Public Art and Residual Urban Spaces

The Case for Informal Public Art in Stockholm

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THE CASE FOR INFORMAL PUBLIC ART IN STOCKHOLM

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While Stockholm has made significant investments in formal public art throughout the inner city and suburbs, the city has a lack of informal public art. Defined as a feature or work produced by a person who considers themselves to be an artist or crafts person, located in a place accessible to and used by the public, public art can be either formal or informal. Informal public art generally has no formal process, with flexibility on the temporal nature of the work, materials and subject. This allows the artwork to inhabit spaces which are overlooked or underinvested in by formal public art commissioning bodies, and not have to follow formal public art requirements which are part of the broken “public art machine”. (Phillips, 1988).

Much of Stockholm’s urban environment is considered beautiful, has heritage value and/or is protected. But Stockholm also hosts many spaces in between – spaces that hold the city together, including infrastructure, bridges, alleys, and the places under and between them. These spaces can be labelled as a city’s residual spaces (Villagomez, 2010), and are where informal public art can be utilised to make these spaces into places. This study outlines the importance of and background to public art in the context of Stockholm.

A survey of Stockholm’s residents, visitors and potential future visitors established how they feel about public art in the city, as well as in residual urban spaces, and to what extent it assists with establishing a place connection. This was accompanied by onsite interventions and observational analysis which challenged the way residual urban spaces are being used in Stockholm, and developed a case for how informal public art can be incorporated in the city’s residual urban spaces.
I could not have done this project without the help and support of many people. Biggest thanks to my supervisor Katrina Johnston-Zimmerman whose friendliness, patience and ever-present availability (despite being in a totally different time zone) when I was stuck or stressing was just as helpful to me as her interesting and insightful advice about public life analysis and survey creation.

Also, to my friends and family here and everywhere for their enthusiasm about my topic, for sending me articles and pictures of public art from all over the world and always being keen for a catch up call.

Special mentions to Simón Fique for all his help but especially for assisting me with putting up my posters quickly and sneakily, Jon Nilsson for kindly helping me translate my survey into Swedish, and Miri Badger for letting me use some of her stunning paintings in my survey and for my cover page. Thanks so much!
Public art can be a form of expression for many different purposes, and can be used as a tool to improve and engage people with space. Author of the book Public Art (Now) Claire Doherty stated that “Great public art challenges authority and forces us to rethink our relationship with the world around us” (King, 2015).

Stockholm is a city which embraces and invests heavily in public art. Formal public art can be seen everywhere – sculptures line streets in the city and pathways in the suburbs, murals can be found colouring walls in Södermalm and beyond, there are works that move, works that light up, works that make sound. In comparison; however, the city has very little informal public art. To see it one must search for it, and be aware of what one is looking for. While tagging is prevalent on most surfaces – inner-city and outer – art itself is not.

This project looks at how public art contributes to place in Stockholm, with the view that a greater ‘sense of place’ can be attained through the incorporation of public art within a space. The relationship between place and informal, unsanctioned public art is also a key focus. The opportunity to utilise informal public art to enliven residual urban spaces in Stockholm is investigated.
research focus and questions

To what extent does public art contribute to peoples’ connection with a place?

How does this vary between formalised public art and informal street art?

How can informal public art be used to develop an identity for “in-between” or “residual” spaces in Stockholm?

Should Stockholm embrace informal public art in residual urban spaces, and how can this be done?

why study this?

This project aims to establish to what extent public art, both formal and informal, contributes to peoples’ connection with a place, and how it can benefit urban areas.

While there is an array of literature on public art dating back several decades, the literature on street art is not so available. This is a point brought up in a recent article from 2017, “In search of academic legitimacy: The current state of scholarship on graffiti and street art. The article states “An increasing, though limited, number of academic venues focused on graffiti and street art scholarship has slowly emerged.” (Ross, et al., 2017).

This field is inconsistently and relatively unstudied, in comparison to other aspects of the urban environment. The project takes a multi-tiered approach, whereby several methods will be used to gain an understanding of the topic.

Little systematic research has been carried out on the public’s perception of public art, and especially within the context of Stockholm. Interesting findings were discovered through a similar study undertaken in Brisbane which compared “sanctioned” and “unsanctioned” public art (Cavendish, 2017), and it is thought that some of these methods can be applied to the Swedish / Stockholm context.

The evaluation of and onsite research into public art (and particularly “street art” studies) receives little funding, and there is a lack of certainty about the social-science criteria and methods which are best applied to public art (Hall and Robertson, 2001). Also present in the academic world is the unquestioning and common acceptance of public art, without significant understanding of why (Zebracki et al., 2010).
Yi-Fu Tuan writes in *Space and Place – The Perspective of Experience* about the differences between “space and “place”. He writes that “Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other ... Planners would like to evoke ‘a sense of place’.” (Tuan, 1977). He goes on to say that space and place are “basic components of the lived world” and as such we take them for granted. However, it should also be noted that in recent time “space” was considered to be an idea of an “empty area” – a “strictly geometrical meaning.” (Lefebvre, 1991).

The dictionary doesn’t differentiate greatly between the terms, stating the noun to mean:

**Place** /ˈpleɪs/  
**Noun**  
a particular position, point, or area in space; a location.

In comparison space implies an empty area, rather than a location:

**Space** /ˈspeɪs/  
**Noun**  
a continuous area or expanse which is free, available, or unoccupied.

Why is the concept of space even so important? Edward Relph addresses this concisely in his foreword to the reprint version of *Place and Placelessness* (2008) that “Place, both as a concept and as a phenomenon of experience ... has a remarkable capacity to make connections between self, community, and earth...”. He continues that “...it is the intimate and specific basis for how each of us connects with the world, and how the world connects with us. In this respect I have come to think that sense of place has the potential to serve as a pragmatic foundation for addressing the profound local and global challenges, such as megacity growth, climate change, and economic disparity, that are emerging in the present century.” (Relph, 2008).

The identity of place as defined by Kevin Lynch, and summarised by Relph, defined it as that which is distinct from other places, or unique / individual, and is thus distinguishable from other places as a separate entity (Lynch, 1960). Elements such as memorability, connection and engagement with place, an opportunity to have ownership or address an issue, and the temptation to spend time due to the experience that can be had in the place, can be derived as being those that build a place from a space.
defining public space

Following these more general views and before defining public art it is important to establish the meaning and definition of public space. There are many definitions ranging from places that are public owned, to those that are physically publicly accessible or visually accessible, to those that are cost-free (ie. not galleries or metro stations with a fee required for access).

The definition of public space for the purposes of this project has been derived from *Public Places - Urban Spaces: A Guide to Urban Design* by Matthew Carmona, Tim Heath, Taner Oc, Steve Tiesdell. The definition is perhaps broader than could be expected, stating that public space is a place where the public has access with the need to consider ownership (publicly or privately owned), access and use (both intended and actual) (Carmona et al, 2010). As stated above, a space need not be located outside to be considered a public one.

residual urban spaces

Many of Stockholm’s environments, those that are more popularly known and thought about, are considered aesthetically pleasing, are old or protected. But Stockholm also hosts many spaces between – spaces that hold the city together, including infrastructure, bridges, alleys, and the places under and between them. Erick Villagomez writes about claiming residual urban spaces in *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities* (2010).

Villagomez defines multiple types of residual urban spaces which are generally underused, derelict, or often obsolete environments. These environments have been categorised into a typology of eight (8) urban residual spaces. This project hypothesises that these types of residual urban spaces are ideal locations for allowing informal public art in Stockholm, specifically five (5) of these spaces – spaces between, spaces around, redundant infrastructure, void spaces and spaces below (Villagomez, 2010). These are seen in the diagrams above, which are based on Villagomez’s typology.

These spaces often offer “great environmental attributes” (Villagomez, 2010) but are not locations where significant investment in the public realm for the use of it by the public is made. These are spaces which are not usually considered to be ‘places’.
As illustrated in Landi’s quote above, the definition of public art can be very broad, and as with public space, there are many slightly differing definitions. Generally, both Becker (2004) and Roberts (1995) define it as a “feature or work” produced by a person who considers themselves to be an artist or “craftsperson” which is located in a place accessible to and used by the public. Public art is also defined by its “desire to engage with its audiences and to create spaces” (Paddison, et al., 2005). This is a key feature of public art that is central to this study. This also demonstrates that it has multiple forms and can be located in a number of types of locations. The location of the artwork can also influence its design, and vice versa. Barbara Kruger stated in an interview with W. J. T. Mitchell that artwork may be “successful” in one space over another (Mitchell, 1992). The findings of the survey undertaken as a component of this project (which are discussed in greater detail later in this report) brought this to light as well. Some comments and criticisms were made about the “success” of certain artworks based on their context.

In the context of this project and following on from the definition of public space outlined in the previous section, an artwork located in a private space such as a house but which can be seen from the public realm such as the road outside, would fall under the definition of public art.

Another question that has been raised in literature is if there is a difference between public art and art in public places. Becker (2004) believes that public art is designed for a space and the context in which it sits, while art such as sculpture can simply be placed in a space that is public but still be quality art (Becker, 2004). This project considers both to be one and the same.

Public art presents itself in both two and three dimensional forms, and is not always limited to visual forms. It can be movement and performance, and it can incorporate a multitude of senses.

"Use of public art is nuanced. As much as I like it, sometimes it’s not the right place.” – survey respondent
including touch and sound. Some examples include performance art, installation, photography, monuments and sculpture, plays, audio-visual art and community art (Loopmans, Schuermans, & Vandennabeele, 2012). According to Selwood (1995), there is also an argument as to whether functional objects such as lighting can be regarded as art. This boils down to the question of what art even is.

For the purposes of this study, a specific definition has been chosen which excludes elements such as performance, and only includes public art in its “pictorial” and “literate” forms (Anderson, et al., 2010). For this project, public art is considered to be a feature or work produced by a person who considers themselves to be an artist or “craftsperson” to be located in a place accessible to and used by the public.

Miles (1997) asserts that the design of a site may be art, stating that for public art “the term ‘site-specific’ is also used, both for art made for installation in a given site, and art which is the design of the site itself...”. Public art often gives people a greater opportunity to interact with their environment, urban or otherwise. This idea is relevant for architects and urban designers who can and should consider fixed seating and landscape to be art as well. This means also integrating environmental psychology principles such as prospect and refuge into public art design.

The opportunity to encourage interaction through public art can often be visual (murals are best known for this, but lighting and movement are also techniques employed) but can also engage other senses such as touch (sculptures can make you want to reach out and touch – many have been touched so much that they wear away), and hearing (artworks can employ sound, or the opposite – providing a quiet space in the city). Often more than one sense is engaged; however, one can be more dominant than the other. They can also afford many uses for which they may or may not be intended. Sculptures can be sat on, climbed upon and dressed up.

Interaction with the environment through public art

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formal // informal

Public art can be further categorised into formal and informal public art.

In the 1980s, Patricia Phillips introduced the concept of the broken “public art machine”. This is a concept that remains a significant issue (Phillips, 1988), especially with regards to differentiating the content and intent behind formal and informal public art. This idea refers to how formal public art is required to conform to very specific standards and requirements. The implications for this are that much formalised public art is made from similar, long lasting materials and are located in locations where investment is made – for example, civic areas, new developments, etc.

Formal public art is sanctioned by a governing body or similar, and has generally gone through a process of curation, development and implementation. Examples include statues, murals, installations, sculpture, mosaic, etc. For the purposes of this project, this often sanctioned or curated form of public art as defined here will be referred to as “formal” public art.

More informal versions of public art are called “graffiti” or “street art”. These are often discrepancies in how these terms are used, as they also can be defined in a multitude of ways ranging from only including certain mediums or forms, to much wider definitions. Jeffrey Ian Ross, Peter Bengtsen, John F. Lennon, Susan Phillips, and Jacqueline Z. Wilson acknowledge this and provide definitions for both “graffiti” or “street art” for their article “In search of academic legitimacy: The current state of scholarship on graffiti and street art” (2017). The common link between these two types of public art is that for both the owner of the property has not given permission for the artwork to be there (Ross, et al., 2017). Informal public art generally has no formal process, with flexibility on the temporal nature of the work, materials and subject. This allows the artwork to inhabit spaces which are overlooked or under-invested in by formal public art commissioning bodies.

Considered “a movement of contemporary art” (Luong & Van Poucke, 2016), street art is a component of public art that is often disputed. The inclusion and acknowledgement of street art within the area of public art has happened over the last 10 years or so where street art shifted from “an artistic subculture” to a more widely recognised and respected art form (Bengtsen, 2013). This movement has been popularised by Banksy’s who is a secretive and controversial street artist whose works are making their way from the street into galleries and are worth millions (Banksy & KET, 2014). Nonetheless, Bengsten states that “…we must insist that public art, including street art, is always art. However, this does not preclude the notion that gallery art and street art often function in quite different ways…” (Bengsten, 2013).

Street art can be found in various forms or “genres” (Young, 2014) including tagging, throw-ups, pieces (or “masterpieces”) and slogans (Halsey & Young, 2002). According to Gomez (1993) there is a key difference between street art that is art and that which is vandalism. The intent behind the work is the dividing factor – notably, street art is “motivated by a desire to create art” (Bruce, Haworth, & Iveson, 2013) and vandalism type graffiti is guided by the aim to mark out territory (Gomez, 1993).
A very important distinction that must be made is that tagging is not considered public art for the purposes of this project. Several comments were made by respondents in the online survey for this project, as well as in onsite interviews, that were rightfully confusing tagging with art – as it is often labelled also as graffiti.

"I love informal public art, but I hate ‘tagging’ or art on important equipment."
- survey respondent

"In my opinion, what we typically term graffiti (sprayed scribble and tags) is not a value add, anywhere.”
- survey respondent

Lewisohn (2008) differentiates graffiti tags from street art through how they connect with people. Much of graffiti is not legible and is not done for the general public as an audience – it not legible to people outside the tagger and targets. Street art (informal public art) differs in that it aims to interact with a general “audience on the street”. Lewisohn acknowledges that these definitions are not universal – many artists have their own opinions on where their work falls and as to what term they use for themselves (some do not consider what they do to even be art) (Lewisohn, 2008).

A report published by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation stated that:

“Tagging, the act of writing your graffiti name with spray paint or markers, is one of the most maligned, misunderstood and prosecuted forms of self expression.

From its early beginnings in struggling New York City neighbourhoods to suburban Australian alleyways, artists and some members of the public remain divided over the artistic value of graffiti.

…

Attitudes to urban art have shifted significantly in the last four decades. Where once the vast majority of graffiti was viewed as vandalism, an explosion in street art in the late 1990s has lead to a greater appreciation of all forms of urban art, including graffiti murals. But tagging remains exempt from this shift in attitude. “

(Stone, 2016)

For the purposes of this project, street art as defined here will be referred to as “informal” public art.
A significant amount of research has been undertaken on the benefits of public art, with literature finding that public art and street art are beneficial for a variety of reasons. By taking art out of the gallery and onto the streets it was seen that it enhanced public life and made art more equitable (Zebracki, 2013). The Creative City Network of Canada states:

“Arts and culture are powerful tools with which to engage communities in various levels of change. They are a means to public dialogue, contribute to the development of a community’s creative learning, create healthy communities capable of action, provide a powerful tool for community mobilization and activism, and help build community capacity and leadership.”

(Creative City Network of Canada, 2005)

The benefits of public art are not limited to simply improving the aesthetic value of a place or engaging people to interact with the space around them.

Public art can act as a “vehicle for involving the community in environmental improvements” or to make a statement (University of Belgrade, 2019), has shown economic benefits (Loopmans, et al., 2012), it assists with creating and expressing a sense of community or civic pride (Landi, 2012) and it can relate specifically to a place and help to educate the public about this in a clear or abstract way. It can celebrate a place’s history or highlight particular characteristics which relate to that specific site (University of Belgrade, 2019). Becker (2004) also communicates that it can inspire a greater appreciation of art, while Bengtsen (2013) puts forward the argument that public art can encourage public debate on timely and pertinent issues.

A previous study into the perception of public art in Brisbane (Cavendish, 2017) found that the use of informal public art to educate on issues is a topic not commonly thought to be satisfactorily dealt with by government or the “public art machine” (Phillips, 1988). Notably this can be utilised in activist informal public art, but is nonetheless relevant to many formalised public artworks too.

According to Cavendish (2017), a study in the Philippines found through research and a mural festival that “cities with an active and dynamic cultural scene are more attractive to individuals and business.” (Art BGC, 2015). Consequently, this influenced property prices and the local economy. This concept of economic enhancement through public art investment is also included in literature by many academics, including but not limited to Becker (2004), Loopmans et al (2012) and Roberts (1995).

Public art’s contribution to a sense of community is widely believed to be so valuable to communities it becomes part of cultural heritage (Smith, 2016). Art BGC Mural Festival in Manila, Philippines also argued that communities having their own identity is particularly important “in a world where everyplace tends to look like everyplace else.” Becker (2004) found that community art such as street painting festivals brought communities together and contributed to developing and strengthening a collective sense of pride.

Qiao (2012) argued that there are many benefits to public art, but a major one is the improvement of aesthetics in a city. Qiao looked at this from the perspective of art in Chinese cities where it is used to create both cultural and social aesthetic value, a unique environment and is used for beautiful decorations (Qiao, 2012), which is nonetheless relevant outside of China too. According to Falls and Smith, Government sanctioned “official art” can be perceived by the public as “sanitized and bland” (Falls & Smith, 2013); however, this is not backed up within their study.
Artist-activist Fiona Foley brings aboriginal realities into the public realm in Brisbane. In a 2012 interview with Artlink magazine she said "Largely, the premise behind my public art is to write Aboriginal people, Aboriginal nations and Aboriginal history back into the Australian narrative. I do this because we have been written out too often." (Foley, 2012). This is socio-spatial activism in action – addressing aboriginal rights and history in a visual and public way through art.

There are some other social and environmental benefits that are specific to informal public art. It allows for greater expression of the public, as it is not required to undergo the same process as formalised public art. Informal public art allows a means for people to make their mark and personalize space (Becker, 2004), often contributing to the identity of the place and putting ideas out in the public which may be censored in formal public art. Further to this, it is an activity that technically anyone can take part in – whereas formal public art is only designed by people who are formal artists or designers. It is also not held to the same requirements for content and materials as formal public art.

Some artworks make a statement which challenges the viewer and their perspective on an issue or the city. Bates (2014) argued that street art contributes to cultural heritage through its use as a political tool to speak out on issues and its ability to surprise viewers. This is also the case for formal public art. Bates relates this significance to the Burra Charter’s definition of cultural significance: “the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.” (Australia ICOMOS, 1988). Cavendish’s 2017 study found that this aspect of street art (that it is of cultural significance) is a factor in how well it is perceived by the public.

While the benefits are well-documented, the popularity of public art and street art is also clear, as seen through a review of social media and city guides. Hashtags assist with sorting and collating information such as photos on Instagram. The numbers of images posted online with hashtags relating to public art are significant. Interestingly, street art appears to have a greater capacity than the more general "public art" to engage with social media – on Instagram #publicart has over 1.5 million images, while #streetart has over 46.5 million posts, #graffiti has 38.3 million and #mural has 8.2 million at the time of writing. And this is only the images which have included hashtags on one social media type, there are more which have not been captured in this way, as well as more on other sharing platforms.

City travel guides will direct people to iconic artworks such as Cloud Gate by Anish Kapoor (also known as the Chicago “bean”), and guide tourists to “hip” and “cool” areas where street art is abundant and is often linked with the identity of a neighbourhood. An example of this is the neighbourhood of Karaköy in Istanbul which has a long and rich history, and is in a new phase of its life as a centre for art and commercial activities. Too Istanbul guide described the art in the neighbourhood as part of its new identity, as excerpted below:

“Street-art is a global phenomenon that did not miss Istanbul and particularly Karaköy. It has been now several years that Turkish street artists have made a name for themselves and perform their art freely in the streets, some shop owners even pay for it. Some little streets give the impression of being in open-air galleries.”

(Too Istanbul, n.d.)
Stockholm has a long history of culture and public art investment and appreciation. One example is the Stockholm metro system (tunnelbana). It is known as “the world’s longest art exhibit”. According to Visit Stockholm, 90 out of the total 100 tunnelbana stations in operation are ornamented with mosaics, installations, painting and sculptures. Over 150 artists have been involved since the project began in the 1950s to make this public “gallery” amount to 110 kilometres of art (Visit Stockholm, 2019). There is a cost so it can be debated to what extent this art network is public. A train ticket is all that is needed to enter this public space, which does limit the audience to some extent; however, it makes a significant amount of art available to the general public and daily commuters.

Walking around the city and the suburbs one can find bronze sculptures along streets, in parks, in squares and in open spaces. The city hosts many art galleries which provide free access to masterpieces for the public and visitors. The city has an organisation Stockholm konst (Stockholm Art) set up just for implementing public art projects for public and private entities and developers. Another noteworthy stakeholder in public art throughout Sweden is the Public Art Agency Sweden which is a government office run by Statens konstråd – “The Swedish Art Council” (Statens konstråd, 2019). Both Stockholm konst and the Public Art Agency Sweden manage and deliver public art in both permanent and temporary forms, and includes visual art, sculpture and performance (or a mix of all).

“The supply and access to art is highly significant for enriching the experience of public spaces. Art can be expressed in a variety of ways: integrated with buildings, through installations or traditional artworks at places and along thoroughfares, or as part of a playground, for example”

Stockholm Royal Seaport Sustainable Development Programme
While both Stockholm konst and Public Art Agency Sweden produces artworks for governmental buildings and purposes, Stockholm konst’s clientele are slightly broader – providing professional public art expertise to all sectors including municipal companies, administrations, builders and “private operators” (Stockholm konst, 2018). Stockholm konst also oversees public art programs and implements “enprocentsgren” – the one percent rule, which states that one percent of development (whether it be new development, or redevelopment of space) in Stockholm must be “allocated for artistic design”, namely public art (Stockholm konst, 2018).

Public art projects and competitions with large budgets are also used in Stockholm as a way to improve the built environment of the suburbs, seen in the example of the Vårberg Public Art Competition. These images of public art in Vårberg show the ways it has played a significant role in the suburb from the center’s formation in 1968 as an ABC suburb (Columbus, 2018), to being used as community engagement, to continuing to engage the community with the public realm into the future through the sculptures to be developed as part of the Vårberg Public Art Competition (Mahovic, 2018).

Stockholms stad invests heavily in public art, as well as improving the “liveliness” and quality of Stockholm’s public spaces. Stockholm aims to bring “the city’s public spaces to life, creating pleasant outdoor environments and an attractive city life.” (Stockholms stad, 2019). One of the many ways that this can be done is through public art.


Torsdag Clubben uses public art as a tool to connect mothers and children in Vårberg.

Drawings by children from the suburb decorate an entrance to the station/ Vårberg centrum.

While not “public art”, some Vårberg residents express themselves through tagging, particularly in underpasses.

“Vårberg’s Giants” artwork which will be built as a result of the Vårberg Public Art Competition.
In the Stockholm City Plan, it is stated that there is an aim “to allow space for artistic expression in its various forms. This helps to establish multifaceted, interesting, attractive and also democratic public spaces.” (Stockholms stad, 2018). Despite this statement, while formalised public art is prominent throughout Stockholm – both in the inner city and the outer suburbs, walking around the city it is uncommon to see informal street art in any form. In some areas there are traces of stickers, or marks where posters or spray paint used to be, but actual artworks that have not been commissioned by an authority or company are a rare find.

This view is not just based on a feeling about the city, or even from observation, but is reflected in crowd-sourced mapping of street art via the website Street Art Cities. Looking at an overview of Europe in the map on the next page it is clear that Stockholm is far behind other cities in the volume of street art that has been recorded and mapped by users.

Of course, there may be other factors at play here such as there perhaps being fewer map users in Stockholm, and fewer visitors than cities like London. There also appears to be a concentration of recorded works in the Netherlands and Belgium where the website is based (Street Art Cities BV, 2019). But even taking these factors into account the difference in numbers is so drastic that it must be an indication of the lower number of street artworks in the city. Notably, even Gothenburg and Oslo have significantly more artworks recorded than Stockholm. Compare this low number also to the map of formal artwork in Stockholm, produced by Stockholm konst alone.

It is understood that a large component of the reason for the lack of informal public art in Stockholm is the existence of the “zero-tolerance” policy that forbade graffiti in any form from 2007 (The Local, 2011). This hard-line policy required that Stockholm did not “support activities or events that don’t clearly renounce tagging, illegal graffiti, or similar acts of vandalism” (Gordan, 2011). Not only did the policy impact graffiti, according to a study by graffiti academic Jacob Kimvall, “it became practically impossible to get permission to paint walls with any kind of images slightly reminding of graffiti” (Kimvall, 2013). The policy covered all forms of graffiti and tagging and excluded no one – including world-renowned street artist Banksy. A report aired on Sverige Radio in 2014 covered a street exhibition arranged in Stockholm where Banksy informed he would travel to Sweden via an anonymous letter (Sverige Radio, 2014).

Tobias Barenthin Lindblad, a street art expert, stated in response to this that “I would be really interested in how the politicians who are anti-graffiti and anti-street art react if Banksy does an illegal mural in Stockholm which would cost a couple of hundreds Euros to remove and would be worth tens of thousands of euros if it was to stay.” (Sverige Radio, 2014).

The policy lasted from 2007 to 2014 (however informal public art is still very much policed, and the effects are continuing) and was considered to be one of the last of its kind in Europe as other cities realised the value of street art for self-expression, tourism and other reasons (ArtSlant, 2014). Since, legal graffiti walls have been installed in places like Slussen and street art events are held in the city.
The proposed methodology for this project is
an experimental take on that used in Zebracki’s
2013 study on how the public perceive public art
in an urban environment. Zebracki found that,
while art producers and planners are often given
the opportunity to provide their perspective on
public art, the public are not always so engaged.
Notably, Zebracki stated that there is “a consid-
erable lack of parameters of public-art perception”
(Zebracki, 2013) and that the perception of public
art continues to be an exploratory field. Bengtsen
also backs this up with specific reference to infor-
mal public art, stating that the field of street art is
“relatively unexplored” (Bengtsen, 2013).

Zebracki also used a multi-layered approach
whereby he both observed artworks and inter-
viewed the public. This project aimed to use
secondary research and literature as well as
primary research techniques to gather qualitative
and quantitative data.

To achieve this, the project used both a more
general online survey focusing more on the
bigger questions which are less linked to specific
places, as well as an onsite intervention whereby
observation techniques were used to analyse
three (3) places with and without informal public
art in them. There was also a smaller, more
specific onsite survey component to complement
findings.

online survey

intervention // observations

findings // analysis
online survey

The survey was created and all data collected using Google’s online platform Google Forms. This provided flexibility in the type and format of the questions and how they could be answered, as well as for there to be visual aids and explanations/notes to assist respondents in their understanding of questions. The full survey has been included as Appendix A – Online Survey. The questions included multiple choice formats, short response, and statements through which answers were linked to a Likert scale whereby:

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

Google Forms automatically collates all responses as they are written which allowed for constant monitoring of answers, and for easier analysis later on. The material was collected in graph form as well as in an excel sheet linked to the form. Respondents’ information was kept anonymous – defining characteristics such as names and contact details of those answering the survey (respondents) were not collected, except where an email address was voluntarily provided as an option to receive the final results. Some demographic information was collected, including the professions of respondents, ages within brackets, postcodes and level of education. This was to allow for the separation of data into various groups as needed. The survey was designed to focus predominantly on the case of Stockholm; however, it was considered that outside views on this topic would also be valuable. Thus, the survey was available to those who are not residents but have visited the city, and those who have never been to Sweden or Stockholm (i.e. potential future visitors).

All questions, answer options and explanations were translated into Swedish for inclusivity. This was considered particularly important given the views of Swedes, not just visitors, are of the most importance to this study. Notably, this approach was worth the effort as responses were received in Swedish.

The online survey included a range of questions from more general questions regarding their views on public art, to more specific public art and place questions. The questions narrowed down in specificity, with a more general demographic section at the end. A series of questions were asked which compared images of the same residual urban place with and without public art in them. The places chosen were all within the Nordic region, with all but two being located in Stockholm – one was located within Oslo, and another showed under a bridge in Södertälje. Both of these are residual urban spaces that are also very common within Stockholm, and therefore remain representative. A significant portion of the survey included these types of questions as a previous study similar to this was done in 2017 and it was found that the visual questions were most evocative for people to understand the topic and relate to.

All of these places either already contained public art which was then Photoshopped out or did not contain art whereby art was Photoshopped into the image. This non-existent art was chosen as it represents a variety of types of art (posters, murals, stencil, paste-ups, etc.) and either existed elsewhere in Stockholm as public art, or has permission to be used as it was personally made or done by painter and friend Miri Badger. The majority of the artworks could be considered either formal or informal art; however, some are clearly informal. The respondent is able to decide for themselves what type each is, with the unifying element being that all the spaces are in-between/residual places such as under bridges, along footpaths, building sides, carpark edges, etc.

The survey was distributed via email to connections in planning and design offices, as well as on social media and professional media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook to gain a wider base of respondents.
It has been established that there are few informal public artworks in the city, while there is an abundance of formalised public art. To establish the interaction between public space and art and public life, and how people perceive informal public art in the city, an intervention was proposed.

The intervention was in the form of an artwork designed to question and engage the public with the space in which they were affixed. Posters were used as they are flexible in their arrangement and as they were easy and fast to implement. The design itself included ink drawings printed in black with four bright colours: yellow, pink, blue and green. The artworks were accompanied with questions in both English and Swedish – questions to challenge the viewer about the role of public art and especially informal public art.

Further to this, a QR code was placed in the bottom righthand corner, along with a hashtag #publicartsthlm. The QR code linked to the online survey and was used as a way to engage with people outside of personal connections. It gave people a way to respond to the questions asked by the artwork and have a platform to voice their perspective. The hashtag gave an opportunity to collate information in a different way – if anyone were to upload an image to social media they were able to use this hashtag and the image could be found.
locations
Three locations were chosen using a number of criteria. The sites have different primary uses, represent different residual urban spaces and were located within close proximity of one another and the city centre to allow for efficiency of observation. For the purposes of this study, the sites have been named after their nearest tunnelbana (metro) station.

slussen
The first site was a very busy pedestrian and cycle path which had construction fencing along the length of it, and extended between Gamla Stan and Södermalmstorg adjoining Slussen metro station. The intervention space where the art was affixed was the construction fence.

medborgplatsen
This site was located within the Levande Stockholms stad pop-up park (Stockholms stad, 2019) at Fatbursparken. The pop-up park adjoined a construction area, and similarly to the Slussen site had construction fencing along its edge. The intervention space where the art was affixed was the construction fence, next to picnic tables and seating areas.

hornstull
This site was located on Hornstulls strand under Liljholmsbron. The path is open to pedestrians and cyclists and follows the water. This part of Hornstulls strand is where Hornstulls marknad (market) is held each weekend in summer months. The intervention space where the art was affixed was the bridge pillar.

timing
A variety of times were chosen to provide a broader understanding of the sites. All sites were analysed on both a weekday morning and a weekday afternoon, with and without public art. Each site was also evaluated on a weekend day, with and without public art. This ensured that the sites were assessed in various circumstances, with a wider spread of weather conditions and site conditions.
To analyse the impact of this intervention, a combination of public life and public space techniques were used. These techniques were derived from pre-existing methods developed by Jan Gehl, William H. Whyte, THINK.urban and STIPO.

**tools**

- **looking for traces**
  In all sites, as well as generally around the city, traces of existing and since removed art, graffiti, tagging and posters were recorded. Many remnants of tape and stickers were identified, as well as scrubbed walls. This method is utilised and promoted by THINK.urban and Jan Gehl.

- **photographing**
  Photographing using a smart phone was a crucial method used throughout the study. It is a key part of public life studies used to document urban spaces and public life (Gehl & Svarre, 2013).

- **time-lapse**
  William H. Whyte famously used time-lapse videography to record and later analyse New York City’s civic life (Whyte, 2001). This method was used onsite and assisted with identifying patterns, as well as recording people’s interactions with their environment.

- **counting**
  Counting is a common tool used for public life analysis (Gehl & Svarre, 2013). This was used to record people and cyclists, and to evaluate how busy locations were by counting pedestrians passing or staying per hour (Karssenberg, et al., 2016). Coupled with journaling this allowed for comparisons before and after art was in location.

- **journaling**
  Keeping a diary is another of Jan Gehl’s key techniques for recording and registering “details and nuances about the interaction between public life and space, noting observations that can later be categorized and/or quantified” (Jelovac, n.d.). This was used for both before and after the intervention in the sites, and to record site conditions.

- **interviews**
  STIPO, The City at Eye Level and THINK.urban use interviews in conjunction with observation techniques to gain a qualitative understanding from individual people/groups’ perspectives (Karssenberg, et al., 2016). This was used to complement observations of how people interacted in sites.

**limitations**

There were a number of limitations to be worked around, which are outlined below with their subsequent response.

**complexity**

The topic is complex, and due to the time limit some larger, more complex areas had to be simplified slightly to allow for analysis. This is particularly relevant to the survey, where some of the questions were simple but infer greater meaning. An example includes the comparison of spaces with/without public art linked to the question “which place would you prefer to spend more time in?”. Many different questions could have been used to get similar responses, and a combination of many of them would have better addressed the complexity and nuances of the question; however, for time’s sake and to make the survey more accessible to more people of different backgrounds a singular question was chosen. There are also a relative lack of precedent studies in this field that could be used as a base for the project.

**timeframes**

The timeframe of the project is short, which allowed for efficiency but not to investigate the full extent of time periods – for example, onsite investigations were limited to the available weeks and weather that existed at these times. The difference of the seasons was also not able to be assessed as the study was only able to be carried out in Swedish spring – April and May.

**resourcing**

There were also few resources available – both material and social. The few connections established in Stockholm were utilised to the greatest possible extent to gain the highest number of respondents possible. Lack of Swedish language skills also had the potential to be limiting. To address this, Google translate was used to translate the survey and then this draft was reviewed by a Swedish friend Jon Nilsson.
The study aimed to establish how public art contributes to place in Stockholm, hypothesising that a space can gain a ‘sense of place’ through the incorporation of public art, focusing more on informal public art, within the space. There was also an emphasis on improving “in-between” or “residual” spaces in Stockholm with informal public art. The findings of both the online survey and the onsite investigations/public space intervention found that in general there is support for this idea, and that Stockholm should embrace informal public art in residual urban spaces provided that artistic expression is respectful and inclusive.

“I think informal art benefits a public space as it is often unexpected, making a space feel less organised and controlled, encouraging a user to feel more comfortable lingering in a space. I think it can also add excitement and visual appeal to a space, and make people smile!”

Survey respondent
The survey assisted with establishing how Stockholm’s residents, visitors and potential future visitors feel about public art in the city, and in residual urban spaces. A large number (108 in total) of respondents were recorded online. A significant amount of data was collected through this method, the most relevant of which has been analysed and is presented in this section. The full survey and the results (with contact details of respondents removed where provided) are included in Appendix A – Online Survey and Appendix B – Survey Results.

Firstly, despite efforts to expand the variance of respondents by sharing with connections and senior industry professionals, the majority of respondents were fairly young, with 74.5% of online survey respondents being 35 years of age or under. There was also a higher percentage of female respondents (58.9%), and a much higher percentage of post-school qualifications (33.6% of respondents hold an undergraduate degree, while 59.7% of respondents have a post-graduate or doctorate degree).

As outlined in the limitations section, the time limitation impacted on the ability to gain access to the public and as a result of this existing connections had to be used. While LinkedIn and asking people in the planning and architecture industry to share with others managed to reach people outside of a single circle, the demographic results still show a bias towards young, highly educated people.

Notably, there was a significant bias towards built environment professionals – 61% of respondents work in the built environment or design industry as architects, planners, designers or academics in this field. 3% of the total respondents work in both built environment and art, and 3% work in art as artists, curators, art academics or art manufacturers. It is assumed that this result is due in part to the subject matter and in part due to the connections available and distribution technique. The remaining 36% of respondents with other occupations were part of a huge range including several lawyers, engineers, business persons, students, medical professionals, and tradespeople.
It is also noted that those who chose to spend approximately five (5) minutes taking part in answering the questions have some interest in doing so. This may be that they have a preconceived positive or negative bias towards the topic, and this may provide a nominally different result to if the survey had been a compulsory exercise rather than done by choice.

Nonetheless, the results still somewhat reflect a large part of Stockholm society and thus holds some value for learning about the wider publics’ perceptions. For comparison, according to Stockholms stad statistics, over 50% of people hold a post-school qualification, approximately 50.5% of Stockholmers identify as women, and more than 85% of the city’s population are under 65 years old (Stockholms stad, 2018).

people appreciate art

Overwhelmingly, the respondents appreciate and create art. Not only do respondents appreciate public art, they appreciate it in all forms. 99.3% of respondents have a medium to high appreciation of formal public art, while only 0.7% have a moderately low to low appreciation. This varies more for informal art, though there is still a majority (89.6% of respondents) who have a medium to high appreciation.

Given this high appreciation of formal public art, it then follows that many people visit spaces with curated art such as art galleries at least a couple of times per year. 75.5% of respondents responded that they visit spaces with curated art a couple of times per year or “regularly”. It is interesting that only 5.7% of respondents never visit. Of course there could be many reasons for this such as accessibility but it can also be derived that they do not have much of an interest in art or at least formal art, yet they still responded to the survey.

An intriguing finding was that a high percentage of people are artists themselves – approximately 55% of respondents have made/done/created art in the last year – and surprisingly almost half of people have wanted to make art and put it in a public place. This is a significant finding. Approximately 42% of respondents are potential informal public artists. This shows that were informal public art made to appear more accessible and with fewer barriers such as the law, there is a possibility that many people would make their own mark. So not only do people appreciate art but they give it a go themselves, and would like to do so in the public realm.
There was a general consensus that the more art, the better. People favour places with public art – almost 70% of respondents’ favourite public spaces that they like to spend time in have a form of public art in them. Even though a lot of people's favourite places contain public art already, people would like to see more. In peoples’ favourite places, 60.4% would like to see more public art in them, 38.7% like the amount that exists, and only 0.9% (in other words, one person) think there should be less.

It appears this includes both formal and informal public art. When asked about informal public art specifically in Stockholm, the trend continued. Of those that did not answer “I don’t know” and therefore have either been to Stockholm or live in Stockholm, one person thinks there should be less informal public art in the city, approximately 19% are happy with the current amount, and approximately 79% think there should be more. Again, of those that live in Stockholm or have visited, approximately 15% think Stockholm has a lot of informal public art, while 77% do not think it has a lot. This shows a high level of support for this type of public art that is not currently being met in the city.
The identity of place as defined by Lynch and Relph at the beginning of this report was used to derive some key elements to make places from spaces. These elements were used to form questions that were used to gain an understanding of people’s perceptions of spaces when there is public art – formal or informal – within them. The statements related to ideas of memorability, connection and engagement with place, opportunities to have ownership or express identity, and wanting to spend time in a place due to the experience that can be had there.

The findings were generally positive. Of course, not all people agreed with the statements; however, there were a clear majority who did. The level of agreement differed slightly between informal and formal public art. There was a little less surety in respondent’s answers for informal public art with a higher number putting their agreement level at “neither agree nor disagree” or “agree” rather than “strongly agree” as they did for formal public art. Regardless, the number of respondents disagreeing with the statements was in the minority for both formal and informal public art.

Some statements which received more disagreement than other statements had a consistency in this disagreement for both the formal public art and informal public art versions of the statement. For example, for the statements “I am more likely to spend more time in a place if it has *formal* [or] *informal* public art in it, compared to if it didn’t.” – 13 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the formal public art version of the statement, while 16 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the informal public art version of the statement. Interestingly, people felt stronger about the formal public art version with three (3) respondents strongly disagreeing, while only one (1) respondent strongly disagreed that they would be more likely to spend more time in a place if it has informal public art in it compared to if it didn’t.
informal public art // criminality

Both the online survey and the onsite interventions aimed to deal with the perceived criminality of informal public art – seen as a contributing reason for the lack of informal public art in Stockholm. Given the restrictions around informal public art currently, one question asked what types of informal public art should be considered by respondents to be a crime. The results show that people perceive the majority of informal public art not to be a criminal act. Of all types, 8.7% of respondents think stickers should be considered a crime, 6.7% think mural should be, while the smallest percentages thought installation (3.8%) and paste-ups (2.9%) should be criminal. Overall though, 77.9% of people thought no type of informal public art should be considered a crime, and 76.6% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the municipality should support informal public art in public places.
informal public art // perception of benefits

Some common themes emerged when people were asked to write their own answer to the question “how do you think informal public art benefits or impacts public space?”. Some of the comments have been extracted onto this page. The words “expression”, “community”, “identity” and “unique” were common. People liked public art that tells a story and connects to the identity or history of a place. They also like informal public art that allows the community to express creativity and have a sense of ownership of places. These comments were also related to the perceived lack of expression shown in Sweden and Stockholm, a topic that came up regularly in onsite interviews as well. People expressed the view that it made them feel more comfortable in a space, as well as adding visual appeal and surprise.

“I think the biggest impact art has in public space is that, in my opinion, it reflects the level of ownership and agency that people have towards a public space and the level of expression and opinion a place’s population has, whatever form the art takes. In a society such as the Swedish, with a high level of institutionalization and government intervention, informal public art seems more controlled and public spaces, at least in the city’s centre, are for sure more controlled. However, an interesting question would be ‘if the Swedish people do feel a need for this type of expression, which in many cases I think relates to a level of unhappiness with the status quo, given that they live in a country with one of the best perceived lifestyles (welfare state).”

“I think informal public art can be an enriching form of expression for society. I particularly like political art in public space, whether it be formal or informal, I enjoy when art has something to say about our current times or struggles. It can be empowering.”

“I think informal art benefits a public space as it is often unexpected, making a space feel less organised and controlled, encouraging a user to feel more comfortable lingering in a space. I think it can also add excitement and visual appeal to a space, and make people smile!”

“I personally really enjoy informal public art, it makes me want to spend more time in a place and also makes me feel safer. I like the surprise effect of discovering an informal art work in a place. It always makes me smile and keeps me wondering how the place will look the next time I come.”

“It helps tells the story of the place and its inhabitants. Locally loved, straight from the heart, unique to the space.”

“I believe these types of art, both formal and informal, create a sense of unique communal culture. A culture which has been built via a culmination of individuals artistic expressions and responses to the urban spaces they inhabit. These art pieces give an authentic sense of the aesthetic of an area and can stimulate important conversations as well as pushing back against the inundation of consumer orientation imagery.”

“I think it makes it feel more like a place for the people and a space that shows the true spirit of a city.”

“Interest, community energy, decorative, witty and engaging.”

“Informal public art is often a true reflection of those who use/live near the public space.”

“by creating a varied sense of scale, materiality and expression, it can present an opportunity for often overlooked or marginalized voices and points of view to become visible, acknowledged and engaged.”

“It encourages freedom of expression.”

“I personally really enjoy informal public art, it makes me want to spend more time in a place and also makes me feel safer. I like the surprise effect of discovering an informal art work in a place. It always makes me smile and keeps me wondering how the place will look the next time I come.”

“It can express every voice in the community.”

“It adds character! It is an expression of the ‘people’ behind the ‘place’, it makes a place, quirky, or different and contributes to the overall essence or sense of place a public area might not otherwise have.”

“Makes it more interesting place to be and adds culture. It also gives the impression that free expression is accepted and encouraged in a society.”

“It adds uniqueness and allows artists with different backgrounds and resources to be heard and acknowledged.”

“Interest, community energy, decorative, witty and engaging.”

“It adds character! It is an expression of the ‘people’ behind the ‘place’, it makes a place, quirky, or different and contributes to the overall essence or sense of place a public area might not otherwise have.”

“Makes it more interesting place to be and adds culture. It also gives the impression that free expression is accepted and encouraged in a society.”

“Interest, community energy, decorative, witty and engaging.”

“It can express every voice in the community.”

“It adds character! It is an expression of the ‘people’ behind the ‘place’, it makes a place, quirky, or different and contributes to the overall essence or sense of place a public area might not otherwise have.”

“Makes it more interesting place to be and adds culture. It also gives the impression that free expression is accepted and encouraged in a society.”

“Interest, community energy, decorative, witty and engaging.”
informal public art // specific findings

The findings for the statements on informal public art show that generally there is support for it and that it assists people with perceived place creation. The graph results below show a trend towards agreement with the statements, with the strongest agreement that informal public art contributes to freedom of expression (approximately 88% of respondents agree or strongly agree), that the municipality should support it, people like to see informal public art in places they pass through or spend time in, and that informal public art makes a place more memorable. More varied responses or comparatively negative responses were recorded for having informal public art in a place makes people more connected to it or have a greater sense of ownership over it, and that the presence of informal public art in a place makes them more likely to visit it more than once.

The method of showing two versions of residual urban spaces, one without public art (whether it exists in this form or not) and one with public art, yielded a lot of interest in the form of feedback and comments, as well as clear results. It is understood that the visual nature of the questions communicated the setting better than other questions as ‘a picture speaks a thousand words’ and each image held a lot of information that allowed respondents to put themselves in the situation easier and understand the question in more depth.

with // without comparisons

It was also important to show people that these were currently just ‘spaces’, not ‘places’. These pathways, underpasses, edges and building walls are void spaces, spaces below, spaces between and spaces around, as defined by Villagomez (2010). By wording the question in the way that it was worded – “For each of the following images, which place would you prefer to spend more time in?” – the respondent was forced to imagine themselves in the space in two scenarios. It was important that the question didn’t ask which was good as they may not like either (which is fine, but most of these environments are ones that cannot be avoided), but if they had to spend time in one, which one would they rather it were.

“Use of public art is nuanced. As much as I like it, sometimes it’s not the right place. Some photos showing more context may have given the opposite answer.”

– survey respondent

“I didn’t think about it before but when you see them side by side it’s quite clear it’s super nice.”

– survey respondent

“I didn’t realise I liked public art so much before comparing the pics with and without.”

– survey respondent

“Use of public art is nuanced. As much as I like it, sometimes it’s not the right place. Some photos showing more context may have given the opposite answer.”

– survey respondent

“I didn’t think about it before but when you see them side by side it’s quite clear it’s super nice.”

– survey respondent

“I didn’t realise I liked public art so much before comparing the pics with and without.”

– survey respondent
onsite intervention

The onsite interventions and observations produced many learnings which incorporated and aligned with the learnings from the online survey. The environments where interventions were put in place were ones that could be defined as residual urban spaces and where informal public art has been removed. The public art interventions challenged the way Stockholm’s public space is used and how people can express themselves within these spaces. The template for recording findings and observations is included as Appendix C – Onsite Analysis Template.

placing the posters

Placing the interventions in the spaces took practice and care. With assistance, it did not take more than a couple of minutes, and in this time there was a significant amount of engagement from people passing. Most watched with interest at the taping of the posters, reading them and watching as the placement occurred. This was most noticeable at Slussen, where during the duration of the poster placement almost every passer by watched the process as they passed. At Hornstull a man approached as posters that had been stolen were replaced and congratulated the work, while also explaining that he had seen the artwork the previous day, remembered and appreciated it. This demonstrated the ability of informal public art to make a place memorable to the public.

Another site in Medborgplatsen was also chosen but changed to the Fatbursparken pop-up park. This site was discarded due to many factors. Despite it being a residual urban space in that it was a back wall of a restaurant tenancy within the back of Medborgplatsen square, the wall was covered in graffiti and tagging which changed the way the posters’ questions could be read – i.e. “Is this art?” appeared to relate to the wall it was on rather than the posters themselves. The site also adjoined a busy bike path so pedestrians could not safely approach the posters or scan the QR code, and the nearby seating was positioned to face away. This made observation hard within the short periods available, and thus the site was changed.
During the study changes to the condition of all three sites were observed which showed the fluidity of urban spaces. Many factors of change occurred – both independently or influencing other changes – changes in their use, users, layout, physical embellishments (for example tagging / removal of tagging), weather, level of activity, etc.

The Hornstull site was used mainly for relaxed activities during the weekdays – jogging, strolling and dog walking. For this reason, people appeared to be more engaged with their surrounds, looking around at their environment, looking through the columns of the bridge at the water and stopping to look at posters advertising gigs and new music when attached to the columns.

In terms of the physical conditions of the site, it was noticeable that the posters were not attached to the columns for long, and there were layers upon layers of marks of tape and washed off spray paint at this site, and others. People did not appear to notice the actual columns of the bridge as they looked around and between them, but not at them until something such as advertising or the intervention were attached.

In comparison, the site conditions of the Slussen site hardly changed. The site was a main pedestrian (and to a lesser extent cyclist) thoroughfare, with very high rates of pedestrians at all times of the day and week.
**physical site conditions**

**slussen**
Traces of staples and tagging are on all the construction walls. The staples once held posters to the walls that are regularly removed, with only municipality signage, advertising and security signage allowed to remain. The use of the path rarely changed, particularly in comparison to the other sites – the path was always busy with commuters and others.

**medborgplatsen**
Before the Levande Stockholm season began the pop-up park showed signs of neglect, with the walls being covered in tagging and graffiti. As the weather improved into May, the intervention was put in place and the park was cleaned up, repainted and the struggling plants replaced.

**hornstull**
This site under the bridge was different at every observation and visit. Tagging would appear overnight and be removed within a week, posters came and went in different locations on the bridge posts, temporary uses such as markets like Hornstulls marknad appeared on the weekend and disappeared during the week. The market layout was different each week, on the day of the intervention a sign was placed in front of the artwork and stalls surrounded it blocking its visibility. On other market days depending on the weather and number of vendors the market didn’t reach the bridge, or it extended underneath.
Informal public art is very temporary in Stockholm

Over the course of the intervention study period, the artwork/posters were not stationary. Only in one location, Medborgplatsen, did the posters stay in place. While there were issues with them staying stuck on the wall in the sun, once additional tape was added they stayed there for several days.

In Slussen, the posters were arranged in a different order – one long line of posters rather than a solid rectangular block. The line was split into two parts on either side of a fence post, and as such the second half which asked questions in Swedish disappeared each time the site was returned to. It is unlikely these were removed by authorities as the first half remained for many days. The first time they disappeared within a couple of hours and may have been stolen by a passer-by or have fallen off due to wind. The second time they disappeared they had fallen off as they were found on the ground a couple of metres away very dusty and trodden on.

At Hornstull, between one day and the next, half of the posters were removed; however, in this case it was the first half of the posters – the ones with questions in English. The posters had once again not been taken down by authorities (as half of them remained) but had almost certainly been stolen. This was apparent as the tape connecting the posters that had been stolen and those that had been left had been very carefully ripped. When interviewing people at this site after this had happened, it was mentioned by interviewees that they had considered stealing them as they liked the artwork.
When comparing observations of the sites with and without public art interventions, people engaged more with the spaces they were in or passed through when there was informal public art there. These graphs compare the percentage of people who engaged with the artworks in some way within the site with those that did not.

In both Slussen and Hornstull the interaction mainly consisted of people glancing at the artwork as they passed, although this is an interaction with the environment/wall where the artworks were placed that would not have occurred otherwise. In addition to this, people were observed slowing down and/or turning back to read the questions and look at the artworks, taking photos, looking at the artwork and then turning to the person they were walking with and discussing it.

The volume of people was significantly higher at Slussen where there were approximately 1,000-2,000 people per hour, with around 150-250 people looking at the artworks. While as a percentage of the number of people passing, this number is small, the actual number is fairly large, especially considering that the volume of people passing was significant making it hard to not only stop but also to see the artwork at times. Further to this, the pace of movement was significantly higher than the other site and approximately 50% of people were disconnected from their environment via their phones – either listening to music or talking on the phone. After three days, it was found that someone had interacted with a poster by taking the time to take out a pen and answer “no” to the question “is this art?”.

Hornstull was quieter during the week, but busy on the weekend, with a similar number of people looking at the artworks on any given day. It is thought that this may be due to the market disrupting the view of and access to the artwork. It was noticeable however that the engagement with the artworks on the weekend was more meaningful – people photographed it, talked about it and mentioned it. This may be due to the demographic. On the weekend at the Hornstull...
site the public were generally younger being in their twenties. During the week a lot of pedestrians were older citizens strolling or middle-aged people jogging.

Interestingly, the Medborgplatsen site was quieter on the weekend than during the week. Despite this, the time spent in the pop-up park was longer and more people engaged with the artwork the longer it was there. Once people were interviewed about it as part of this study they were also more likely to approach the artwork and study it in more detail.

At the Medborgplatsen site people went out of their way to come into the pop-up park and photograph the artwork, read the questions and people were witnessed scanning the QR code in order to do the survey. Whether people who used the QR code did or did not support informal public art, by using the QR code they were engaging with the space and the art in a way they would not have if it were not there.

The tracing mapping shows the distribution of paths taken by people without public art on the sites, and then in comparison to after the artworks had been placed. The paths vary where people have approached the sites with art. It should be noted that on the weekend when Hornstulls marknad was underway that the artwork was not as easily accessible. The area in front of the artwork was used by people waiting for and meeting others, making phone calls, talking to friends and also taking photos of the artwork or reading it.
At two of the sites – Medborgplatsen and Hornstull – interviews of site users were undertaken when artworks were in place. These interviews tended to turn into conversations which provided some interesting viewpoints from Stockholm's residents. This qualitative data supported the online survey findings, and was actually more positive in response. In total 18 people gave answers to five questions, as well as provided background from their point of view on everything from public art in Stockholm, public art in Berlin and Melbourne and what and where they like to see it, to Sweden's culture and social stigmas and how their background as immigrant families impacts their preferences for public art and public space design.

The questions asked, which instigated the further comments and conversations, were as follows:

- Do you appreciate / value public art?
- What about informal public art?
- Do you feel informal public art could improve a space like this?
- Do you think informal public art makes you connect with a place more? For example, makes it more memorable?
- Do you think Stockholm should have more informal public art?
do you appreciate / value public art?

yes

yes

yes

yes

yes

absolutely

yeah

yes, more art to the people!

yes

100%

yes

what about informal public art?

absolutely

yes, I particularly like murals and paintings

yes, but it is place dependent

yes

it depends but generally yes

yeah, but aesthetics are important to me, and if it has a message

yeah, it is very important

yes – I love it

the best kind

young people need to have places to express themselves, public spaces are for the people, so why not?

yes I do

do you feel informal public art could improve a space like this?

yeah

absolutely

definitely

yes

of course

yes

definitely

of course

absolutely

it is nice, and doesn’t hurt anyone

yes!

of course, especially in the suburbs – in winter there is a lack of colour – art can convert boring architecture to make it special – I’ve seen this in Poland

do you think informal public art makes you connect with a place more? for example, makes it more memorable?

yeah, it makes it more lived in, with more personality

fun stuff!

yeah

yes, it can provide colours and vibrancy – for example, it has been used for this in my home of Buenos Aires

yep, I remember the place better and refer to the place by the art

it feels more cosy!

makes me feel more comfortable in a city, feels safe

yeah

it improves the perception of safety

yes

you can create personality through art

this is just a grey wall [talking about the Hornstull site’s bridge pillars]

this is the perfect place to have it, and it is so urban – also here in Södermalm it is liked

do you think Stockholm should have more informal public art?

yes

yes

absolutely.

ja

yes

yep, but not tagging

yes, if it is regulated in some way

yep

absolutely.

yes! there is a lack of it in Stockholm!

yes

people should allow people to express themselves

yes

as long as it isn’t offensive

yes, i like tagging too

yes!

there is not much now, it would be nice

yes, not tagging

yes, Stockholm is too lagom, in that it doesn’t want to do anything with a risk – compared to Berlin which has a lot of good street art, Stockholm doesn’t have much

yep! self expression! it is not encouraged in Sweden due to being a welfare state / the culture?

good for revamping areas, for example abroad we have googled where street art is just to go and see it – was especially good for communicating about old / historical events

yes. maybe there is less here because the tagging makes people wary of allowing it?

i don’t like tagging, but i think there should be more art
Themes emerged which showed that people would like to see more informal public art in Stockholm. They appreciated the precedents of Berlin, Budapest and London for the self-expression and aesthetic improvement that is offered in the built environment. Particular reference was made by people to the ability of informal public art to bring colour and interest to neglected areas and derelict, grey spaces in the city. There were concerns made about allowing informal public art on heritage or valued buildings in the city, but when clarified that the study focused on residual urban spaces support was granted by all interviewees.

There was an understandable wariness of tagging and the opportunity for disrespectful graffiti to be created should laws be relaxed. One or two people appreciated tagging, while the remainder of interviewees did not like tagging and condemned its prevalence around Stockholm. The view seemed to generally be though that they were open to public art and as tagging is occurring in such high concentrations, art could only be an improvement. Many people mentioned the legal graffiti wall at Hornstull as being a step forward for the city but not as fulfilling the need for more public art.

In both the Medborgplatsen site and the Hornstull site, interviewees felt that informal public art could improve the places and make them both improved and more memorable. People felt that opportunities for self-expression are minimal in Stockholm and that expression is an important public right in public space. The municipality’s care for the city and investment in formal public art was appreciated (a couple of people referred to the murals going up recently in Södermalm) but people feel that there should be a more relaxed approach to informal public art. The general view was: the more art, the better.
The findings showed that people are really supportive of informal public art as they feel it is something lacking in Stockholm, and that there is a case for supporting informal public art in residual urban spaces in the city.

Understandably though, people are concerned about allowing total freedom for expression where it may lead to “offensive” or “disrespectful” messages; however, it is thought that this may be a response to the current significant amount of tagging all over the city. The way forward needs to address these concerns while enabling artistic expression where it can improve the public realm.

Part of the intent of the legal graffiti walls is to allow a canvas for street art and address these wants and needs. However, the wall at Hornstull for example, is used only for one type of spray street art by one particular group of people. This is not a democratic space where any artist or would-be-artist can feel comfortable taking part. On all observations, the wall has been only used by men who are of a particular age. Nonetheless, this wall is an important step for the municipality to have taken, but it can go further and stay in some control.

Through this research, analysis and interviews with people, a process to allow for more informal public art in Stockholm has become evident. Through observational site analysis it was clear that tagging is rife and is constantly having to be removed by the municipality. This appears to be done on a zero-tolerance basis whereby all graffiti, street art, tagging or informal public art is removed. If a clear narrative were communicated where it was made more obvious to the public that art is welcome in residual urban spaces (with examples of the types of spaces where it is and is not welcome provided), while tagging is not, and that regular removals will occur on the same basis that they are currently occurring; however, now only tagging and art which is deemed offensive will be removed. What is offensive will have to be defined to ensure that freedom of speech is not inhibited significantly – this may mean a zero-tolerance approach to content that is harmful using the “harm principle” or “offense principle” (eg. Racist content or hate speech will be removed).

Further research and a greater analysis of precedents could strengthen this proposal; however, the case is there to show that there is place for informal public art in Stockholm.


APPENDIX

online survey
Public art in residual urban spaces

Thank you for taking the time to do this survey. The study aims to investigate the influence of public art in contributing to a sense of place, with a focus on informal public art, particularly for the residual spaces of cities. This survey has been created as a component of a final thesis project for the Masters of Urbanism Studies at KTH, Stockholm. All responses are anonymous and will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses. Non-identifiable data will be aggregated before reporting.

The following definitions will assist with understanding the questions in the survey:

*Informal public art* generally has no formal process, with flexibility on the temporal nature of the work, materials and subject. This allows the artwork to inhabit spaces which are overlooked or underinvested in by formal public art commissioning bodies. Eg. posters, paste-ups, stickers, murals, stencils, yarn "bombing", etc.

*Formal public art* is sanctioned by a governing body or similar, and has generally gone through a process of curation, development and implementation. Eg. statues, murals, installations, sculpture, mosaic, etc.

---

### Introductory Questions

---
What level of appreciation do you personally have for *formal* public art? // Vilken nivå av uppskattning har du personligen för *formell* offentlig konst?

For reference, "value" is defined as considering "something to be important or beneficial; have a high opinion of." // För referens definieras "värde" som att överväga "något som är viktigt eller fördelaktigt, ha en hög åsikt om."

1 2 3 4 5

Low value // lågt värde 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇  High value // högt värde
What level of appreciation do you personally have for *informal* public art? // Vilken nivå av uppskattning har du personligen för *informell* offentlig konst?

For reference, "value" is defined as considering "something to be important or beneficial; have a high opinion of."
// För referens definieras "värde" som att överväga "något som är viktigt eller fördelaktigt, ha en hög åsikt om."

Low value // lågt värde

High value // högt värde
How often do you visit spaces with curated art, for example art galleries? // Hur ofta besöker du utrymmen med kurerad konst, till exempel konstgallerier?

- Never // aldrig
- Once a year // en gång om året
- A couple of times a year // ett par gånger om året
- Regularly // regelbundet

Have you made/done/created art in the last year? // Har du gjort / skapad konst under det senaste året?

- Yes // Ja
- No // Nej

Have you ever wanted to make art and put it in a public space? // Har du någonsin velat göra konst och sätta den i ett offentligt utrymme?

- Yes // Ja
- No // Nej

Think about your favourite public space you like to spend time in. This can be your local park or playground, a large central square in the city, or a street you enjoy. Does it have any form of public art in it? // Tänk på ditt favoritutrymme som du gillar att spendera tid på. Det här kan vara din lokala park eller lekplats, en stor central torg i staden eller en gata du tycker om. Har det någon form av offentlig konst i den?

- Yes // Ja
- No // Nej
Thinking about this public space – how much public art do you think it *should* have in it? // Tänk på detta offentliga utrymme - hur mycket offentliga konst tycker du att det borde ha i det?

- More // mer
- The same amount // samma mängd
- Less // mindre

Do you think Stockholm has a lot of *informal* public art? // Tror du att Stockholm har mycket * informellt * offentlig konst?

- Yes, it has a lot // ja det har mycket
- No, it does not have much // nej det har inte mycket
- I don’t know // jag vet inte

How much *informal* public art do you think the city of Stockholm should have? // Hur mycket * informellt * offentlig konst tycker du att Stockholms stad ska ha?

- More // mer
- The current amount is good // nuvarande belopp är bra
- Less // mindre
- Not applicable or I don’t know // inte tillämpbar eller jag vet inte
Do you think any of the following types of *informal* public art should be considered a crime? // Tror du att någon av följande typer av *informell* offentlig konst bör betraktas som ett brott?

- Installation // installationskonst
- Paste-ups // klistra
- Stencilling // stencil
- Stickers // klistermärken
- Mural // mural
- Posters // posters
- None of the above // ingen av ovanstående

**Informal Public Art**

The following questions contain a statement, please tick the box which best reflects your level of agreement with the statement. The questions are on a scale whereby:

1= Strongly disagree  
2= Disagree  
3= Neither agree nor disagree  
4= Agree  
5= Strongly Agree

Please state how strongly you agree with these statements.

//

I like to see *formal* public art in places I pass through/spend time in. // Jag gillar att se *formell* offentlig konst på platser jag passerar / spenderar tid på.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree // Helt oenig  ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  Strongly agree // Helt enig
I like to see *informal* public art in places I pass through/spend time in. // Jag gillar att se *informell* offentlig konst på platser jag passerar / spenderar tid på.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree // Helt oenig</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</table>

Having *formal* public art in a place makes me feel more connected to it. // Att se *formell* offentlig konst gör att jag engagerar mig mer i platsen den är i.

<table>
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<th>5</th>
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</table>

I am more likely to spend more time in a place if it has *formal* public art in it, compared to if it didn’t. // Jag är mer benägen att spendera mer tid på en plats om där finns *formell* allmän konst , jämfört med om det inte finns.

<table>
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</table>
I think that *formal* public art enhances public space. // Jag tycker att *formell* offentlig konst förbättrar det offentliga rummet.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree // Helt oenig</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree // Helt oenig</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Formal* public art makes a place more memorable to me. // *Formell* allmän konst gör en plats mer minnesvärd för mig.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree // Helt oenig</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Informal* public art makes a place more memorable to me. // *Informell* allmän konst gör en plats mer minnesvärd för mig.

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The presence of *formal* public art in a space makes me more likely to revisit it more than once. // *formell* offentlig konst i ett utrymme gör mig mer benägen att återkomma mer än en gång.

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<td>☐</td>
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The presence of *informal* public art in a space makes me more likely to revisit it more than once. // *informell* offentlig konst i ett utrymme gör mig mer benägen att återkomma mer än en gång.

1  2  3  4  5

Strongly disagree // Helt oenig  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Strongly agree // Helt enig

I value that *informal* public art contributes to freedom of expression. // Jag uppskattar att *informell* offentlig konst bidrar till yttrandefriheten.

1  2  3  4  5

Strongly disagree // Helt oenig  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Strongly agree // Helt enig

I feel like I have a greater sense of ownership over places with *informal* public art in them. // Jag känner att jag har större äganderätt över platser med *informell* offentlig konst.

1  2  3  4  5

Strongly disagree // Helt oenig  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Strongly agree // Helt enig

The municipality/government should support *informal* public art in public spaces. // Kommunen / regeringen bör stödja *informell* offentlig konst på offentliga platser.

1  2  3  4  5

Strongly disagree // Helt oenig  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Strongly agree // Helt enig

How do you think *informal* public art benefits or impacts public space? // Hur tycker du *informell* offentlig konst gynnar eller påverkar det offentliga rummet?

Ditt svar

For each of the following images, which place would you prefer to spend more time in? // Enligt bilderna nedan, vilken plats skulle du föredra att spendera mer tid på?
with public art // med offentlig konst
without public art // utan offentlig konst

with public art // med offentlig konst
without public art // utan offentlig konst

with public art // med offentlig konst
without public art // utan offentlig konst
with public art // med offentlig konst
without public art // utan offentlig konst

with public art // med offentlig konst
without public art // utan offentlig konst

with public art // med offentlig konst
without public art // utan offentlig konst
with public art // med offentlig konst

without public art // utan offentlig konst

with public art // med offentlig konst

without public art // utan offentlig konst

with public art // med offentlig konst

without public art // utan offentlig konst
Demographic / Other Questions

To which gender identity do you most identify? // Vilken könsidentitet identifierar du dig mest med?

- Female // Kvinna
- Male // Manlig
- Övrigt: ________________________________

What is your age? // Hur gammal är du?

- Under 26
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-65
- Over 65 // Över 65
What is your occupation? // Vad är ditt yrke?

- Built environment/design (planning, architecture, design, academic in this field) // Konstruktion och design
- Art (artist, curator, art academic, art manufacturer) // Konst
- Both built environment and art // Både konstruktion och konst
- Övrigt: ________________________

What is your highest level of education? // Vad är din högsta utbildningsnivå?

- High school // Gymnasium
- Trade/technical/vocational training // Handel, teknisk, yrkesutbildning
- Undergraduate degree // Grundexamen
- Graduate degree // Examen
- None of the above // Inget av ovanstående
- Övrigt: ________________________

What is your postcode? // Vad är ditt postnummer?

Ditt svar ________________________

If you have any comments or views you would like to share on informal (or formal) public art, please do so here. Leave your email address here if you would like a copy of the results (minus personal details) emailed to you. // Om du har några kommentarer eller synpunkter du vill dela med dig av angående informell (eller formell) offentlig konst, gör det här. Lämna din e-postadress här om du vill ha en kopia av resultaten (minus personuppgifter) skickade till dig.

Ditt svar ________________________

SKICKA
Vilken nivå av uppskattning har du personligen för * informell * offentlig konst? // nej det har inte mycket

What level of appreciation do you have for informal public art? // not applicable or I don't know

Regularly // regelbundet

Once a year // en gång om året

A couple of times a year // ett par gånger om året

A couple of times a year // ett par gånger om året

How often do you visit spaces with curated art, for example art galleries? // Har du gjort / skapat konst under det senaste året?

Does it have any form of public art in it? // Tänk på ditt favoritutrymme som du gilla att spend time in. This can be your local park or street you enjoy. Does it have any form of public art in it? // Nej, det har inte mycket

The current amount is good // nuvarande belopp är bra

The same amount // samma mängd

More // mer

Yes // Ja

No // Nej

I don't know // jag vet inte

Not applicable or I don't know // inte tillämpbar eller jag vet inte

Does it have any form of public art in it? // Tänk på ditt favoritutrymme som du gilla att spend time in. This can be your local park or street you enjoy. Does it have any form of public art in it? // Nej, det har inte mycket

The current amount is good // nuvarande belopp är bra

The same amount // samma mängd

More // mer

Yes // Ja

No // Nej

I don't know // jag vet inte

Not applicable or I don't know // inte tillämpbar eller jag vet inte
av ovanstående

None of the above // ingen

None of the above // ingen

None of the above // ingen

None of the above // ingen

av ovanstående

installationskonst

av ovanstående

// mural

Stickers // klistermärken,

None of the above // ingen

None of the above // ingen

None of the above // ingen

None of the above // ingen

av ovanstående

av ovanstående

// mural

av ovanstående

Konst bör betraktas som

*informal* public art

Do you think any of the

in. // Jag gillar att se *

I am more likely to spend

plats om där finns *

I think that *informal* public art in a place makes me

*formell* allmän konst,

The presence of *informal* public art in a space makes me more likely to revisit the space makes me more likely to revisit
Contributes to freedom of expression. I value that informal public art gives a sense of more personalised space/place. It is Locally loved, straight from the heart, unique to the different and contributes to the overall essence or imagery. It brings character to an area. Sometimes make the space bigger and more colorful. Offers an escape in essence.

However, if there is the right amount of informal art in their art purely as a means of self expression or to wondering how the place will look the next time I come. Making it more pleasant. I personally really enjoy It can express every voice in the community Interest, community energy, decorative, witty and makes it more interesting place to be and adds add excitement and visual appeal to a space, and

I feel like I have a greater sense of spaces. Kommunen / regeringen bör
personal emotion. Importantly it can also become a conduit Depending on the art and its location, it can have a It is more lively, at the image of the population, less Makes each place individual/unique. Examplifies Allows people to take part in creating public spaces more interesting to be around. Is a better reflection of art. Truer expression. More It is a way for people to express themselves in a place more interesting to be around. Is a better reflection of art. Truer expression. More It can, but can also be problematic
with public art // med offentlig konst

Male // Manlig

Female // Kvinna

To which gender identity do you most identify?

What is your age?

What is your occupation?

What is your art education?

What is your postcode?

I live in France
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Age and Gender</strong></th>
<th><strong>Occupation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Location</strong></th>
<th><strong>Comments</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26-35 Male</td>
<td>Business analyst</td>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>I love informal public art, but I hate 'tagging' or art on important equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35 Male</td>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>Would love to see the results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35 Male</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>I generally think Informal art should be supported and is generally an improvement on a space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35 Male</td>
<td>Jury member</td>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>I think there is an important distinction to be made between informal public art that is edifying, and so-called informal art, in the right place can be enhancing, but poor quality art, or art in the wrong place is not.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Notes:**
- Brisbane has a public art policy and this has really paid off over time with so many interesting points to visit.
- I understand government angst about the difference between informal art and graffiti which is a shame.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>slussen // medborgplatsen // hornstull</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Weather</th>
<th>Without Art // With Art</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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Site Conditions

Counting

People

Cyclists

Other

Notes // Learnings