

## Vancouver's Trans Am Totem needs new home before it ends up in artist's driveway

Large public art installation in False Creek is reaching end of its run with the Vancouver Biennale

Natasha Frakes · CBC News · Posted: Mar 06, 2018 6:00 AM PT | Last Updated: 6 hours ago



The Trans Am Totem was built by Vancouver artist Marcus Bowcott and his wife Helene Aspinall specifically for its location in False Creek. (CBC)

Love it or hate it, one of Vancouver's most memorable pieces of public art will be coming down in September 2018, and so far, it doesn't have anywhere to go.

The highly Instagrammed installation of five cars stacked on top of an old-growth cedar tree, known as the Trans Am Totem, was created by artist Marcus Bowcott and his wife Helene Aspinall, specifically for its current location near the Georgia Viaduct, but because it is part of a Vancouver Biennale public art exhibition, it was only scheduled for a two-year run.

That timeline was extended by the city for another two years, but a representative says when that comes to an end in September, the city will be looking to remove it.



Artist Marcus Bowcott is hoping he will find a buyer on the Lower Mainland for his sculpture. (CBC)

Bowcott says he always knew it would likely be temporary, but that the Vancouver Biennale had told him there was a chance it could be bought and donated to the city to become a permanent fixture. It didn't happen.

"They've just informed me that it's not part of their plans," said Bowcott.

It's left Bowcott in a bit of a sticky situation to try and find a new home for the large sculpture, which he hopes can stay on the Lower Mainland, since it was created with the area's history in mind.

"I built it for the False Creek site, because, you know, that area used to be Squamish ... they lived here and it was old growth trees," and he said now, it's a consumer hub filled with cars.

Bowcott says the Vancouver Biennale is asking for \$250,000 US for the Trans Am Totem, of which Bowcott would get half, but so far there haven't been any interested buyers.

The Vancouver artist says if he can't find someone to take it, he may have to resort to storing it in his driveway. An option he knows at least one of his neighbours would not be thrilled about.

"I don't think she would really like Trans Am Totem in my front driveway, but, you know, if I don't have anywhere else to put it, it's going to go in the front driveway."

But Bowcott says he isn't disappointed with the current situation, because the piece has already received such an incredible response, and it's helped him to gain some international exposure.

The artist was commissioned to create a similar piece in Munich last year, but with German cars stacked on an upside-down willow tree.





An Apparatus for Divining Capital was created by Marcus Bowcott and his wife Helene Aspinnall. It was installed in Munich, Germany in 2017. (Marcus Bowcott)

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Bowcott was also recently invited to Israel to showcase some of his work at an art show on consumerism and shopping.

As for those in the area who have grown accustomed to seeing the sculpture as part of their neighbourhood, many are excited for what the future will bring with the city's plan for the redevelopment of False Creek.

"I know that we will have art all over. I'm confident in the city's ability to provide that with this whole infrastructure that's going to change," said local resident Lorna Seifried.

Jeff Terrell is also often in the area and says he would like to see as much art and green space in the city as possible.

"I might be a little sad to know the art work's being taken down," said Terrell, but he won't lose sleep over it.

Resident Bjorn Julson says the installation isn't bad. He's seen worse,

"It's soft on the eyes. Like, it looks kinda cool. It's definitely better than a lot of other city art, that's for sure."

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