



ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

28 FEB - 15 MAR 2020

Resource developed by Julie Orchard 2020.

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Background information provided by the Public Programs Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales: Education notes: 40 Years Kaldor Public Art Projects: 2009 Tatzu Nishi. Coordinated and written by George Alexander, Tristan Sharp and Sharon Tofler.

The Adelaide Festival Education Program is generously supported by Lang Foundation & Thyne Reid Foundation.

A Doll's House

Tatzu Nishi

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A Doll's House

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Introduction

Australian Premiere / Australian Exclusive

Tatzu Nishi works in public places, often taking the monumental or symbolically overloaded objects that adorn these spaces – such as museum sculptures or embassy flags or weathercocks on church steeples, and constructs box-like domestic spaces around them. These simulated bedrooms and living rooms and authentic-looking rooms are all accessed by stairs, ladders or ramps, regardless of elevation. It's like being a young child, in a very different kind of cubby house or Alice in Wonderland where she shrinks to accommodate the exaggerated size of her surrounds. This flipping of the context and scale, from public to domestic, impersonal to private, has the edge of a joke. It's a way of making the known strange again; a healthy way of shifting our habitualised point of view.

*I'm not interested in art for experts.
I want art to come to the people, to
involve them in it, and this doesn't
happen in the gallery space.*

Tatzu Nishi, quoted in Laura Allsop,
'Outside in: Nishi Tatzu', Art Review
no 13, p30.



Image: Aurélien Mole

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A Doll's House Installation

The sprawling, three-level doll's house is made of iron and wood and visitors can walk through it, moving from a pink-painted living room and kitchen and beyond (but not to sit on the chairs!).

It is very much like a metaphor for the feeling a child develops about their own home, protected by the family. However, then they grow up and leave home, they experience the bitter reality of society. In Paris we found that the doll's house was out in the weather for two months and the childhood innocence gradually fades due to the elements.

I wanted to create a work that reminds me of a childhood memory, My work is influenced by the minimalist art of Donald Judd, I thought, through the layout of the interior and I tried to draw on the wallpaper much like a child drawing on a wall. It was my adventure as an artist. – Tatzu Nishi

It was first presented in 2018 on the external walls of the Palais de Tokyo Contemporary Art Museum in Paris. This was part of a childhood-themed group show called *Childhood: Another banana day for the dream-fish*. (This title comes from the 1948 short fiction story of J.D. Salinger).

A Doll's House differs from many of his previous works, which have incorporated or transformed historical monuments such as statues or public spaces in buildings, sometimes going as far as to turn them into functioning temporary hotel rooms.

In Adelaide it has been constructed at the intersection of Rundle Mall and Gawler Place. It is a free event and can accommodate 20 people at a time. There is ramp access

City of Adelaide Public Art Action Plan 2019-22

Public Art is for everyone

Public Art tells the story of Adelaide – it reflects our creativity and cultural richness

Public Art makes us stop, open our eyes, feel and imagine

Public Art connects people with places and spaces

Public Art can be many things – playful, reflective, unexpected, whimsical, challenging and fun

Public Art enables us to see the world a little differently

A Doll's House is the Adelaide Festival's gift to the people of Adelaide – placing its heart on the street

A Doll's House is delivered in partnership with the City of Adelaide and Adelaide Festival.

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Theme

Installation Art

In the 1920's and '30s, Russian constructivist Vladimir Tatlin broke away from the ideal sculptural space on the pedestal as traditionally offered by a gallery. Working from his sailor's knowledge of the physical things, he set up his sculptural works, like his 1917 Corner relief, made from vernacular materials, in the angles between the walls themselves. This shift to use of real materials in real space – interior corridors, ceilings, walls or floors, or even outdoor site – announced the emergence of installation art.

Installations vary enormously; they can be small and intimate, or massive and theatrical, which each artist's efforts in this area are as intimate and revealing as handwriting. Photography, video, painting, sculpture, all the mediums of installation, shed their autonomy; the object itself is not the work but the system of relationships.

Installation art is an artistic genre of three-dimensional works that are often site-specific and designed to transform the perception of a space.



Image: Aurélien Mole

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The artist



Tatzu Nishi was born 1960 in Nagoya, Japan and currently lives and works in Cologne, Germany.

He studied at Musashino Art University in Tokyo and later in Germany at Kunstakademie, Munster. When Tatzu first arrived in Europe he was struck by the number of solemn monuments, and decided to try and do something to bring them much closer to the public.

In 2001, as part of the Skulptur Proect Munster, he built a house around Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen's public sculpture, the giant concrete Pool Balls 1977, and Nishi's public art installations seem to follow the line of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's wraps.

Other public projects include *Cheri in the sky*, at the Renzo Piano designed Maison Hermes 8F Forum in the Ginza district of Tokyo; a hotel room for the Christ statue on St Anne's Square in Ghent, Belgium titled, *Gott erscheint* (god appears); a functioning hotel room, *Villa Victoria* for the Liverpool Biennial; and the one-room apartment that surrounded the small angel shaped weathercock right at the very top, 40 metres above ground of the 14th century cathedral in Basel, Switzerland. His recent exhibitions include MAM Project 006: Nishi Tatzu at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, where, unusually, he made his own monument rather than working with a readymade one.

Technically *A Doll's House* is not attributed to Nishi but to 'Amabouz Taturō' – one of his many pseudonyms. He sees the different names as part of his art. His real name in English is Tatsuro Nishino. Tazro Naschino was the first pseudonym and he uses Tatzu Nishi often.

It is an art work to change pseudonyms. I found 'exchange' as an art work concept when I was a student, but I did not have any money to create art work with the concept of exchange. For example, an idea of exchanging the statues of Saddam Hussein and Abraham Lincoln. And when I thought about exchange around myself, it is not exactly exchange, but I got an idea to change my pseudonym. For my first overseas trip to Germany, my name on the passport was changed from Japanese to English. – Tatzu Nishi

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After the visit

1. Research Australian installation artists.

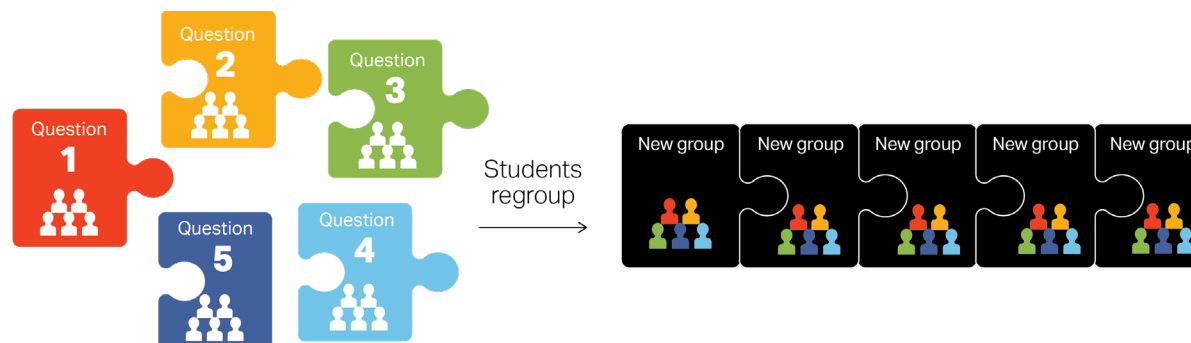
Questions to consider:

- What is the medium they use?
- Where are they installed?
- Are they permanent or temporary installations?

2. Make a model of *A Doll's House*

- As a single structure – one or two stories. Using recycled boxes and cardboard. Material scraps for curtains/furnish covers
- Create separate rooms with furniture and with playdough or similar the people to inhabit it

3. Jigsaw activity:



4. In small groups explore the following questions and bring together to discuss findings:

- What roles do art galleries play in creating the value of an artwork?
- Should an artwork be able to exist on its own without being placed in a gallery environment?
- What is the difference between an artists' public installation and those found in shopping centres/office foyers?

5. Tour the City of Adelaide following the trail of public art.

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[A Doll's House Timelapse - Adelaide Festival](#)

[Article on the exhibition of *A Doll's House* in Paris](#)

[Untitled: A controversial piece](#)

[Summary of Donald Judd](#)

American artist Donald Judd's installation *Untitled* is a clear example of the challenging nature of much contemporary art. A grey, discoloured mould of a triangle in reinforced concrete, it is stark, bold and minimalist. It occupies a large section of the courtyard and was commissioned by the Art Gallery of South Australia. Judd arrived in Adelaide in May 1974.

[City of Adelaide Public Art Plan](#)

[John Kaldor: Kaldor Art Projects](#)

[Christo: Wrapped Coast. One million square feet. Little Bay, Australia 1968-69](#)

