



David Edwin Thomas

Project Manager (Public Arts)

Designer / Arts Strategist

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I am an accomplished design thinker, strategist and project manager, with a strong interest in how art and creativity can positively affect the urban public realm.

I have worked for the past 12 years within a local government setting, collaborating with artists, designers, architects and communities to create site-specific and unique public art projects.

From 25-years' experience in the arts/design field, I bring enthusiasm, experience, formal training, a broad art/design/production knowledge base, and a honed critical eye for developing potential from concepts and then realising them as projects.

I have a talent for fostering collaboration within projects, and for encouraging and delivering innovative results and 'the unexpected' from artists/creatives and project teams that I collaborate with and/or manage.

QUALIFICATIONS

Master of Art & Design (Auckland University of Technology, 2009)

Bachelor of Design (3-Dimensional, Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, 1994)

SKILLS

- Vision and ability for developing quality design-led public projects, in collaboration with artists/creatives, technical specialists and stakeholders (scope, design, produce (develop, fabricate, install)).
- Excellent project management capabilities – competencies in working within project parameters and timeline and budget limitations to meet anticipated project goals.
- Public consultation, communication and problem-strategising skills – developed ability for quality engagement and collaboration in varied-scale project teams to develop site/purpose specific projects.

- Ability to work successfully with divergent artists/creatives, media/technical experts and stakeholders to produce cohesive, diverse and high-quality project outputs.
- Experienced in the use of a wide range of design approaches, media/materials, production methods and linked to diverse and resourceful artist/creative networks.

STRENGTHS

- I work well in small or larger teams to foster collaborative and positive working cultures, focused on project objectives.
- I have proven ability to work well with people from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, arts/design disciplines and vocational areas – enabling art/creative and technical disciplines.
- I am good at cultivating productive relationships with artists, creative practitioners, communities & stakeholders to foster & develop exceptional project outcomes.
- I bring experience and insight to projects through having held various roles across the arts and creative industry sectors – on projects for museums, television, festivals and local government (public arts & culture development).
- I am a resourceful and creative practitioner – able to apply design-thinking, project management acumen, insight & humour to successfully and innovatively progress the development of projects.

CURRENT ROLE (Nov 2010 -)

Project Manager

Arts & Culture
(Public Art)

Auckland Council

Management of public art projects across Auckland city and scoping for new public art projects. Simultaneously-active projects may be in different phases – e.g. scoping, artist selection, preliminary or detailed design, fabrication and installation.

Some of these projects produce ‘stand-alone’ (monumental) public art outcomes for open space areas. Some projects involve artists developing integrated artwork elements – frequently through mana whenua (local Māori) and community engagement – and sometimes in conjunction with large amenity projects (libraries, community facilities, parks & streetscape areas etc). Some combine more than one output.

Project art budgets typically range from £75K up to £500K.

Key Responsibilities

- Liaise with the project development teams – to identify, scope and curate opportunities for temporary and permanent public art development.
- Coordinate the selection and briefing processes for artists/creatives for key public art opportunities, with emphasis on proven ability and project synergy.
- Work with artist(s) to refine artwork concepts and to find innovative approaches for artwork realisation that complements project goals and perceived outcomes – including, where required, engagement of mana whenua (local Māori) and stakeholder communities.

- Engage thoroughly and collaboratively with project team members and project stakeholders – accordingly within the project setting or in relation to tikanga (indigenous protocols) – to ensure high-quality project outcomes.
- Manage the staged and on-time/on-budget development and production of the artist/creative’s monumental artwork or integrated artwork features within a parent project, including: concept realisation; preliminary and detailed design; fabrication; installation; and project launch and closure.

Selected projects viewable [on my website](#).

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT (Selected)

Waitakere City Council (03/2006 – 10/2010)

- Public Art Project Manager: Project management of monumental & integrated public artworks citywide – for public spaces, public facilities & parkland areas.
(This role is very similar to current – with Auckland regional city councils having been integrated into a ‘super-city’ single body, Auckland Council in 2010.)

Splore festivals, Auckland region (2006 & 2008)

- Curator and producer of the visual arts for 3-day music and arts festival.

MF Films – “NZ At Home” television series, TVNZ (2004-05)

- Researcher: NZ Architectural History (Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, screened 2006).

Puke Ariki Museum & Heritage Centre, New Plymouth (2003–04)

- Preparator: mount making/installation permanent/temporary museum galleries.

Auckland War Memorial Museum (2002)

- Designer, “Weird and Wonderful” – Children’s Discovery Centre: artisan design.

Screentime Communicado Ltd, “The Big Art Trip I & II”, TVNZ (2001–02)

- Research and production: NZ arts programme development.

Canterbury Museum, Christchurch (2001)

- Designer: ‘Living Rooms Exhibition’ – design and exhibition installation.

Unitec – Faculty of Architecture and Design, Auckland (1999 – 2001)

- Lecturer: Critical Studies studio leader and 3D Design studio tutor.

Auckland War Memorial Museum (1999 – 2000)

- Preparator: Māori Natural History exhibit design and mount-making.

Richard Priest Architects, Auckland (1995)

- Designer: architectural fittings and furniture design.

PERSONAL ARTS/DESIGN PRACTICE – SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Carried Away: Bags Unpacked, Auckland Museum (June 2019)

A Different View: artists address pornography, Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland University (Aug 2013)

Encounter: New Zealand Design and Decorative Arts, Exhibition of works from the collection of Auckland Museum (2007 – present)

Her Majesty's Pleasure (Kunitunga), Objectspace Gallery, Auckland (June 2006)

Bombay Sapphire Design Room, Urbis / Air New Zealand Fashion Week (October 2004)

Fibre and Fairylights: Contemporary Responses to Kete Māori, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt (December 2002)

Dowse to Go, Dowse Art Museum/NZ Arts Festival Wellington (February 2002)

Reclaimed, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt (December 2001)

Transparency Exhibition, The Film Archive/Centre, Wellington (August 2001)

Risk: Transformative Practices, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin and the Bishop Suter Art Gallery, Nelson (June – February 2000)

Indicator – Studio Exhibitions, Auckland (December 1998 - 2003)

Woven Path Touring Exhibition

The Netherlands (1995-96)

Nijmegen Ethnological Museum, Nijmegen

Volkenkundig Museum, Groningen

Reinwardt Academie van Museologie, Amsterdam

New Zealand (1996-97)

Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre, Gisborne

Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt

Rotorua Museum of Art and History, Rotorua

Southland Museum of Art and History, Invercargill

Taki tahi: Multi-cultural weaving, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (June 1994)

PERSONAL ARTS PRACTICE – VISUAL ARTS COLLECTIONS

Dowse Art Museum, Wellington, NZ (2001)

James Wallace Charitable Art Collection, Auckland, NZ (2001, 2003)

Wing Nut Films (Peter Jackson), Wellington, NZ (2000)

Auckland Museum, Auckland, NZ (1998)

REFEREES

Tracey Williams

Service and Asset Planning Specialist
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(Prev: Creative Strategist, Arts & Culture)
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Reference attached



07/03/2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Mr David Thomas

It is my pleasure to write in support of David Thomas. I first met David in 2013 when he was appointed as the Auckland Council Public Art Team's project manager for a public artwork we had been selected to create, named *Rainbow Machine*. The project has since come to fruition and has been highly successful. This is no small part due to David's dedication, skill and experience.

Over the past 5 years David has been a tireless advocate for not only our project, but also the importance of public art within the city and of artists who create work in the public realm. His stewardship of *Rainbow Machine* through consultation with multiple stakeholder groups, regulatory authorities, political groups and vast numbers of local and international consultants and fabricators has been highly impressive. David is so skilful in his management of complex processes and groups of varied personalities that through our professional dealings I have learnt a great deal from him.

He is respected, and moreover liked, by all of those he works with. So much so that he is regarded as a friend by many of us. This is not a trait I can say is common amongst the project managers I have worked with in my professional career or in my academic life with the University of Auckland.

David is a person with an uncanny way of finding solutions when others see only roadblocks. His vision in seeing the desired destination of a project and/or artist and then navigating through the various stages in order to achieve this, is done with substantial tenacity. His ability to adapt and his own substantial

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knowledge in the fields of art and design make him an invaluable team member.

Alongside his ability to lead complex and challenging projects, David's integrity and professional ethics are possibly his greatest quality. In his dealings with members of the public, private institutions, community organisations, commercial entities and various local government representatives, David always demonstrates his fairness and unshakable ethics.

I wholeheartedly recommend David to you and wish him well in the next stage of his career abroad.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarosh Mulla', is written over a light blue dotted background.

Dr Sarosh Mulla
Director
Pac Studio Limited



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