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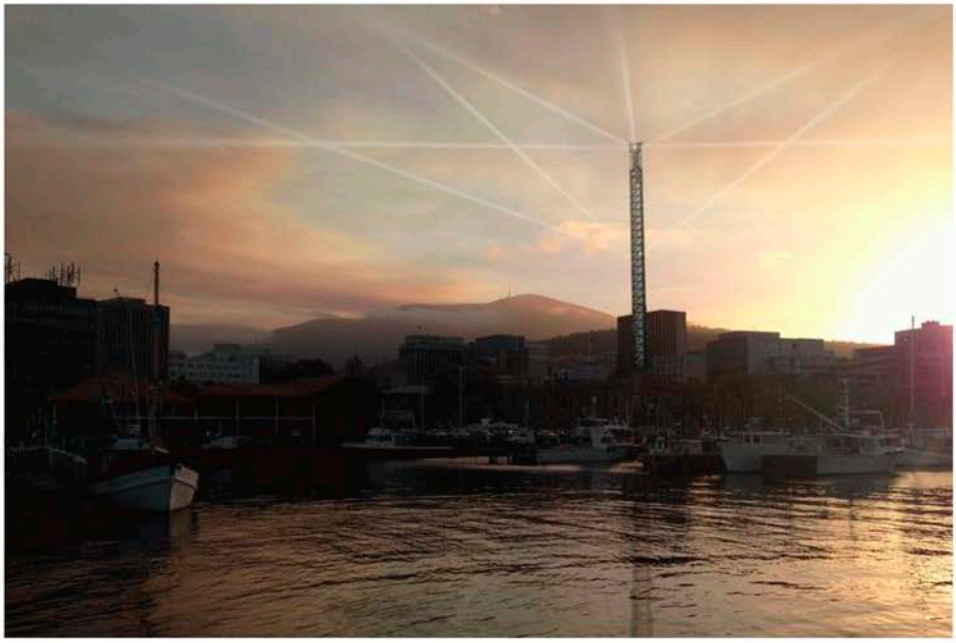
The Tower ...

Rebecca Fitzgibbon, Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) First pub: June 13 15.06.15



Public Forum Saturday 13 June 2015, 11am – 12pm
Odeon Theatre, 167 Liverpool St, Hobart

Art Tower is the first concept to be presented to the public as part of the Detached cultural precinct development in the old Mercury building in Hobart, Tasmania.

"Detached Art Tower is a powerful symbol of creativity, and a reflection of the people that live in this city. It will provide Hobart and Tasmania with a new cultural icon and attract domestic and international visitation. There is a groundswell of cultural activity in and around Hobart, and this is part of the next wave," said Leigh Carmichael, Detached Project Director.

On a 5000m2 site in Hobart's central business district, the Detached cultural precinct will include Detached gallery spaces, project spaces and public program spaces focussed on education and innovation across art, science and health.

Art Tower will provide a bold new platform for contemporary art as well as a connection point for public participation.

"David Walsh has shown what happens when you dream big. In collaboration with others, we take on the challenge and responsibility to build on Mona's success. In the development of this precinct, our intent is to contribute to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the City of Hobart and Tasmania" said Penny Clive, Detached Director.

The innovative tower design is a collaboration by architect Robert Morris-Nunn and structural-engineer Jim Gandy. A central lifting core will hydraulically raise and stack each level of prefabricated steel, creating a unique vertical assembly without the use of a crane.

Project Architect Robert Morris-Nunn said: "The 117-metre Art Tower is a semi-transparent steel structure with a diameter of six metres and a double helix set of stairs. The tower will be skinned in a fine mesh of warm-white LED lights. The tower has been designed around the challenge and experience of climbing up and down its 1300 plus individual steps - 650 ascending and 650 descending -making physical exertion an integral part of the experience."

The tower also celebrates Hobart and its natural landscape, offering visitors breathtaking panoramic views as they ascend and descend the transparent structure.

Art Tower will also have strong links to population health and scientific research. Through a partnership with the Menzies Research Institute, Art Tower will have a number of permanent interactive elements to gather health and bio data for Menzies Research Institute, such as heart rates and other health indicators.

"Detached has a strong commitment to advancing and challenging contemporary thinking across art, science and health. Through the Art Tower and precinct, Detached Cultural Organisation will collaborate with cultural, medical and science-based organsations (both local and international) and the public, in an ever-changing program and exploration", said Magdalena Lane, Detached Assistant Director.

Art Tower will present a changing collection of works commissioned from local and international artists. Acclaimed artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer was brought into the team to provide a leading role in the development of the project. Tasmanians will remember Lozano-Hemmer's Pulse Room (acquired as part of the Mona collection in 2008) and the large-scale interactive public artwork Articulated Intersect, from Dark Mofo 2014.

Among his contributions, Lozano-Hemmer has prepared a comprehensive plan for interactive audio-visual technologies that can make the tower a reprogrammable platform for artists working with sound, light and data.

Under the name Biometric Abstraction Lozano-Hemmer will develop three pieces for the tower when it opens to the public in June 2017.

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer said: "As with my previous works, Biometric Abstraction relies on public participation to create unique, personalized experiences. The voices, movements and vital signs of visitors will provide the content of the piece itself, creating a connective experience between people and the city."

Lozano-Hemmer will travel to Hobart to present these concepts in detail during a public forum, to be held at the Odeon Theatre on Saturday 13 June at 11am.

The Detached cultural precinct and Art Tower will be delivered and funded by Detached Cultural Organisation, a not-for-profit organisation established in Tasmania in 2008. Detached offers an independent platform for the initiation and presentation of contemporary art, science, education and health projects.

To date, Detached has delivered major contemporary art exhibitions and projects with Tasmanian, Australian and international artists including Patricia Piccinini's Evolution at Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), Mike Parr's Tilted Stage at TMAG, Chiharu Shiota's In Silence at Detached 7 Campbell St, and Yin Xiuzhen's Washing River 2014 at Mawson Place on Hobart's waterfront. Since 2007, Detached has worked with and funded the Access Art program at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Project Manager Dean Coleman (SolutionsWon) said: "Internationally unique, the Detached cultural precinct and Art Tower offer a challenging project and an opportunity to work with Tasmanian and international excellence across art, architecture, engineering and creativity."

The Detached Art Tower concept team includes:

- Detached Cultural Organisation Director Penny Clive
- Internationally acclaimed artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer
- Detached Cultural Organisation Project Director Leigh Carmichael
- Detached Cultural Organisation Assistant Director Magdalena Lane
- Circa Morris-Nunn Architects – Robert Morris-Nunn and David Johnston
- SolutionsWon Project Manager Dean Coleman

During Dark Mofo 2015, a temporary light installation Pulse Column by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer will be installed to highlight the site of the proposed Art Tower.

It is anticipated the precinct including DetachedArt Tower will be complete and open in June 2017.

Tasmanian Premier Will Hodgman said: "There is no doubt that Mona turned the world's spotlight south, firmly to Tasmania. Art Tower has the potential to illuminate our state even more. While so many Tasmanian success stories are credited with starting small but thinking big, what's unique in this is the Art Tower team's ability to skip to the colossal. The proposed Detached Art Tower will serve to inspire."

VIDEO: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UN2U4VUFtYM