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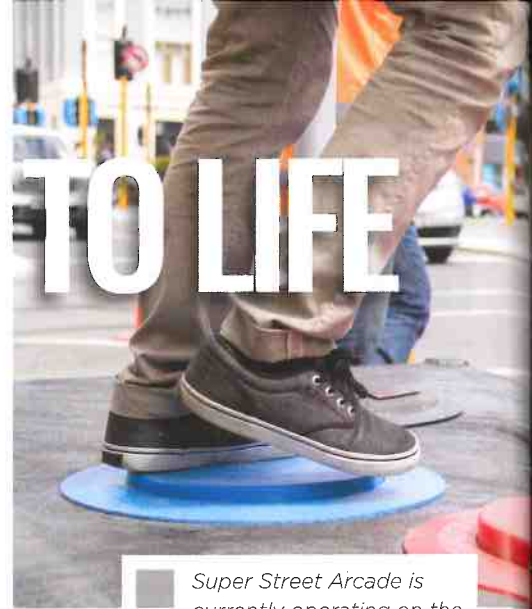


Gap Filler's Coralie Winn has been injecting life into vacant city spaces.

HOW GAP FILLER INJECTED FUN BACK INTO VACANT SPACES

In November 2010, while fences continued to surround the dusty core of Christchurch's CBD, Coralie Winn, Ryan Reynolds and Andrew Just joined creative forces and, with much help, took some of the city's vacant spaces and injected them with life - both in the literal and figurative sense.

Canterbury Build talks to Winn about transitional projects and bringing ideas to life.



Super Street Arcade is currently operating on the Corner of Tuam and High Streets. Photographer: Erica Austin.



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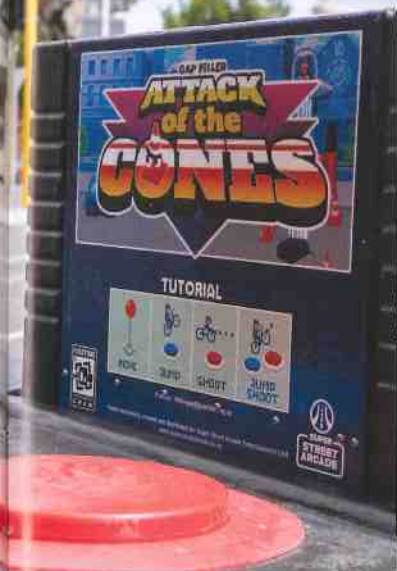


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Winn was working at the Arts Centre on the Artist in Residence programme and performing with the Free Theatre before the post-quake development of Gap Filler.

It was intended as a one-off project; transforming an empty city site into a temporary space featuring a garden café, petanque court, live music and outdoor cinema. But the project quickly took on a life of its own.

"It was really successful, with many different kinds of people getting involved and coming along," Winn says.

"They talked about seeing temporary projects elsewhere. So, we thought: why not here? What would it do for Christchurch if those with ideas could be supported to realise them?"

Following February 2011, Gap Filler evolved, putting its creative energy into an outdoor cinema in Beckenham. Later that year came the Lyttelton Petanque Club and the Think Differently Book Exchange. In early 2012 came the Cycle-Powered Cinema and the Dance-O-Mat. After being told the latter 'wouldn't work as Kiwis won't dance in public', what is arguably the most popular Gap Filler project has proven those sentiments wrong.

In Peter Young's documentary, *The Art of Recovery*, a flamenco group teaches scooter-riding teens some moves, with a boundary-breaking dance party perfectly capturing the spirit of the project. Even Prince Charles and Camilla danced there.

"We can draw lessons from Dance-O-Mat that can be applied to permanent development of public spaces. Temporary projects allow us to experiment and test ideas in a low-risk way."

The Pallet Pavilion was the largest, most ambitious project. Made from 3000 borrowed,

blue CHEP pallets by hundreds of volunteers, it captured imagination and sparked conversation around what temporary architecture was and could be.

Gap Filler continues to adapt to the changing city, with current projects like Ping Pong, Super Street Arcade and Open City not occupying post-quake sites. Although the realisation has changed, they continue to empower citizens to transform their surroundings. "Initially Gap Filler was about community, hope and trauma recovery," Winn says.

"Now, it's asking who has the right to do things in a city and how can we enable people to bring more ideas to life? Often, members of the public are not enabled to participate in shaping their spaces and places.

"People ask me 'what will you do when all the gaps are filled?' But there are gaps in any city, and there will always be land that won't be built on or empty buildings.

"The rebuilt Christchurch is at risk of being too homogenous and consumer-focused. We want to ensure the energy, colour, critique and spirit of the post-quake period has an ongoing presence in this city, to make it different from other cities and ultimately a city with something for everyone."

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