



Sky-high optimism

Uplifting artwork reaches new heights on a prominent Sydney apartment building.

At a time when Sydney needs it most, an inspiring new mural titled *As One Door Closes, Another Opens* has been unveiled at a prominent junction near Sydney's Kings Cross Station. Mere metres away from the iconic Coca Cola sign, the radiant artwork covers what was previously a blank white wall on the side of the 18 storey Top of the Town apartment building.

The work is multi-disciplinary artist and designer Will Cooke's most significant project to date; one that he hopes will encourage the city's communities to re-engage with all the eccentricities and opportunities that Sydney has to offer. Its design is comprised of two doors, painted in swathes of saturated Resene colours that appear to open and close in geometric perpetuity.









"The influence behind it draws on the simplest of utilitarian objects: the common door. Not just any door, though; this opening refers to the progressive designs of modernist architect Jean Prouve," explains Will. "Prouve designed a suite of demountable buildings in 1944 to combat the shortage of immigrant housing

after WWII ended in France. The cornerstone of each structure was a tall, open, aluminium door that allowed light and air to pass through freely. In this instance, function followed form completely."

"I've been influenced by the power of colour and how it can transform one's emotional and physical experience of space," he continues. "I hope that the artwork acts as a visual olive branch to the public, drawing them back into the city for revitalisation and giving them space for contemplation. The work is for the Sydney public of all ages and demographics, and I see it as a portal into a more positive and energised post-pandemic future."

The building itself has an interesting history within the local community. "It was originally called the Top of the Cross Motel and housed an infamous nightclub until the late 90s. In 1980, Tropicana Café opened at the base of the building and housed the first Tropicana Short Film Festival. This evolved into Tropfest – the world's largest short film festival, which is still operating today," says Will.

left: Will used Resene Lumbersider to create his mural, titled *As One Door Closes, Another Opens* – which won a Resene Total Colour Commercial Exterior Colour Maestro Award. "Since it faces full sunlight at all hours of the day, we were after a hardwearing yet bright and punchy exterior-appropriate acrylic." To create the illusion of a door opening and closing in perpetuity, Will chose a palette of Resene Southern Cross, Resene Supernova, Resene Hit Pink, Resene Glorious, Resene Glamour Puss, Resene Smitten, Resene Scrumptious, Resene Wewak, Resene Cupid, Resene Melanie, Resene Twilight, Resene Confederate Grey, Resene Tropical Blue, Resene Charlotte and half strength Resene Spray.

	Resene Southern Cross		Resene Melanie
	Resene Supernova		Resene Glorious
	Resene Hit Pink		Resene Glamour Puss
	Resene Cupid		Resene Smitten



“When Covid-19 struck, I felt the community needed a reintroduction to what the City of Sydney has to offer, both physically and metaphorically. Given that Top of the Town is so culturally rich and is literally at the top of the town, my project found its ideal home.”

Will says he chose to use Resene products for their outstanding coverage and the quality of colours available. “When choosing the colour scheme for my project, I wanted a colour palette that was almost obnoxious in its positivity. Each major colour of the mural represents a different key theme of the project. For example, Resene Scrumptious represents engagement, Resene Wewak is for resilience and Resene Happy is for acceptance. Resene allowed me to achieve these messages with absolute clarity.”

After much research, it was Resene Lumbersider waterborne low sheen that offered the qualities he was after in a paint formula. “I sampled lots of other paint brands before deciding, and Resene was a cut above the rest.”

The project was also a great opportunity for Will to collaborate with Elliott and Billie Routledge, the husband-and-wife duo behind Funstudio. “Elliott and I have been friends for over 10 years and working with Funstudio has been a longtime goal. Their main role is to facilitate public art projects as producers, assisting in all aspects leading up to activation. Over the past

few years, they’ve worked alongside many notable contemporary artists like Reko Rennie, Ash Keating and Nadia Hernandez,” he says.

When it came to paint application, Will reached out to experienced and trusted assistants Jarryd Lynagh, Vieri Landini and James Lesjak-Atton for help. “We initially set about the wall with 270mm wide rollers, but the surface was so heavily rendered that the roller covers would skip over the bumps – making it very tricky to get the colour down. As a result, we painted the entire space using smaller 160mm rollers.”

Though many depend on painter’s masking tape to ensure crisp edges, very little was used on this project. Will’s talented team produced most of the design’s sharp lines through a combination of chalk and careful precision.

“To be honest, it was the choice to use Resene that allowed my project to go challenge-free, and we actually completed the project ahead of schedule as a result. The project was initially expected to take two weeks, but we completed it a lot quicker than we originally thought. It ended up taking only 48 hours over 6 days to get the job done.”

For those eager to spread a message and make their mark through public art, Will offers some optimistic advice. “The City of Sydney puts out a tender each year for various public art projects under their Art and

About Festival programming. I have had friends enter projects over the years and each spoke very highly of their individual experience. As a result, I pitched quite literally the biggest idea I could muster and thankfully got through. There were three rounds of submissions and roughly 700 applicants. I’m still pinching myself that I was given the opportunity to realise a long hoped for goal.”

“If you have a big idea you feel isn’t possible to actualise, there are ways and means to get your project going,” encourages Will. “Never in a million years did I think my artwork would be gracing the side of a major public building in the heart of Kings Cross, watching over the Coca Cola sign. It sounds corny, but it really is a dream come true – and I’m so chuffed that my project is already being embraced the way it was intended.” **BW**

For more information on the City of Sydney’s Art and About programme, visit www.artandabout.com.au.

design Will Cooke,

www.instagram.com/williamcookestudio

painting Will Cooke, Jarryd Lynagh, Vieri Landini,

James Lesjak-Atton

production Funstudio, www.afunstudio.com

project management Liza Bahamondes, City of Sydney

images Chris Southwood, City of Sydney

Resene
Happy

Resene
Wewak

Resene
Scrumptious

left: Will says that the colour design process for the project was surprisingly straightforward and his initial colour palette was embraced with open arms. “I provided three separate colour choices, with one marked as my preference. Given the project was about embodying progression and positivity, my project manager at the City of Sydney, Liza Bahamondes, agreed the colours needed to be almost obnoxious in their positivity.” Vivid yellow and pinks, Resene Happy, Resene Scrumptious and Resene Wewak, covered the largest areas.

Resene
Rum Swizzle

Resene
Twilight

Resene
Confederate Grey

Resene
Tropical Blue

Resene
Charlotte

Resene
Spray