



Media Release

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Geelong Gallery supports community mural projects—leading a visual arts legacy



Our Lady Star of the Sea Ocean Grove mural project, 2023



Our Lady Star of the Sea Ocean Grove mural project, 2023



St Thomas Aquinas Primary School mural project, 2022

Geelong Gallery has been working with First Nations artists and cultural educators, **Norm Stanley**, a proud Kurnai and Wotjabaluk man and **Nikki McKenzie**, a proud Wadawurrung woman from Wurri – Ki Culture, and Geelong-born artist **RONE** on a series of murals throughout the region. The mural projects have engaged over 1,000 students and teachers, and highlight Geelong Gallery's ongoing commitment to community outreach, facilitating connection between artists, educators and young people throughout the region.

Students at **St Thomas Aquinas Primary School** in Norlane from across all year levels worked alongside **Norm Stanley** and **Nikki McKenzie** in addition to Geelong Gallery Educators to design and create an important legacy project for their school through a series of workshops exploring students' connection to place. The project aimed to create authentic and meaningful connections for young people to celebrate the rich and thriving culture, knowledge and experience of our First Nations people and for every Koorie person to feel strong in their cultural identity. The mural, pictured left, explored the question of what connects us to Wadawurrung Country. This project was supported by Creative Futures Design Fund.

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School Arts Teacher, **Narelle Norman** commented 'I only have positive feedback about the whole process, the students were fully engaged during all the sessions and developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of local indigenous culture through Norm's cultural talks and stories. It's so lovely being outside on yard duty and watching different students go up close to the mural and interact with it.'

Currently underway at **Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School** in Ocean Grove, over 300 students from across levels 4, 5 and 6 have again worked alongside First Nations artist Norm Stanley, First Nations educator Nikki McKenzie and Geelong Gallery Educators to design a mural focused on 'Connection to Place.' The project has addressed curriculum imperatives to teach students about First Nations history and culture and gain important connections with Traditional Owners and First Nations people. This mural will be launched to the school community on Friday 28 April and is proudly supported by the Geelong Community Foundation.

Geelong Gallery Support Educator, **Kirsten Penzes** commented on the benefits of the project 'extraordinary stories of place were explored by the students during the workshops with Norm and Nikki. The students are gaining so much knowledge, observation and connecting memory and stories to place which is such a rich experience.'

Currently in the final weeks of installation, Geelong Gallery is pleased to partner with Geelong-born and internationally renowned artist, **Rone** working with 450 young people at **Newcomb Secondary College** in a collaborative mural project. Harnessing the power of the arts to improve young peoples' health and wellbeing.

This project provides greater access to arts programs and contemporary artists. This mural will be launched with a school community celebration on Tuesday 28 March and is proudly supported by **VicHealth's Future Healthy initiative Jumpstart!**





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Collaborating artist, **Rone** says 'Providing these young people with an opportunity to take a leading role in all decision-making processes and supporting them to collaborate and work with their peers, and to plan and co-design this public mural has been an incredibly fulfilling experience. The outcome of the mural is just a small component of the hidden benefits of a project like this.'

Mural project partners

Creative Futures Design Fund



Newcomb Secondary mural project, 2023

Geelong Gallery acknowledges the commitment of Learn & Audience Engagement Manager, Elishia Furet in the coordination and implementation of this project and a special thank you to Narelle Norman from St Thomas Aquinas Primary School in Norlane, Rachael Thomas from Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School in Ocean Grove, Ben Davis and Ann Roberts from Newcomb Secondary College, and Geelong Gallery Educators Ella Preston and Kirsten Penzes.

- ENDS -



Newcomb Secondary mural project, 2023

