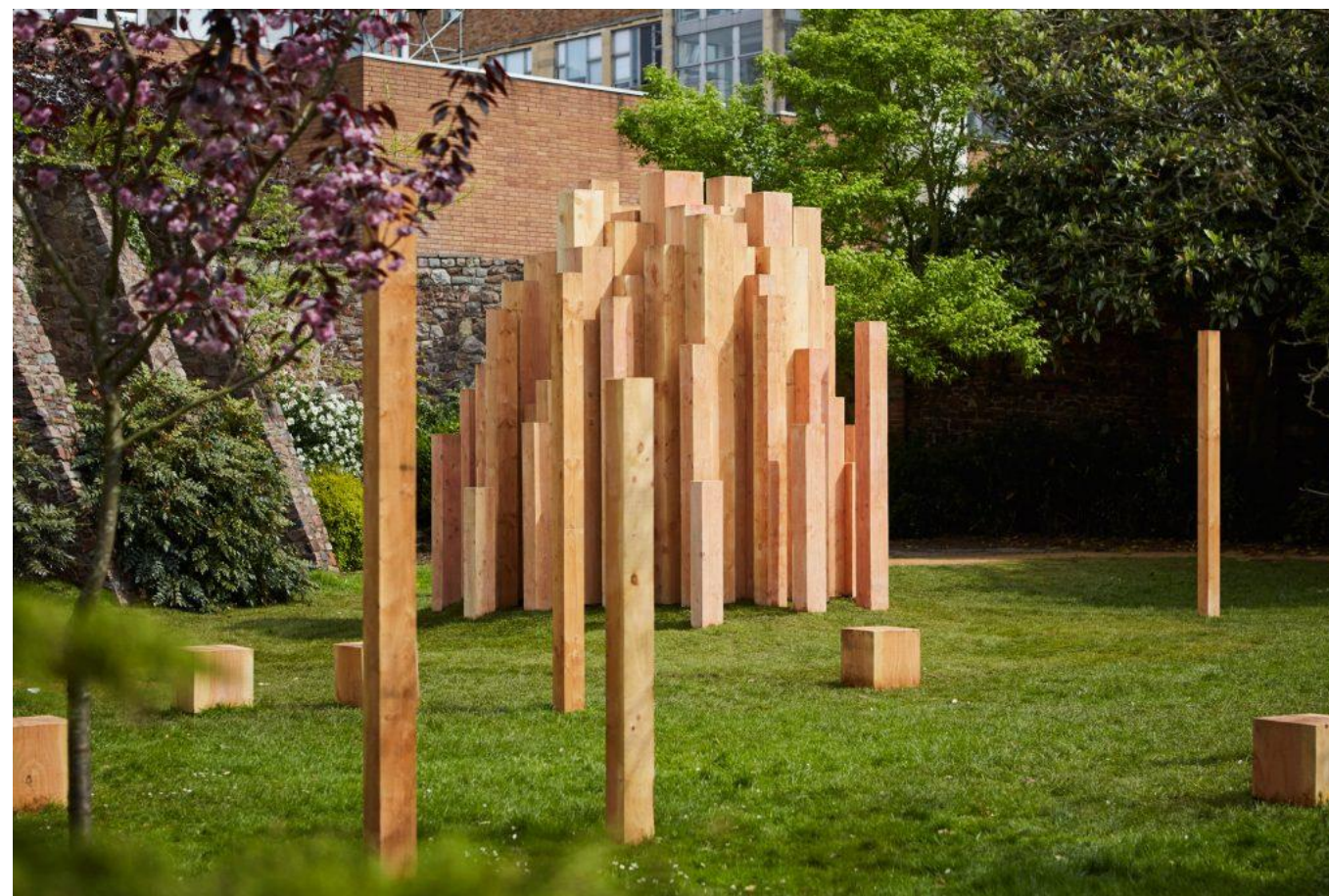


UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL PUBLIC ART STRATEGY



Katie Paterson, *Hollow*, 2016

Prepared by Contemporary Art Society

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1.0 A VISION FOR PUBLIC ART AT UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

A University of Imagination and Innovation

The ambitions for the University of Bristol as a global civic University are mirrored in the vision for the public art programme. To be truly civic means that the University plays an important part in the life of the city, making its knowledge, creativity and innovation genuinely accessible to all while drawing from its civic context in a symbiotic relationship of cultural exchange. Artists and their creative processes are fundamental and complementary to the University's place in Bristol; drawing out inventive ways to understand this changing urban environment, giving voice to the unique character of place and supporting the development of integrated communities through collaboration and co-production.

The University's public realm is seen as a social realm, welcoming, full of interest and activation. Public art will emphasise this social realm by creating a dynamic and connected place – where boldly imaginative art is an integral part of the University experience. Through its programme of estates development the University will enhance the recognition and permeability of its environs and contribute to the city's cultural richness with new creative districts.

The University's commitment to the wellbeing of its people is at the heart of the public art programme, seeking new ways to engage students, staff and local communities. Commissioning processes offer meaningful ways to connect with the Bristol arts ecology and to engage with diverse communities. Public art at the University of Bristol will create opportunities for people to come together, learn and explore.

Public art is an integral part of the University's expression of itself. At this moment of rearticulation for the University, art can be a prism through which debates are focussed and heritage is interpreted. Public art can provide a platform to engage with complex questions about history and the future. Art here will express the ethos of the University through a creative lens, bringing inventive and surprising new readings.

Innovation and collaboration are central to the University's vision, and public art will confidently embrace research, experimentation and co-production as part of the creative journey. The strategy recognises that these processes require an investment in time, support and management. Perhaps most importantly, these processes require open minds and open briefs – allowing artists to bring their creativity to the inspirational opportunities found in a University of imagination and innovation.



Jeppe Hein, *Follow Me*, 2009

Making knowledge, creativity and innovation genuinely accessible to all

Giving voice to unique character of place and contributing to the City's cultural richness

Art can be a prism through which debates are focussed and heritage is interpreted

Supporting integrated communities through collaboration and co-production

Expressing the University ethos through a creative lens, bringing inventive and surprising new readings

1.0 A VISION FOR PUBLIC ART AT UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

1.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The strategic objectives for the public art strategy reflect the vision of the University of Bristol and are applied across all the University's estates developments, bringing coherence to the articulation of its public art programme.

REARTICULATE UNIVERSITY CHARACTER

The organising principle of 'Tradition with edge' is central to the public art programme, designed to respond to the history and heritage of the University and the context of its place in the city.

The global civic University is at the heart of the vision, and public art can explore and promote new ways of understanding and seeing the world whilst articulating and enhancing the University's place in the city.

Inviting artists to develop artwork in response to the character and ethos of the University will contribute to a coherent personality of place that frames its public realm as an expression of University identity. Public art will be celebrated and legibly communicated to catalyse dialogue across the city with the University and its culture.

CONNECT THE UNIVERSITY

Public art will further the Estates strategy by enhancing physical connectivity and intuitive wayfinding across the University. Artworks will express and define the public realm, contributing to orientation, linking its dispersed campuses and encouraging perceptions of the University's public spaces – interior and exterior – as accessible to all.

As importantly, the public art strategy is connected across the University's internal operations, delivered through a joined-up approach that supports activities across communications and branding, engagement programmes, learning and research. A coherent strategy for public art, owned and endorsed by key stakeholders will strengthen the University's cultural assets and provide shared and best practice guidelines for its delivery.

PROPEL CREATIVE INNOVATION

Public art at the University will be driven by ideas, risk taking and experimentation. Drawing from the University's strengths in education and knowledge production, the programme will frame public art practice as a laboratory for testing ideas, catalysing dynamic partnerships that advance research and promote academic development. The programme will build productive partnerships in the city, creating frameworks for collaboration that encourage cross-disciplinary exchange and the circulation of ideas.

A focus on contemporary practice will encourage a wide exploration of media and new forms of public art, harnessing research, new materials and technologies.

The art programme will develop processes and spaces for research, debate and dialogue, offering a creative prism through which we can understand our world better.

FOSTER INCLUSIVE INTERACTION

Designed for the human experience, the public art programme will enrich the social and cultural life of the University and the city, reflecting the rich cultures of Bristol and encouraging a diversity of participants, audiences and communities to feel a part of this place. The strategy creates opportunities for co-production, social interaction, hospitality, research, and investigative processes to provide multiple layers of engagement for local communities – staff and students, residents, visitors and businesses.

The University will become a destination for all to encounter great art, engaging diverse and intergenerational audiences through a dynamic programme of events and activities. In this way the University supports the wellbeing of its communities through an active and animated public realm.

2.0 CONTEXT

The public art strategy is informed by contemporary approaches to understanding the role of arts and culture in the public realm, the vibrant cultural ecology of Bristol and the University's role as a global civic university.

2.1 A Global Perspective

Thoughtful and sustainable urban design, combined with a strong arts and cultural offer, enhances the liveability of cities, creates distinctive identities and narratives of place, supports community building and social resilience and contributes to creative innovation. A culturally rich offer leads to positive perceptions.

The World Cities Culture Report (2014) indicates the world's top cities are not just leading centres of trade, commerce and politics but also cultural powerhouses. UNESCO's Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development (2016) positions the arts and culture as pivotal in urban renewal and innovation – explicitly acknowledging the role of culture in enabling sustainable social, economic and environmental development.

Places thrive when people have a range of reasons to be there; culture plays an increasingly important role in social cohesion, allowing existing and new communities to find common ground and celebrate shared values. Public art performs a key role in placemaking – great art tells a story of place, creates opportunities for engagement and participation, and in itself encourages creativity and discourse, helping to build understanding between disparate communities.

2.2 Bristol Context

Bristol is truly unique – The city has always looked out to global networks and there is a complex reality to its history as a port and its connection to the transatlantic slave trade. This history is being reassessed to develop a collective memory that fully recognises the legacy of the past. It is also a city of economic, social and physical disparities, with uneven development, inadequate transport infrastructure and housing inequality. The Runnymede Divided City report recognises that Bristol is the most unequal core city.

Attracting people from all over the world has led to a complex cultural fabric in the city, revealed in the juxtaposition of old and new and in the distinct social and cultural identities of Bristolian communities. There are over 45 religions, 50 nationalities and 91 main languages spoken, with 22% of the population coming from non-White British backgrounds.

Bristol is a place of innovation, exploration and non-conformity. This radical city is a major cultural hub for the South West and is networked internationally through its cultural organisations. It is part of the new city-region comprising the West of England Combined Authority and sees the opportunity to develop a major creative economy cluster. The cultural sector have produced an ecosystem of talent, facilities, businesses and organisations which contribute to the City's reputation for innovation, particularly in the fusion of art and science, creativity and technology.

Bristol's internationally renowned creative ecology includes the origins of trip hop and drum and bass, a widely recognised street art scene, a vibrant music,

festival and theatre culture and TV, digital media and film innovation. Bristol has a permanent status as a designated Unesco City of Film celebrating its achievements in moving image. Bristol is also designated England's first Unesco Learning City, part of a world-wide network that champions learning to transform lives, communities, workplaces and cities. It was European Green Capital in 2015 and there is impetus to build on the momentum and achieve sustainable city development goals.

Bristol City Council recognises the importance of public art in contributing to the vibrant cultural life of the city and is working with teams at the Watershed and Arnolfini and the DIY Arts Network to create a new Bristol Cultural Standard with pledges on best working practice in arts and culture.

The City's Strategy for Bristol Culture "City of Openness, Imagination and Originators" sees culture as central to the identity and life of the city and its economy and acknowledges its contribution to education, health and wellbeing. It seeks to increase cultural participation through partnership and leadership, recognising that there is inequality in terms of access, participation and ownership. It positions Bristol as a city of imagination, championing the radical and bold and supporting its creative practitioners to build a sustainable cultural sector. Cultural placemaking is central to the vision and the City facilitates culturally-led development through partnership and proactive planning policy.

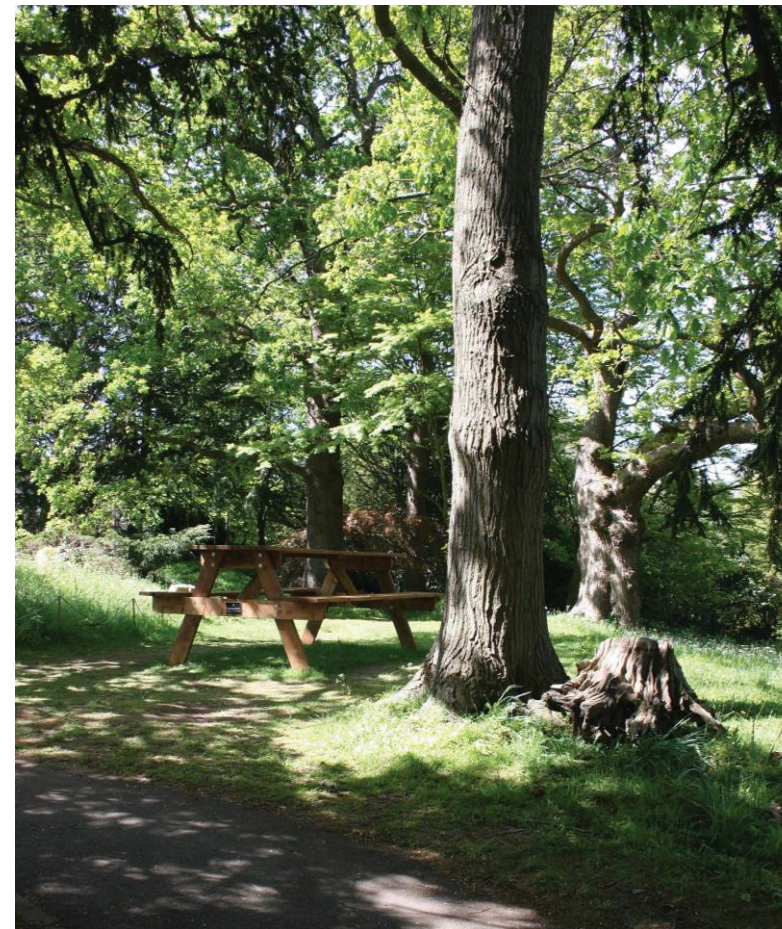
2.0 CONTEXT (Cont'd)

2.3 University Context

The University of Bristol is intertwined with the city of Bristol; sharing history and looking towards a future of cultural exchange. The vision of the global civic university embeds this relationship, placing the University in dialogue with the city, in a continuing exchange of knowledge, learning and culture. Public space plays an important role in fostering this exchange, and the University recognises the need to ensure that its public realm is truly open and permeable, welcoming all in accessible social space. Estates developments are extending the public realm and enriching the social and academic life of its communities. This development gives the University a once in a generation opportunity to embed its connection to its people and its neighbours.

Placemaking puts the wellbeing of students and staff central to the University and offers opportunities to connect and exchange with a diversity of participants in local communities and partner organisations, ensuring that everyone feels a sense of belonging to the University. The University recognises that this engagement with its audiences can be enhanced through collaborative cultural programming that is embedded into its developments and will ensure that the new areas and improved public realm offer sustainable futures for generations to come.

The public art programme sits within the existing cultural infrastructure of the University – its buildings, gardens and open spaces, existing artworks and the important special cultural collections. Through new campus developments it seeks to amplify the offer of its cultural assets, providing new ways to understand the character of the university and its place in the city.



Luke Jerram, *Shrinking Device*, 2018



Frank Benson, *Castaway*, 2016



Sarah Staton, *Edith and Hans*, 2016

3.0 PUBLIC ART PROGRAMME

3.1 Art Programme Principles

Commission principles provide a valuable tool for informing artist briefs and guiding commission directions. Establishing principles that reflect best practice in public art will help to generate widespread support and buy in for the public art programme. These principles will be applied across the University's public art activity and form the basis of evaluation for determining public art priorities.

VALUING EXCELLENCE

The public art programme will result in a collection of remarkable artworks and experiences that reflect the standing and reputation of the University. This can be achieved by creating open and inspiring briefs, allowing space for research, collaboration and co-production, and demonstrating a respect for the artist's creative process. In recognising the value of public art and by establishing inspirational art commissioning opportunities, the University will be a magnet to attract world-class artists engaging in innovative research and interdisciplinary practice.

PROMOTING COLLABORATION

At every level the University embraces collaboration and co-production. The public art programme will identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership working both internally and with external agencies, providing opportunities to support project funding, showcasing innovation and engaging diverse participants in the co-production of artworks. Public art should connect with a diverse spectrum of people – rich in authentic experiences and able to be appreciated by audiences young and old, from all walks of life and culture. Local and wider communities will be involved in the art programme both as participants and co-producers.

BEST PRACTICE DELIVERY

The strategy is grounded in practical and deliverable methodology that includes clear guidelines for delivery, best practice models for commissioning artists and a governance model that effectively engages key stakeholders and influencers. The programme will be delivered through transparent and accountable procurement processes, managed to a high standard and communicated through sensitive public engagement. The curation and delivery of public art will be supported by reputed curatorial and public art management expertise. The Bristol Cultural Standard currently in development will be applied as a benchmark for the University's public art programme.

INTEGRATED WITH DESIGN

New artworks will be integrated into existing spaces and existing collections with an understanding of how those spaces work currently, and how usage is expected to change over time. This understanding will be built through close collaboration with users/occupiers. The processes of commissioning public art will be closely aligned with the design of new places and spaces, how they are used and how art can be incorporated in unexpected and exciting ways. In the context of estates development, the exchange between the artworks and how new urban space develops is essential. The process of collaboration with design and construction teams will be built into the delivery process, seeking to bring creative input into the design of new places at the earliest opportunity.

3.0 ART PROGRAMME

3.2 Public Engagement

Bristol is a city rich in cultural resources and creative practitioners, and sees culture as a key driver for social and economic growth. The University's public art strategy helps deliver this agenda by developing innovative models of social engagement as an intrinsic part of public art programming.

A Model for Community Involvement

Co-creating with local and wider communities will be critical to the lasting success of the public art programme, ensuring that the people of Bristol feel a genuine sense of connection to the history and heritage of the University and are engaged in its future. These communities range from the staff and student body, residents and community groups, arts and cultural organisations alongside business and enterprise.

The public art strategy provides a substantial platform for existing and future communities to be involved in commission opportunities, working with artists in the development of their work and participating in creative activity. The model for co-production encourages participation in projects designed to draw from the collective knowledge and experience of the city's people and inviting contribution to conceptual and content development.

Partnership working is built into the delivery of public art, with cross-disciplinary exchange and collaborative research processes at the heart of the programme. The model uses co-production, social interaction, hospitality, research, and investigative processes to provide multiple layers of engagement for local communities.

A City of Art

The public art strategy recognises the extraordinary wealth of opportunity found in the local arts ecology in Bristol and the West of England Combined Authority. Tapping into this whether in terms of curation, resourcing or content will build connections with the local arts community and demonstrate the University's key role as a cultural provider in the city and wider area. The strategy seeks to contribute to the health and vitality of this ecology by providing a platform to involve and support the local creative sector.

In working with local cultural institutions – arts organisations, studios, artist networks and festival and event programmes – the strategy will put forward partnerships and shared projects that amplify the opportunities available for the Bristol and regional cultural sector.

Public art programmes will offer commission and participation platforms that encourage investment in the local and acknowledge the important skills and knowledge that local creative communities can offer. In delivering public art the University can contribute to professional practice through skills development, collaborative frameworks and supportive networks. The opportunity is for the University to position itself as a catalysing agent in developing the region's cultural offer.

Connecting and Communicating

As a highly visible manifestation of the University's work and place in the city, the public art programme can contribute significantly to the perception of its identity and purpose. Developing a focused approach to the coordination and communication of public art on campus will increase participation, accessibility and impact, building a stronger platform and identity for the University's public art practice. The central role of public art in the University's special collections is important to recognise and communicate – and mechanisms such as a brand identity for public art, a public art website/social media campaigns, documentation and interpretation, publications and archives can all generate engagement and understanding.

Opportunities for audiences to connect with artists' concepts and the production of artworks will be offered through a communications approach that 'tells the story' of public art throughout its development, for instance using artist's blogs, presentation of 'making of' documentation and artist-led events. Opportunities to align with existing events and promotional activities such as the Submerge Festival, Festival of Ideas etc will maximise audience reach and impact. A communications plan will be established as public art programmes are initiated.

3.0 ART PROGRAMME

3.3 The Role of Public Art

Public art and cultural animation will play an intrinsic part in the creation of a socially dynamic public realm, embedding the vision of the University of Bristol as a global civic University in shared public spaces that generate social interaction and an enhanced legibility through the site. In placemaking terms, public art can enhance and influence the experience of shared spaces in the following ways:

CONNECTED SPACE

Public art and creative approaches can programme the public realm at key points across the University, providing a distinctive identity to the University of Bristol with artwork that is integrated with University activity – teaching, learning and research. The public spaces of the University can be flagged as social realm that is genuinely open to all, and public art can assist intuitive wayfinding, creating connections between disparate sites to encourage the development of mental maps of the University and its City context, and a feeling of home and belonging.

Opportunities presented in the public realm include:

- Active and animated ground level frontages of key routes, entrances and buildings, encouraging the permeability of both external and internal public spaces
- Improved recognition and access at key arrival points and institutional thresholds
- Highlighted architecture as visual markers for orientation
- Narrative journeys – heritage and cultural trails that offer new ways to interpret and navigate the area
- Interventions in public realm that create moments of encounter and discovery

PROGRAMMED SPACE

Identifying key additions to public realm infrastructure can provide a platform for ongoing creative programming and expand the reach of the University's teaching, learning and research. Situated at navigation points and at places of rest and recreation, programmable platforms offer a sustainable and cost-effective way to display / produce cultural content. Activities can take place in interior or exterior public realm connecting public space inside buildings with the social realm outside.

Opportunities include:

- Developing infrastructure to provide platforms for ongoing content
- Temporary and pop up cultural spaces for outdoor performance, festivals and events, screenings and programmes
- Creative applications to sites in transition such as hoardings
- Digital content and applications, harnessing new technologies to create a playable, information rich and interactive University

SOCIAL SPACE

Developing the public realm to host events and participatory projects brings diverse communities together and provides mechanisms for social interaction through memorable experiences. Cultural programming can play a role in community building and creating well-defined neighbourhood identities. Spaces that encourage inclusive social participation will contribute to wider community cohesion. Opportunities include:

- Enhanced social spaces and platforms for shared experiences and events
- Spaces for play, learning and social interaction
- Amplifying the green offer and highlighting ecology and sustainability
- Commission processes that engage with communities through participatory practice
- Programming that reflects the pattern of the academic year and the changing types of use between vacation and term time

3.0 ART PROGRAMME

3.4 PUBLIC ART TYPOLOGIES

Public Art is not specific to a single artform, but rather, may be understood as a series of practices that encompass a variety of forms and approaches, temporary and permanent, that engage with the sites and situations of the public realm. Current developments in public art practice show an established pattern of artists engaging in research and collaborative processes, community engagement and cross-disciplinary practice, which is a hallmark of the University's approach to commissioning. The range of media that public art can embrace is as varied as the range of artist's practice today, and in the context of the University will be determined by the specific objectives and physical context of its existing spaces and estates redevelopments. The University's public art programme champions innovative and experimental artistic approaches, and the forms of public art that may be produced are varied. Consideration should be given to a breadth of artwork typologies, examples of which include:

ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS



PUBLIC REALM INTERVENTIONS



LAND INTERVENTIONS



FEATURE SCULPTURE



PAVILIONS & EVENT SPACES



PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVATION



PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMMES



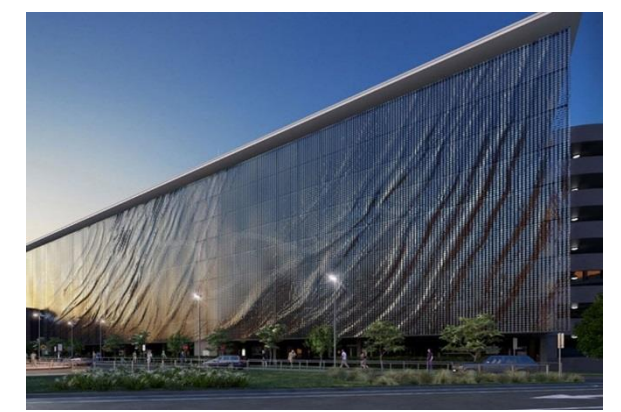
DIGITAL MEDIA & ONLINE



MURALS / STREET ART



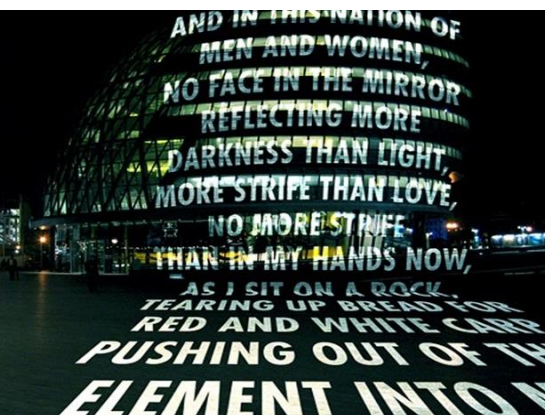
FAÇADE TREATMENTS



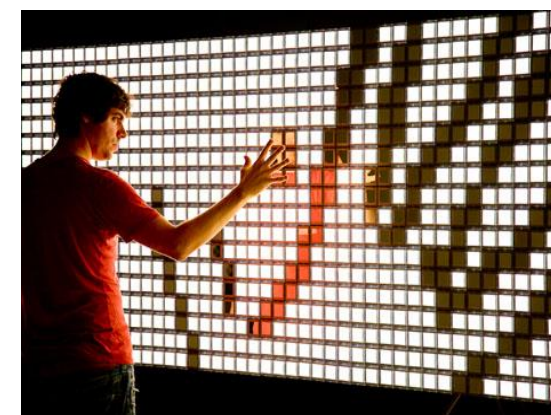
ANIMATED FRONTAGE



LIGHTING & PROJECTION



INTERACTIVE ART



DISTRIBUTED TRAILS



OUTDOOR CINEMA



