

MEDIA RELEASE

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Moss and mud poems bring life to Paddington Reservoir Gardens



Locally sourced mud and moss will be used to create an outdoor gallery of poetry on the walls of Sydney's iconic Paddington Reservoir Gardens.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP said *Modern Day Mossages* will feature words and phrases by emerging Sydney poets paying tribute to John Thompson – founder of Australia's first resident action group the Paddington Society.

"Paddington is one of Sydney's most exclusive and charming heritage areas, filled with historic terrace houses, local designers, stylish bars and restaurants and elegant boutiques," Ms Moore said.

"Residents in the Paddington Society have spent decades protecting the unique architecture and history of their neighbourhood and without their tireless passion – Paddington would not exist as it does today."

Modern Day Mossages is the brainchild of Popperbox, a collective of Sydney artists with backgrounds in illustration, design, fine art, comics and software engineering. Haline Ly from Surry Hills will be working in collaboration with Sonya Gee to write a moss poem on the reservoir walls that will quietly explore growth, nourishment, rejuvenation and the future.

"Paddington Reservoir Gardens is such an unusual and intriguing space, where you can step down from the hustle and bustle of Oxford Street into chambers that will soon be filled with live moss and mud, telling stories of the past," they said.

"We aspire to create something that will reassure and embolden those who would come to see the poem, something that will expand their awareness beyond their immediate and daily concerns."

"Just as the reservoir gardens are concealed and moss lives a quiet and slightly fragile life, the poems will be present yet subtle, offering a message of gentle encouragement."

"We're a group of local artists and to be able to artistically transform this historic site is a real privilege."

The Lord Mayor said the artwork will help activate the award winning Paddington Reservoir site, encouraging more people to explore. Members of the public will be able to wander through the gardens and see the exhibition from Saturday 25th February 2012 to Sunday 1st April 2012. The gardens are open from 25th February to 1st April 2012, seven days a week.



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“The magical Paddington Reservoir Gardens are like no other State Heritage listed space in Sydney and this project will help showcase new creative uses of one of our city’s most unique public spaces,” Ms Moore said.

The City of Sydney invited Expressions of Interest from artistic and creative groups to design temporary art installations, photographic or other exhibitions. *Modern Day Messages* is one of three projects which will help activate the space over the next 12 months.

The Paddington Reservoir Gardens were given a magical makeover, transforming the historic ruin into a new public playground with a water feature fish pond, lawns, flower beds and shaded seating.

Designed by the City Engineer, Edward Bell, the Paddington Reservoir was a key element in Sydney’s early water supply. The former underground reservoir consisted of two 1,023 square metre chambers built in 1866 and 1878 respectively.

The historic reservoir structure reopened in 2009 after a \$10 million restoration which includes a sunken garden within the ruins of the western chamber, preserved vivid graffiti art in the eastern chamber and architectural lighting highlighting beautiful timber work and stunning stone throughout the site.

The new open space and cultural facility restores the civic precinct, linking to Paddington Town Hall, the Post Office and historic Juniper Hall. Paddington Reservoir Gardens has already been described as a combination of the Baths of Caracalla and The Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Paddington Reservoir Gardens Awards:

- 2011 - Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence: Asia Pacific.
- 2010 - International Architecture Award, The Chicago Athenaeum and The European Centre for Architecture, Art, Design and Urban Studies
- 2010 - National Australian Institute of Architects Award for Urban Design.
- 2010 - National Australian Institute of Architects Heritage Award.
- 2010 - Lloyd Rees Award for Urban Design, Australian Institute of Architecture (NSW) Awards.
- 2010 - Greenway Award for Heritage, Australian Institute of Architecture (NSW)
- The 2010 - Australian Medal for Landscape Architecture, Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture.
- 2009 - The Australia Award for Urban Design, Planning Institute of Australia.
- 2009 - Landscape Architecture Medal, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.
- 2009 - Design Excellence Award, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (NSW).
- 2009 - Officer of the Valuer General Heritage Award, Australian Property Institute.

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