
[p v i collective: biography]



founded in 1998 by steve bull and kelli mccluskey, pvi collective are an award winning independent arts group based in western australia. artists in the group have backgrounds in visual art, sculpture, new media, performance, psychology and live art and each contribute their skills towards creating site specific artworks for galleries and alternative spaces. works are generated from a group process of extensive research, conceptualisation and experimentation. research is both theoretical and practical including members of the group posing as tourists for one project and enlisting in the army for another. as a result, the company produce installation art work combining public acts of intervention. often with a dissenting focus, work questions various forms of social control that we live under. pvi seek to actively engage viewers within their artwork - encouraging interaction, participation and debate.

the installation aspect of pvi collective's practice acts as a means of documenting and communicating their broader activities. materials and objects are relevant as tools or elements within the larger initiatives of their artwork, but can also be a revealing insight into activities that often take place on the streets. *s n i f f e r* (2003) involved tracking and stockpiling a variety of day-to-day items from commercial retail stores such as baby food, nail polish, bandages, paper, sanitary pads & shampoo, materials banned from use in iraq due to their 'potential' ability to be used in the construction of terrorist weaponry.

panopticon: sydney, is a site-specific sculptural installation documenting a live art event, involving intervention in the surveillance camera monitored tourist precinct of the rocks & circular quay, an area close to the museum of contemporary art, sydney. the group provided a free privacy service for people, through appropriating the use of umbrellas and adapting them as a privacy tool, allowing an unsupervised journey while under the scope of the security cameras. the work had its first incarnation in taiwan during october 2003. over the course of one day pvi offered this service to travelers using the heavily monitored underground railway network. five individual travelers took part in the exercise and were cocooned in a pod of umbrellas and navigated on their journey by the pvi team. three people made it to their destination whilst two were stopped and turned away. pvi's tactical act was further developed into a sculptural installation for exhibition during november 2003 in the gallery at taipei artist village. *panopticon: perth* and *panopticon: sydney* have since been developed during 2004 offering members of the public the opportunity to undertake an everyday task, such as posting a letter or visiting a bank, whilst enclosed in a private space.

"the lateral, even dysfunctional re-use of the ubiquitous umbrella in the panopticon series posits old technology against new, as well as the individual against the system. instead of protection from natural elements, the umbrella is utilised as a barrier against invasive technology. patently inadequate to the task, its very failure poetically highlights the extensive use of technologies of control within our public spaces, while simultaneously demonstrating both the vulnerability of the individual and their capacity for resistance." – vivienne webb, curator, mca, sydney.

pvi have a subsidised studio space in perth, western australia [pvi lab]. co-founders kelli mccluskey & steve bull were recently awarded a 3 month visual arts asialink residency in taiwan, have attended national workshops & masterclasses including; australia councils 'alchemy' for contemporary artists, 'time_place_space1' hybrid arts workshops, wagga wagga, australia and participated in australia's 'electrofringe festival' in 2002, debating on a 'surveillance art' panel. pvi artists kate neylon and chris williams recently attended the national review of live art in glasgow uk. pvi have performed at the uk touring component of the 'national review of live art' and been involved in numerous group shows and exhibitions including 'primavera' sydney, australia, 'putting on an act festival', australia, perth international arts festival, 'do it' and 'tactical intervention strategies'. in 1999 pvi received a fellowship for innovative new work and in 2000 were awarded 'best artwork' at the west australian fringe festival. pvi have received regular project funding from australia council for the arts and state funding from arts wa.

co-founders of pvi teach live art at curtin university fine art campus in perth and company members provide web design & video production training & services throughout western australia. the company have recently been granted australia council funding for a national tour of art work; the 'tts: australia' project, a site specific artwork for four cities in australia that takes place on a 22 seater bus and its surrounding city streets. the tour will be preceded by a national residency with arts workshops held by pvi in each city.