



KELOWNA  GALLERY

thanks you!



Exhibitions of national calibre







Please Touch the Art: Art in the Public Space



Robert Dow
Please Touch the Art
2014
Commissioned by the City of
Melbourne

One might say that public art is unique in that it is art we live with every day, and it is collectively owned and shared by an entire community. We may walk over it, so in the case of the Caverton Avenue fire station, it might be used as a meeting place like Robert Dow's *Touch of Art* on Bernard Avenue, or it might be a place to meet, such as Ben in Stuart Park where people come and have their photos taken.

Due to the fact that this form of art is located within the public realm, and that art in general is subjective, it often becomes the focus of debate. Questions about the quality of the art, and whether or not taxpayer money should be better spent are frequently at the forefront of public discussion. Nevertheless, statistics show that investing in the cultural sector is a net economic benefit to the city. Moreover, the things that can't be quantified are often the things that we most value: the sense of place that brings a neighbourhood together, a development that is safe for families, and heritage buildings that connect us to our roots as a community.

At its best, public art plays a vital role in enlivening and improving the quality of public space, engaging the public in dialogue, enhancing the visual aesthetics of an area, and creating identity and giving meaning to a place. Evidently diverse and accessible, public art can engage us from above our heads or under our feet. Direct contact between eye and hand in an open space, free of gallery walls, is public art's greatest gift.

The Melbourne Art Gallery is pleased to collaborate with the City of Melbourne's Public Art Committee on *Please Touch the Art*. Art in Melbourne's public art collection, and Australia's art collection, is a testament to the city's history and identity. By ensuring the accessibility of this collection, and making sure it is enjoyed by the public, the City of Melbourne is committed to ensuring the process by which the Public Art Program delivers public art to the community.

**“The making of art has the
most profound impact”**

Jon Hawkes

The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability

Culture's essential role in
public planning





4154 = world record!









