

Case study

Gold Coast Art Festival

Details

What:

The Gold Coast Art Festival was a 21-day community art festival which included the delivery of the International Stone Song Sculpture Symposium.

The Gold Coast Art Centre in Evandale Park, Bundall, was the new venue for the fourth year of the festival and an estimated 10,000 visitors to the park enjoyed the art and craft market, sculpture display incorporating pop-up galleries and artist-run workshops.

The 10-day Stone Song Sculpture Symposium, held as part of the festival, provided the public with the chance to witness master sculptors in action, carving large stone blocks to reveal the art works within. Five leading national and international sculptors were invited to participate in the third annual sculpture symposium. The featured artists included Fabian Saeren from Belgium, Tran Hoang Co from Vietnam, Luke Zwolsman from Australia, Seung-Woo Hwang from Korea and Birgit Grapentin from Australia.

When:

March 2014

Where:

Gold Coast

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$37,000 – Projects and Programs Fund



Sculptor Fabian Saeren at work

Key stats:

- 43 new works created including five public art sculptures
- 10,000 attendees
- 8 workshops conducted

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Links:

Facebook - Gold Coast Art Festival

<https://www.facebook.com/www.goldcoastartfestival.com.au>

Facebook - Stone Song Sculpture Symposium

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Stone-Song-Sculpture-Symposium/110957052303624>

Outcomes

- The sculptors involved in the Stone Song Sculpture Symposium completed five new international standard public artworks. The international sculptors were also able to share skills and artistic knowledge with local sculptors, artists and the community members who attended the event.
- Cr Lex Bell and the Gold Coast City Council have graciously accepted the five symposium sculptures and these works will be displayed throughout the Gold Coast cultural precinct. For the overseas artists, this is the first time their works will be on public display in Australia.
- Important new relationships were forged with the Bleach Festival and the Gold Coast Arts Centre.
- Media coverage was excellent and consistent throughout the festival—NBN Gold Coast News, Nine Gold Coast News, Gold Coast Bulletin and the Gold Coast Sun provided regular editorials and news clips.
- Festival organisers are currently in negotiations with LJ Hooker Surfers Paradise and the Surfers Paradise Alliance to reactivate empty commercial spaces for artists to use as artist-run galleries.



Artist Seung-Woo Hwang and Cr Lex Bell with Hwang's sculpture

Participant feedback

- *Seeing the sculptures regularly at the festivals over the years I have begun to recognise specific artists and it has taken me from simply visiting sculpture shows like this and Swell to now visiting art galleries, which I just would never have done. Now being able to talk to the sculptors as they are making the work gives me a greater insight and education to how they do their works—I recognise Luke Zwolsman ... and now seeing him ACTUALLY carving one of his pieces and talking to him, WOW! Thank you so much for putting this together.*
- *The Symposium was wonderful, what a marvelous event to see and to talk with the artists.*
- *What an education!*

Learnings and reflections

Festival organiser, Frederic Berjot, was pleased that his negotiations with the Gold Coast City Council had resulted in them reviewing the Council Procurement Policy, to allow sculptors involved in the symposium to automatically have their completed artworks installed into public spaces. He believes this will open the door for more international sculptors to participate in the Stone Song Sculpture Symposium knowing that their work would be exhibited publicly on the Gold Coast. Frederic had a few other thoughts for the future:

As we progress towards the 2018 Commonwealth Games the introduction of an international sculpture symposium incorporating the Commonwealth countries would be a valuable inclusion in the exposition of Queensland culture.

We will encourage our committee to commence advertising at least three months prior to the event, and during this time develop in-depth relationships with media partners, sponsors and supporters. We will also contact the ethnic communities the international sculptors are from to be involved in the welcome of the international artists. We will speak with the principals of local schools to encourage them to bring classes to visit the event as part of their arts and culture curriculum.