag' on a wall with marker or paint). However, many people appreciate 'street art' such as larger more artistic pieces or murals placed in appropriate locations with the required permission. In response, the City of Melbourne's Graffiti Management Plan distinguishes between:

1. The need to remove unwanted graffiti applied without permission
2. Street art placed on walls and infrastructure with the blessing of property owners."

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Source of Quote: City of Melbourne website Jan-2010

## Street art

Melbourne is known as one of the world's great street art capitals for its unique expressions of art displayed on approved outdoor locations throughout the city. Street art includes stencils, paste-ups and murals and does not include graffiti or tagging which is illegal.



The City of Melbourne acknowledges that public spaces provide a gallery and stage for artistic expression and approve permits for street art with building owners permission. Legal street art contributes to a vibrant urban environment and can change continually on a day to day to basis.

## Street art locations

To see some of the city's best street art locations, head to:

- Hosier and Rutledge Lane opposite Federation Square
- Caledonian Lane off Little Bourke Street
- Union Lane off Bourke Street Mall
- Rear of 280 Queen Street in Finlay Avenue
- 21 Degraes Street
- Cnr Flinders Lane and Cocker Alley
- 122 Palmerston Street, Carlton

Source: City of Melbourne website Jan-2010 -<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ForResidents/StreetCleaningandGraffiti/GraffitiStreetArt/Pages/Whatistreetart.aspx>



*"The regular transformation of Melbourne's laneways into evocative arts spaces is just one of the City of Melbourne's public art initiatives. The City of Melbourne seeks concepts from artists for innovative and inspiring artworks which will engage the public using the distinct urban setting of Melbourne's laneways."*

(Source: [www.melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au))



## Tips for Developing Street Art:

(information taken directly from City of Melbourne website <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ForResidents/StreetCleaningandGraffiti/GraffitiStreetArt/Pages/Whatisstreetart.aspx>)

### PROPERTY OWNERS & OCCUPIERS

- You can apply for Council approval for street art which is already on your wall or for new art work you are planning.
- If your property is under a heritage control, you may need a planning permit instead of a street art approval.
- If you have a problem with graffiti tagging on your property, the site may be suitable for a street art mural. This may help deter graffiti in the future.
- The City of Melbourne can help if you need advice or assistance in removing unwanted graffiti from your property.
- Information for artists
- An artist will first need to get permission from the property owner or occupier before doing any artwork on a building or a street art site.

### ARTISTS

- Approval can be sought for a street art which already exists or for new art work you are planning to produce for a property owner or occupier.
- If you have an idea for a street art site, contact the property owner or occupier and suggest they seek approval from the Council. You can help them explain the proposal to Council officers.
- If you know of a site with existing art work (by you or another artist) which deserves to stay, approach the property owner or occupier and encourage them to apply for Council approval to make it legal. Legal work is not cleaned off by the Council.
- Working with a property owner or occupier to get a street art permit for your art work means you can now create a larger, higher profile piece of artwork without breaking the law.

### THE COMMUNITY

- If you believe a site in your local area would be a great location for street art, or you know of an existing art work which deserves to stay, contact the property owner or occupier and suggest they apply for Council approval.
- If you see graffiti on property or infrastructure in your local area (eg post boxes, signal boxes), contact the City of Melbourne so we can arrange for its removal. All obscene, racist or offensive graffiti is removed as a priority. If you see someone placing graffiti on property you should call the Police.
- Placing graffiti on private property without permission is a criminal offence and pursuing graffiti offenders is the responsibility of the Victoria Police.
- Legal street art can be identified by a permit number which will be publicly displayed on site of the artwork.

Develop Artful Streets  
in your neighborhood



Top Photo:

[http://www.psfk.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/n1026012078\\_30171811\\_9159.jpg](http://www.psfk.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/n1026012078_30171811_9159.jpg)

Bottom Photo:

<http://www.melbournestreetart.com/graffiti/hey-mr-rooster/>



Hosier and Rutledge Lane opposite Federation Square

Source: [http://knol.google.com/k/-/-/3p6lurvm7ea5p/rzxg8m/graffiti-alley-web-2%20\(1\).jpg](http://knol.google.com/k/-/-/3p6lurvm7ea5p/rzxg8m/graffiti-alley-web-2%20(1).jpg)





## LOCAL ARTISTS DEFINING HOME

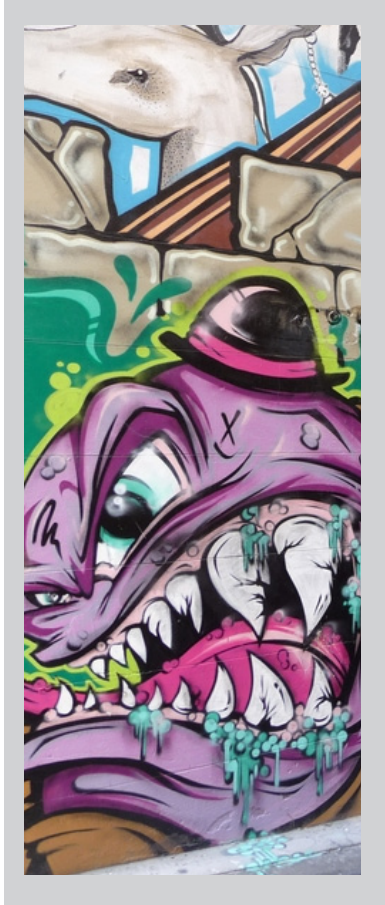
### Spotlight: Everfresh

- “Everfresh are a crew of several artists...who work as a group, solo, and in all possible combinations allowed by the group. They have evolved a very distinctive style, which, once you are familiar with it, is instantly recognisable. ... Their work, both commissioned and uncommissioned, can be seen on walls in many areas of the city (they are well represented in Hosier Lane, for example). ... Last year, when I was in Amsterdam, I had the pleasure of looking up at a wall outside the Cafe Belgique in Gravenstraat and seeing an image that I immediately associated with Melbourne, and ‘home.’” (blog post from Melbourne native)

## TOURIST ATTRACTION

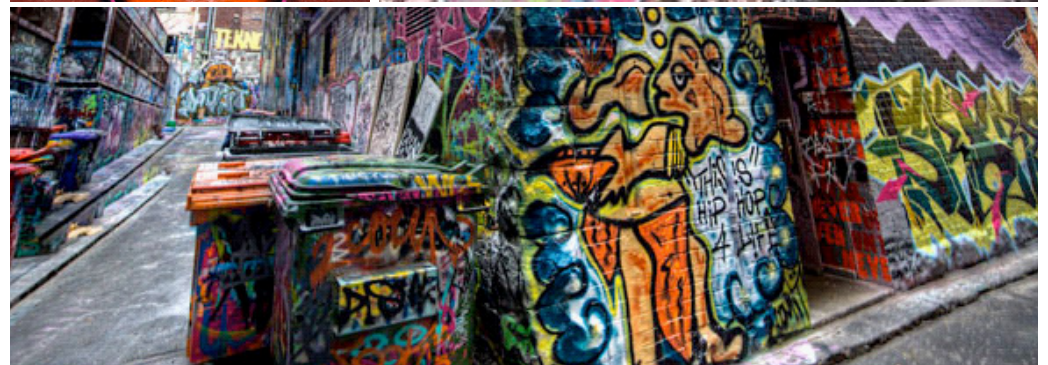
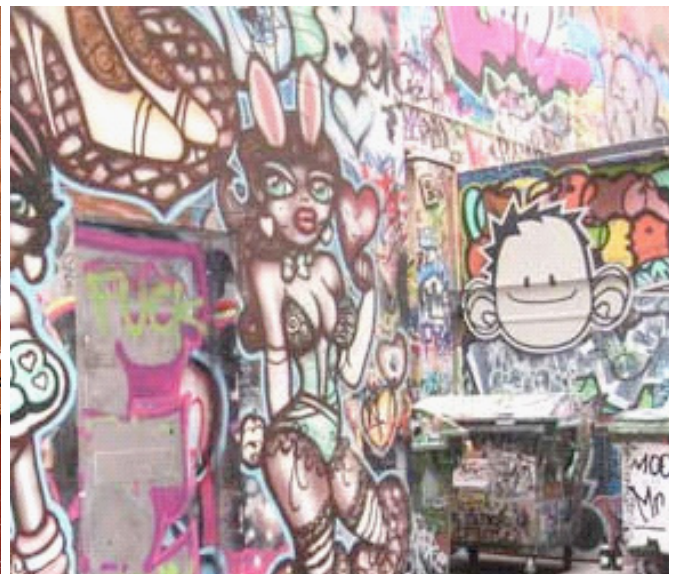
### Spotlight: Hosier Lane

- Hosier Lane is reputedly Melbourne’s most famous art-covered laneway. Tourists, residents, and artists from all over the world frequent the site, and it is constantly reworked by the local stock of emerging and established street artists. Some people visit Hosier to preview work of specific artists, then head to a nearby gallery to purchase a smaller display of the artist’s craft.



Photos above of Everfresh art and blog text from Wordpress [http://imagestoliveby.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/dsc\\_0012.jpg](http://imagestoliveby.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/dsc_0012.jpg)

Photos right of Hosier Lane; left, right, bottom: [http://media.kickstatic.com/kickapps/images/65830/photosPHOTO\\_2578714\\_65830\\_4701021\\_main.jpg](http://media.kickstatic.com/kickapps/images/65830/photosPHOTO_2578714_65830_4701021_main.jpg) <http://www.melbournestreet-tours.com/images/melbs-graffiti.jpg> [http://www.lanewaymagazine.com.au/wp-content/themes/MIFF/images/2009/08/Hosier\\_Lane](http://www.lanewaymagazine.com.au/wp-content/themes/MIFF/images/2009/08/Hosier_Lane)





## Problems with “Mainstreaming” Street-Art

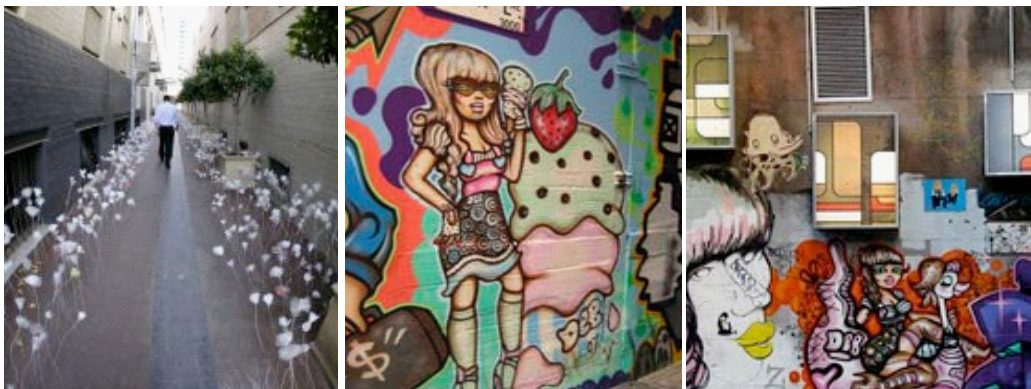
Does the marriage of street art and authority lessen an artist's freedom of expression, or detract from the typical thrill associated with vigilante design?

Melbourne's Union Lane was a City-sponsored laneway project showcasing several well-known, highly respected and experienced artists commissioned to paint a large work covering walls on both sides of the block-long corridor. The project brought young artists on board to participate and be mentored by the pros. Even visiting street artists joined in. The resulting collage of styles and images attracted people from all over the City. Locals took photographs; tourists made the site a destination; many talked with the artists and learned something about street art as they watched the process of its creation.

The presence of a high quality piece on a wall may in most cases inspire respect from other artists, but the Union Lane paintings were quickly tagged-over, and the space lost its allure to casual viewers who were previously drawn to the site. The response illustrated a clash between City officials and the norms and practices of street art culture - one side sees an investment in public amenities, where the other sees a temporal expression not intended as elite or permanent.

Furthermore, while the City of Melbourne's Laneway Commissions commissioned more than 40 laneway projects between 2001 and 2008, “the City Council's latest graffiti management plan showing the \$700,000 cost of graffiti removal in the city in 2007-08 was double that of 2001.” To many involved in the process of creating and sustaining artful streets in Melbourne, this dichotomy presents a frustrating double standard.

source: Union lane discussion from Wordpress blog, <http://imagestoliveby.wordpress.com/2009/05/21/street-art-and-authority/>. Mid page photos of Hosier lane and unknown alley from <http://mystylelocal.net/blog/images/ART/form%203>. City of Melbourne graffiti management plan information from the Sydney Morning Herald, Jan. 13, 2010.

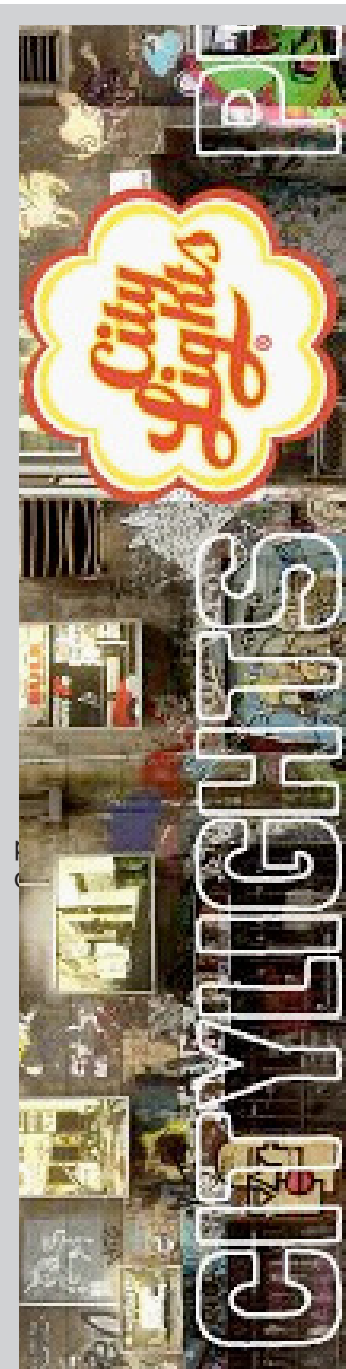


## Solutions

Citylights is an independent public art project providing outdoor and indoor urban space for opportunities to produce ephemeral events focusing on collaboration, street art, and emerging artists. The program directors are sensitive to the idea that some art forms are the products of unique urban environments, generating meaning only within specific public space. Since its beginning in 1996, Citylights has been successful in coordinating street and public art projects as the liaison between artist and City policy. The organization also offers educational and academic programs helping to integrate a new model of street art into the next generation of urban innovators.

source: Citylights logo and program information from <http://citylights-projects.blogspot.com/>

## Can Street Art and Authority Get Along?

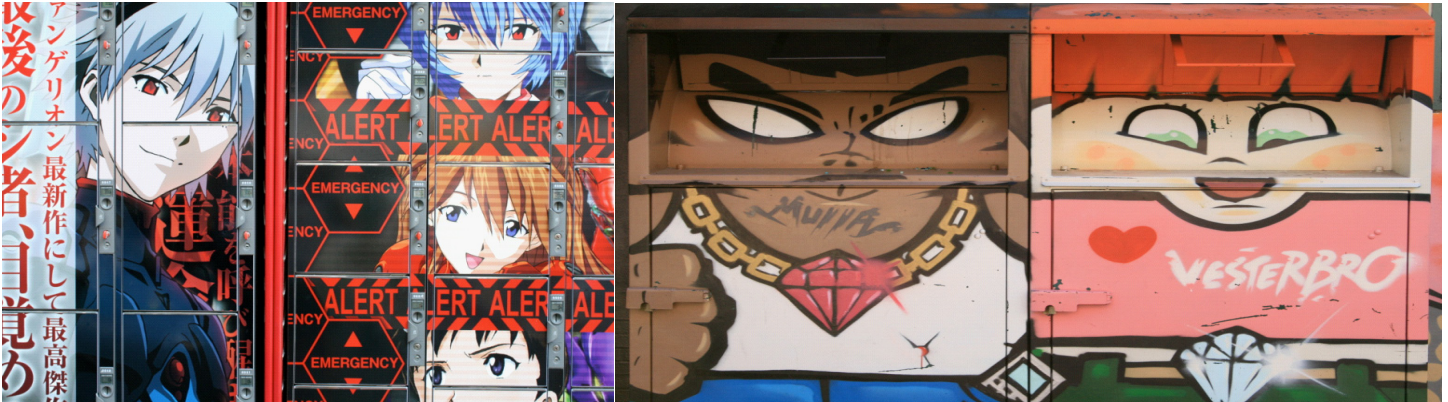




## Urban Street Art: Around the World, and Into Mt Baker

As seen in Melbourne, networks of wall art in alleyways or along corridors can attract an array of pedestrian and tourist activity, adding to the overall vibrancy of a place.

Art displays in the public realm can establish or reinforce local identity among residents, imparting pride, ownership, and responsibility in one's neighborhood. Street art or commissioned graffiti can also tell us what is going on in politics and in the art world. Enabling such a program in Seattle's Mt. Baker neighborhood in the first phase of an upzone or neighborhood redevelopment would encourage the existing community to drive the vision, and a more organic pattern of growth.



Street art and graphic on display are flags of neighborhood identity in Tokyo, especially in the City's infamous Akihabara district - a mecca for anime and gaming enthusiasts. (image above from Akihabara district, 2009, E. Slotnick)

Similar branding occurs in Copenhagen's Vesterbro neighborhood, as seen by the decorated mail receptacles to the upper-right. (E. Slotnick)

The Berlin East Side Gallery (images to right, E. Slotnick) displays hundreds of paintings along a 1.3km-long section of the remaining Berlin wall. Artists from all over the world contribute to the memorial.

Art on in Mt Baker tells stories about the residents, their history, and their home. (photos courtesy of L. Batten)

