

Lost in Laneways! Finding the Hidden Treasures in Melbourne

Indah MUTIA

Lecturer - Architecture Study Program, Faculty of Engineering,
Lambung Mangkurat University - INDONESIA
mutia07@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

A city in Spain taped its decline by inserting a 'gigantic' building into the heart of Bilbao for boasting its global recognition, yet Melbourne started with modest things, revitalization of a fine-grain urban fabric - a gridiron plan with its lanes system - as a vital identity for the city. It has been arranged in a creative manner over decades by merging arts and cultural potentials into urban regeneration agenda. Currently, Melbourne reclaims its center into one of the most liveable and emerging creative cities in 21st Century.

The idea of a creative city introduces a set of preconditions for a place or a city which can generate ideas and inventions. Within the broad picture of urban regeneration in Melbourne CBD, laneways perform a significant character and roles as setting for small grassroot creative activities. Through a descriptive discourse, this paper will share some experiences in creative collaboration and the making of place. Particular, it will examine the establishment of a creative milieu in Melbourne laneways by unfolding hard and soft infrastructures attached to them.

From a set of policy, strategies and demonstrated initiatives such as Laneway Commissions, designated graffiti walls and Creative Spaces, laneways as a creative milieu is highlighted by a continuous intimate space for pedestrian network with active building frontages, some dull brick walls and heritage streetscapes that operate as hardware, a physical setting for various activities. As for soft infrastructures, it outlines the role of policy makers with its creative planning regulatory and delivery; a solid multicultural and tolerant community; the role of universities and research hubs; individuals and artists-led initiatives; as well as the present of 'middleground' layer as significant attributes to foster creative spirit.

Keywords: *Melbourne, Laneways, urban regeneration, a creative milieu, arts strategy*