

# colour out of confusion

Christchurch has a creative answer to a shaken-up CBD.



## Gap Filler projects include...

- A Dance-o-Mat where you put coins into a converted washing machine and your dance party starts on a temporary dance floor
- A street corner mini-library
- A mural by Jen McBride titled *Knit Happens* (pictured at right)
- A temporary (weekend-long) sauna set-up
- A temporary cycle-powered cinema using patrons' pedal power to activate movies
- Painted pianos on vacant lots around the city and suburbs
- Gap Golf – mini-golf holes on vacant lots in various city locations

For more, visit [www.gapfiller.org.nz](http://www.gapfiller.org.nz).

**Left** Ash Keating's impressive *Concrete Propositions 2012*, courtesy of the artist and Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne, Australia. It was created using fire extinguishers charged with Resene paint.

**Right** Gap Filler's Coralie Winn in front of Jen McBride's mural *Knit Happens*.





**Coralie Winn** is one pivotal power-house – albeit an increasingly tired one – of the post-earthquake Christchurch City phenomenon called Gap Filler.

Gap Filler was begun by a few creative souls in the wake of the initial September 2010 earthquake to temporarily ‘activate’ the many blank sites of ex-demolition wasteland that were fast populating the city. These sites have now become backdrops, art galleries, or places to congregate for dancing, live music, or tournaments. The initiative was scaled up after the February 2011 disaster and is now a charitable trust; Coralie certainly has her work cut out.

Gap Filler projects are always unexpected, off-beat or thought-provoking, nearly always colourful. And to many GF undertakings, Resene has donated many litres of recycled waterborne paint.

Creative New Zealand, the Tindall Foundation, the Todd Foundation, the Canterbury Community Trust, and the Vodafone Canterbury Fund have all been financial donors.

Sometimes a vacant lot will feature little more than rubble or bits of mangled metal. But what’s left might be a safe wall; a seismically strong side of a neighbouring building. This will then be used as an artist’s canvas, such as the one at left by Melbourne artist Ash Keating and created using fire extinguishers charged with Resene paint. His dynamic work aims to provoke questions about how widely tilt-slab concrete should be used in the city’s rebuild.

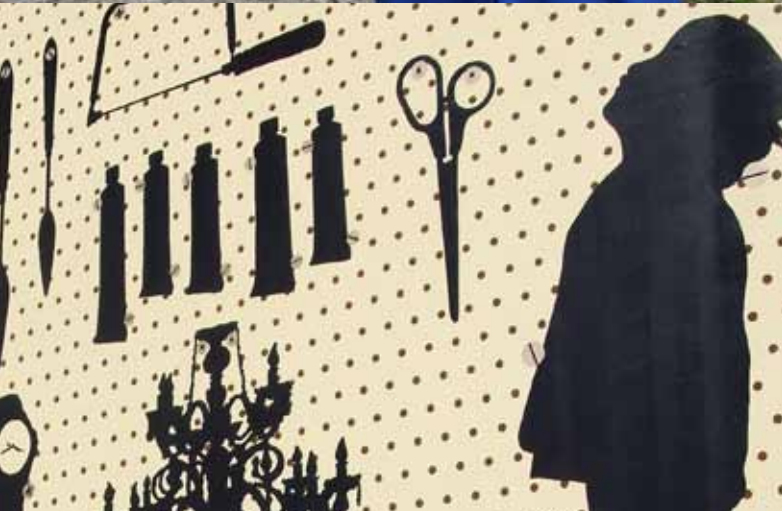
Another large wall mural features a shadow-board of tools. It’s a reminder of all the necessary, practical items rendered inaccessible and lost forever as a result of the quakes.

A recent project requiring hundreds of volunteers was the Summer Pallet Pavilion, conceived as a seasonal space for events. Built from 3000 blue wooden pallets, it houses a secret garden as an oasis amidst rubble and emptiness.

Coralie believes the Gap Filler initiative is psychologically and socially necessary for Christchurch people. While the rest of the world moved on, locals were left without the meeting places, bars, restaurants, art galleries and venues which made life in the city vibrant and interesting. Landmark buildings have been replaced with what looks like a vast, moon-surfaced car park. Says Coralie: “Everyone realises the rebuild will take years; decades even. So by temporarily filling areas with positive, colourful, quirky spaces to hang out in, we’re rejecting the passive ‘wait for things to happen’ mentality.”


She’s amazed by how many people have been willing to volunteer time, money or recycled materials. Getting the community involved has been good, she enthuses. “People in responsible positions in the post-quake city are now exhausted. That’s why it’s great for volunteers to be rebuilding the city in this way.

“I am here to make sure people can engage with a colourful central city again. Getting involved with Gap Filler is a way of processing what’s happened here, and making something creative and resourceful emerge from it. We’re helping create a new identity for this city here and now. It’s exciting!” [H](#)



A large wall mural features a shadow-board of tools as a reminder of all the necessary, practical items rendered inaccessible and lost forever in the quakes.

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Resene  
Yarra 

Resene  
Half Escape 