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**Re Linking Laverton
Art and Design Project 2010**

Art and Design Concept

Visual Art

Title COMPANIONS
Viewer engaging, site specific, sculptural installation of 17 elements

Description

17 square “pillars” of a little more than male, female and child life height, with mirror surfaces, are positioned on 5 different sites along the pathway between Bladin Street and Thomas Street. They mirror their environment including viewers and other pillars. Furthermore on each panel a pair of stylized eyes is engraved, which seem to hover between the real and the reflected. The surface of the pillars and the engraved eyes appear different according to light and environment and thus are active by their own accord. They engage in a viewing game with their environment and passers-by as much as they are a metaphor on seeing and being seen in a public place.

Size 5 Pillars 250mm x 250mm x 2400mm
5 Pillars 210mm x 210mm x 2000mm
7 Pillars 170mm x 170mm x 1600mm

Location

See attachment

Material and Construction

Each of the square pillars are fabricated with 40mm RHS (rolled hollow section) 308 welded stainless steel.
Each side and top will be covered with 1.2mm thick 308 stainless steel sheet “Number 8” (Mirror) finish.
Each pillar will be bolted to a concrete footing with 4 - 16mm ss bolts (this will be verified by an engineer before fabrication).

A Pair of eyes will be engraved on each steel panel (4 pairs on each pillar)
Engraving will be done by the artist

Construction Drawing: See attachment

Landscaping

No benches in current locations, native grasses to be planted around the single pillar on Bladin Street and in the triangle where the pathway forks into Thomas Street.

Content

The proposed work is about *seeing* and *being seen*; about having companions and being companion at a certain time in a certain space. Furthermore it is about observing what happens and reflecting on what has happened in a certain space at a certain time. Subsequently that amounts to generating self-perceptions, gossip, recollections and local history, which is always attributed to a certain place.

Hence, the installation *Companions* consists of actors - mirror finished steel pillars of approx. life size with a pair of eyes engraved on each side. They mirror their environment and with their eyes indicate the process of interpretation. The McCormack Park pathway is the stage for them. *Companions* perform the play of observation and reflection. They show us how space becomes place. However, for people passing along the pathway they turn from actors into companions of their wanderings. They eventually become part of a place which they in return help shaping.

Viewer Engagement

Reflecting surfaces and engraved eyes invite viewers to investigate the various appearances of the *Companions*. According to light conditions and viewing position they will appear different every time. Thus, the viewers are drawn into investigating the installation every time they pass along the pathway. Additionally the landscaping is set up to allow for access of the pillars. Viewer engagement is integral part of the installation.

School Project

Title: GOSSIP

Description

- Within the area of the installation users of a free iPhone application can listen to what *Companions* talk to each other
- Students collect and design content of the recorded conversations
- Content and management of the application will be in the hands of the school and can be altered by the school in the future

Content

- Debate about seeing and being seen in a public place
- Debate about how self-perception and image are generated
- Debate about freedom and limits of a place
- Debate about power structures within a place
- Based on the management of the application by the school: Observation of changes of student opinions on the mentioned aspects over time
- Optional: computer science project for interested students

School Project Management

- iPhones are chosen because of their documented and accessible architecture
- Research assistant from Melbourne University will be hired for 2 weeks programming, 1 week tutorial with students plus documentation and launch
- Artist in collaboration with teachers will introduce the art project *Companions* and the related student project
- Artist will assist with collecting and designing content (mp3 files, design with freeware)