

KULTUR-ALL MAKAAAN



The Kulture-All Makaan

The Kultur-All Makaan is a unique mobile art centre.

It is an intimate yurt-like structure designed and hosted by culturally diverse artists, artisans, and performers in collaboration with local partners and Punctum. Developed on Djaara Country in Central Victoria, it results from collaboration between Hazara, South Sudanese, Karen artisans and artists, Anglo-Saxon designers and artists associated with Punctum, Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services, and local cultural institutions. Kultur in several northern European languages means “culture” and Makaan in different Persian and African languages means “the dwelling of...” also “food” in Indonesian.

The Kultur-All Makaan is a place of daily cultural and artistic nourishment with and for all.

Background

Two critical things happened that ensured the development of the Kultur-All Makaan.

In late 2015, an aggressive group of far-right extremists gathered in Rosalind Park, Bendigo to protest the local Council’s planning decision accepting the building of a mosque. Members of this group were later arrested and criminally charged under Victoria’s Racial and Religious Tolerance Act.

At the same time, in the Bendigo area, Punctum was creating our Public Cooling House gathering space and performances. It opened to the public in early 2018 and unexpectedly, it immediately resonated with culturally diverse people who expressed how the space felt familiar, safe, and calming.

One of the questions we ask ourselves is “What is the nature of what we’re creating doing?” In this instance, it was important to actively resist this racism. We felt that the nature of this resistance would be more productive if through art and collaboration it could build bridges and open doorways connecting people across cultures and celebrating creative practice and cultural contributions.

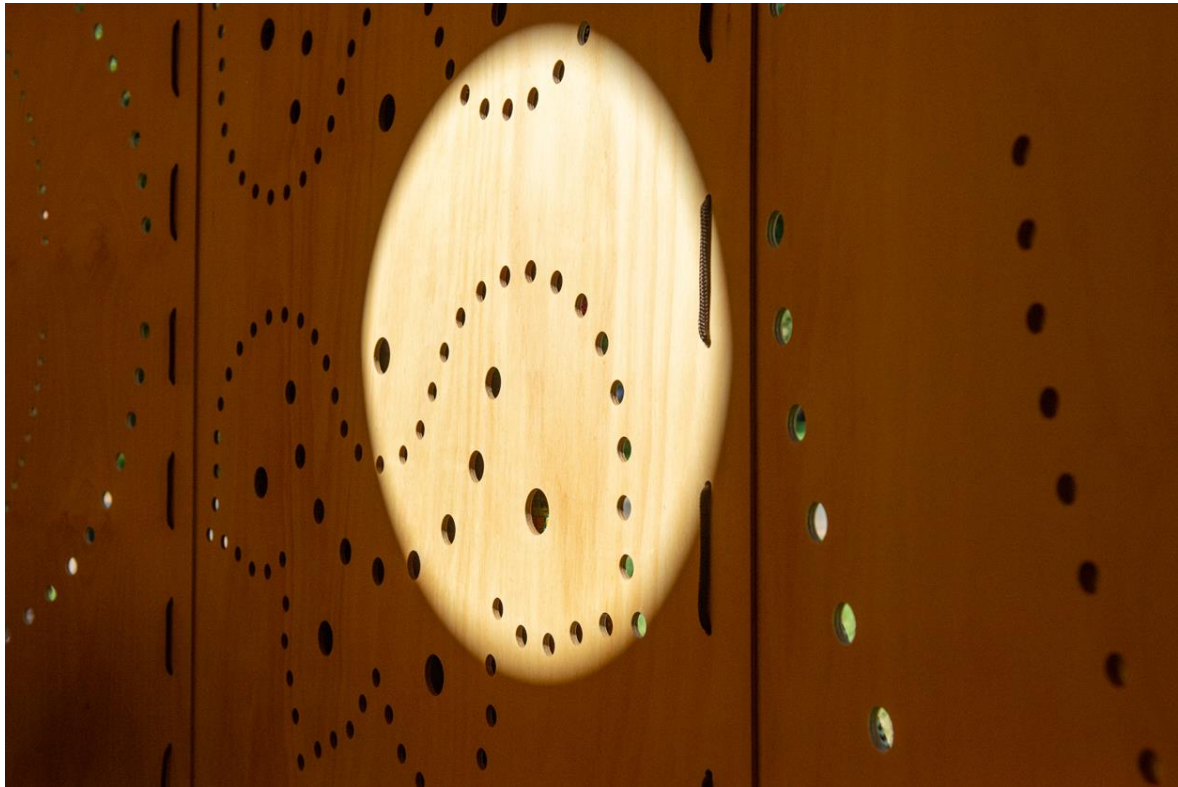
It was here we realised that the Kultur-All Makaan could become a structural template for a new kind of cultural centre and be redesigned, programmed, and presented by culturally diverse artists, artisans and crew in our area—in this instance South Sudanese, Hazara and Karen artists and artisans.

Linto Thomas, coordinator and manager with Loddon Campaspe Multi-Cultural Services (LCMS) a not-for-profit organisation that empowers people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to participate fully in Australian society, joined the project. Through his role with LCMS, he introduced artists and arts facilitators/ambassadors to the project. Together these artists, artisans and arts facilitators with their communities and other artists associated with Punctum, and as a group we created the Kultur-All Makaan. Government, philanthropic organisations, and local cultural institutions also supported the project.

We then built connections between the staff at major cultural institutions and the artists and their communities through holding workshops and meetings in their venues and discussing their exhibitions so that familiarity and connection were constructed between artists and participants and each institutions team. Next steps saw us undertaking shared design of gatherings, workshops and working groups to understand peoples’ relationships to creating and testing the boundaries of their practice and where that might lead individual artists, artisans, performers and production and construction crew.

After 18 months, the Kultur-All Makaan was launched. It proved itself to be a cultural centre with a tangible atmosphere of welcome and celebration. Its name, exterior design, interior fit-out, performances and program were devised by the entire group of artists and artisans with whom we collaborated. It was the regional design project curated as a part of NGV's Melbourne Design Week 2020 and profiled in Garland magazine - an on-line magazine celebrating culturally diverse.

In this way and many others, the Kultur-All Makaan is a doorway to connection, social cohesion and a home for strength-based community development.



What they said:

Evaluation from interviews with artists, artisans, partners, participants, along with audience members at its two-day presentation, reveal the following social cohesion strengths:

Artists said they felt seen and visible, having a unique culture, and had a sense of outcomes from work. All artist participants identified experiencing a sense of 'pride in culture' and visibility.

Arts Facilitators cited a feeling and experience of 'a family', community, friendship, and connection.

Participating community members in workshops all felt very positive about their role in the project. Friendships and connections between cultural groups emerged throughout the project.

Voluntary participants who joined in to assist at various stages of the project cited feeling valued and visible – that their culture was visible, and their contribution was valued.

Cultural institution partners observed and experienced democratic processes in creative processes, self-determination and shared responsibilities. They reflected on audiences of their institutions, on cultural accessibility (and ways to enhance this) and how they could enhance the visibility of their institutions to culturally diverse audiences in the future.

Key community partner – Loddon Campaspe Multi Cultural Services

“The project allowed for trust to develop, strong connections to emerge and for the project to adapt and respond to a broader community of participants. Across recruitment, creative development and delivery, there was significant and authentic engagement with participants. Community leaders have emerged out of this project. They are champions of art and the project gave room for confidence building, connecting and trusted people in this.”

Audiences: post-performance surveys captured key words: *cultures, different, experience, music, love, joy, culture, cultural, amazing, make, in common, thanks, fun, family, opportunity.*

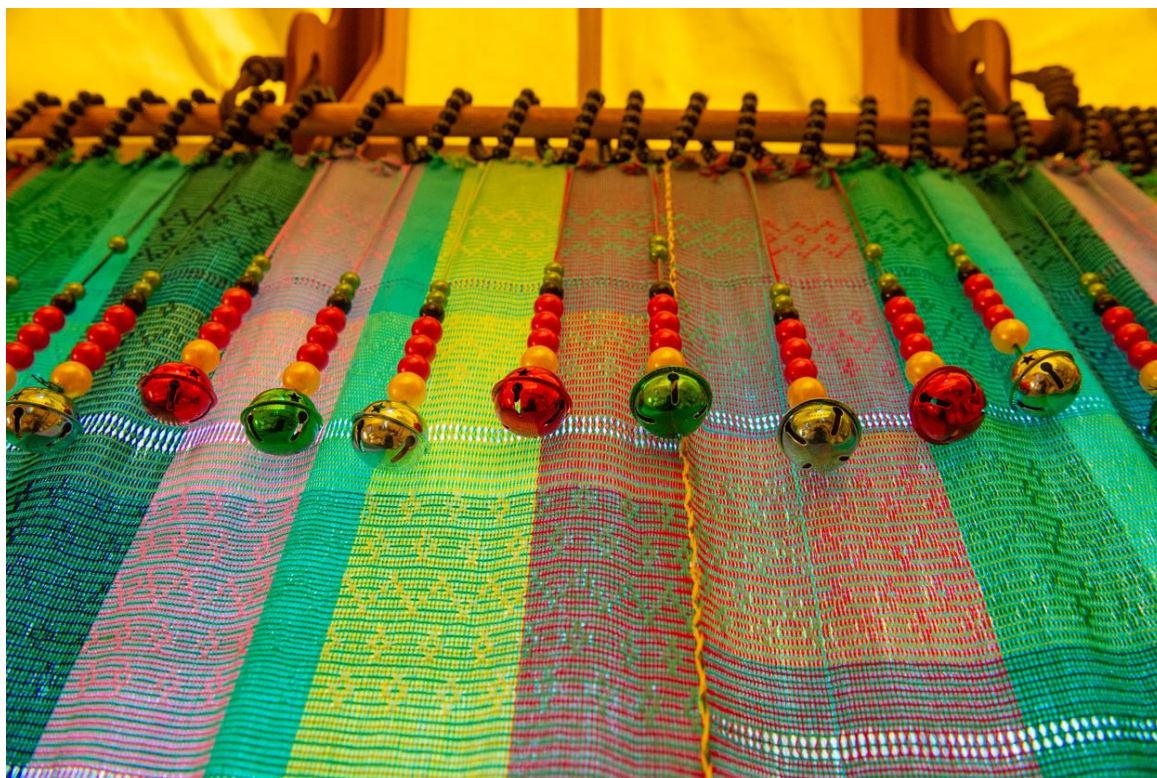
How you might use it and co-design with us:

The Kultur-All Makaan celebrates arts-led cultural leadership through strength-based community development processes. It opens the door to:

Maker Workshops, Music Workshops, Writing Workshops, Professional Artist Incubator, Conversations/Story-telling/Talks & Forums, Music / Song / Dance Performances, Spoken Word and Poetry Performances, Intimate Performances, Pop Up initiatives, Gallery Space for exhibited original work, Child & Parent / Youth Group Activities, Inter-Cultural Digital Streaming Space.

It bridges Cultural, Urban, Regional, Work and Play divides whilst building connections and:

- Leading through autonomous and self-determined activities.
- Supporting artisans from culturally diverse communities to develop and create new work to present for the Kultur-All Makaan.
- Supporting professional artists and practices from culturally diverse communities to develop, create, present and/or program new work for the Kultur-All Makaan.
- Supporting culturally diverse production and event management crew to work on the build, roll out and pull down of the Kultur-All Makaan.
- Supporting culturally diverse marketing co-ordination and communications.



Recommended 5-step Co-design time frame

- A reconnaissance to establish parameters with key partners
- Meet and greet celebration with artists and artisans
- A four-week workshop and rehearsal period spread over 3 months in the lead up to the Kultur-All Makaan activation
- Outside: Install, public preview day, opening day or night, two to three days of performances and activities, pull-down. Inside: as per above but the structure can remain for further programming activities where partnered by and institution
- De-briefs and next steps.

Contexts:

The Kultur-All Makaan is perfect for festivals or as a stand-alone event/space. It activates outdoor spaces (parks, courtyards, gardens, grounds of cultural clubs) as well as indoor spaces as an art object in galleries or other exhibition spaces.

COVID-19 Context:

The activities inside the Kultur-All Makaan can be live streamed in COVID contexts. In 2020/21 it was streamed and experienced live according to varying restrictions. For periods during tougher restrictions we are currently investigating how it might be experienced as a digital on-line shared space.

About the structure:

- Footprint: A circular 6 metre x 4-metre-high low impact, flat-pack design in which many forms of cultural exchange and performance can take place.
- Clearance: 8 metres diameter x 5 metres height
- Capacity: holds up to 20 seated audience members
- Location: External or interior and level site
- Site Access: Transport access for unloading a 3-tonne truck. Access for directly unloading contents of a 3-tonne truck or direct unloading to a minimum 1.5m entry point and egress. If outside can be powered by one power outlet or if no electrical power supply, a tiny generator (eg Honda 2.2KVA)
- Power:
- Build: Built in six hours by a crew of four.
Pulled down in four hours by a crew of four.
- Other: If an external site – shade close by for those who prefer to experience it from the outside.
Depending on programming a 'backstage' trestle table, and access to amenities for changing outfits.



Public Documentation:

Garland Magazine:

<https://garlandmag.com/article/makaan/>

Punctum Website:

<https://www.punctum.com.au/works/kultur-all-makaan>

Facebook Streams:

Shreya:

<https://www.facebook.com/punctuminc/videos/197343984870701>

Sth Sudanese Choir:

<https://www.facebook.com/punctuminc/videos/3047287498661412>

Fatima:

<https://www.facebook.com/punctuminc/videos/557390141546084>

Karen Dancers:

<https://www.facebook.com/punctuminc/videos/681875462583019>

Dabora:

<https://www.facebook.com/punctuminc/videos/210483966727449>

Melbourne Design Week:

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/program/kultur-all-makaan/>

