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NEWCASTLE, AUSTRALIA

Highlights in the This Is Not Art story

1998

This Is Not Art began life as the **National Young Writers Festival** and the **National Student Media Conference** - two events supported by and organised from the Octapod Association - which took place in the week after the Newcastle Fringe Festival in that year. The *National Young Writers Festival* comprised of 70 sessions and 300 people from outside Newcastle attending. It attracted major press coverage in The Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian, ABC Local Radio, Triple J, major literary journals and elsewhere and generated major "word of mouth" publicity that led to a flood of support for the following year's festival.

1999

Electrofringe (which had previously been organised by a committee of the Fringe Festival) also became an independent festival that took place in conjunction with the Writers Festival and the Student Media Conference. As the event doubled in size and scale the audience increased to over a thousand attendees.

2000

With the addition of **Sound Summit** (National Independent Electronic Labels Conference) and an Independent Radio Conference, the term *This Is Not Art* was coined to explain the five very different but interconnected events and the audience grew substantially again. Two and half thousand people came to Newcastle for the festivals, selling out all budget and mid-range accommodation in the city. For the first time, the festival included a massive (the Southern Hemisphere's largest) electronic music performance component comprising over 200 acts.

2001

This is Not Art became Newcastle's largest annual weekend tourism event – attracting thousands of visitors from every state in Australia, New Zealand and around the world. The festival brought in over \$1.5 million into the Newcastle economy and over 40% of the people attending come from interstate or overseas.

2002

Triple J became a major partner of the festival, providing full run of station radio promotion, live broadcasts and editorial support. New elements included a major shopfront art program (using empty shops throughout the inner city of Newcastle), The Asia Pacific Indymedia Conference, a conference for postgraduate students, and the rebirth of the Independent Radio Conference, which last took place in 2000.

2003

This is Not Art expanded to include TINA FM, a local radio station

broadcasting for the duration of the event, **Critical Animals**, a post graduate student's conference and TINA shop, selling wares of independent artists. Attendances soared to over 3,000 people.

2004

Bigger still with the inclusion of EAR (Environment Awareness Festival), other exciting new projects and the Honeysuckle Precinct (next to train station) hosting the festival club, zine fair and outdoor solar cinema. EAR hosted a Kooragang Island windmill party and a partnership with Newcastle Live Sites was established.

2005

This Is Not Art developed a stronger visual presence in the city with wide program of exhibitions (*Otakulture, Australia...Where?, Stuffed*) bringing their colour. Closure of Auckland street to traffic to host massive zine fair, independent artists' market and outdoor stage – the sunshiney street was lined with coloured flags to announce *This Is Not Art* to Sunday strollers. Inclusion of *Strike*, a national convention of aerosol artists. **TiN (This Is Not) Radio** was broadcast on 100.5 FM for the month surrounding the festival.

2006

Electrofringe & Octapod presented a yearlong program of new media workshops and masterclasses. The National Young Writer's Festival, Critical Animals and Sound Summit enthralled and entertained over four thousand punters. TIN radio took over the air waves, bringing the latest news and updates.