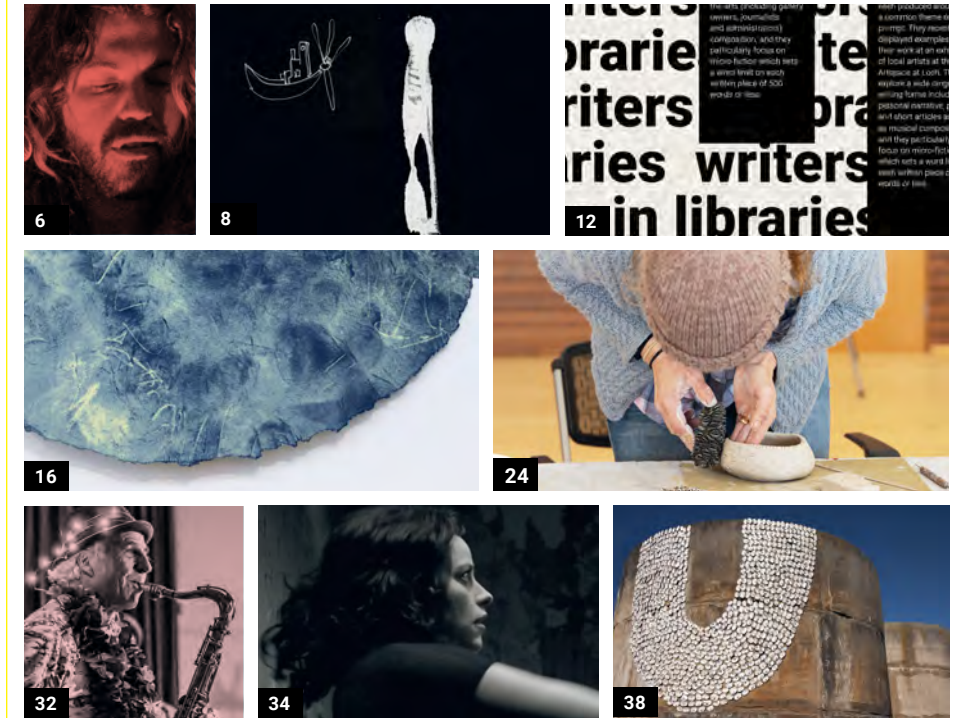




We acknowledge the Bunurong and GunaiKurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of South Gippsland and pay respect to their Elders, past, present, and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

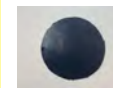


For more information about COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program go to southgippsland.vic.gov.au/covid19creativeandculturalarts



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Front cover artwork
Dark Moon, 2019
Ink on paper
Kim McDonald



F01
Dark Moon, 2019
Ink on paper
Kim McDonald

F01


Introduction

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, one of the first sectors to feel the repercussions was the Arts. Gigs, exhibitions, open studios, workshops, tours were all cancelled. Livelihoods were lost, part-time projects were cancelled, and the challenges of isolation were keenly felt.

In an effort to mitigate the local shockwaves of this pandemic, South Gippsland Shire Council elected to contribute \$2 million toward a range of community-based programs. \$252,000 of these funds were committed to ten community-based art projects. Known as the *COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program*, these projects were collectively designed to involve and assist creatives across the sector and beyond. Providing paid professional opportunities as well as multiple means for people to reconnect and participate, the projects build on existing Programs and energies within the Arts sector, as well as bringing new spaces and initiatives for local artists and creative industries.

The *COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program* projects have delivered in most part, through multiple lockdowns and changing restrictions. Some are postponed to an unsure future date, others part complete, waiting for the possibility to continue. This moment of pause brings the opportunity to document and celebrate what has taken place. We are so proud of all that has happened throughout this program – of the amazing array of creatives who have embraced these opportunities, and of the endless stories of new collaborations, opportunities and connections, between creatives and their community and of the many local people who have stepped outside their comfort zones to engage and participate in these wonderful projects with such enthusiasm.

Please enjoy the following pages.

 [Click to see the work and hear what our creatives have to say about their experience](#)

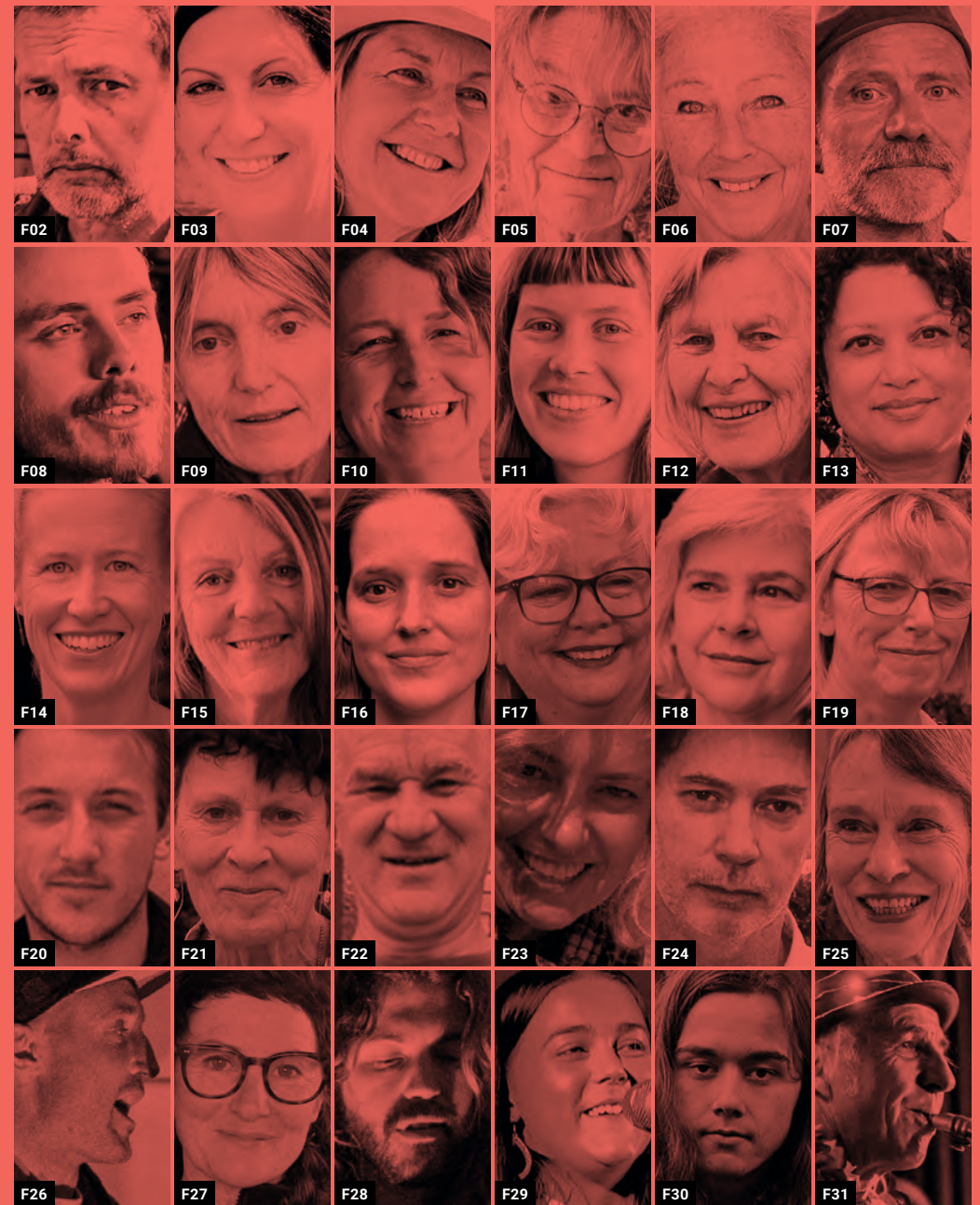
Our Creatives

In the first stages of this project, we put a broad call out to anyone who was interested to participate. We had the most incredible response, with so many new and known faces, names, skills and ideas coming forward.

Through a process of selection, we gathered the following local creatives, all of whom shaped these projects with their talent and sense of possibility. This group bring undeniable proof that the regions are home to our fair share of contemporary talent in the Arts.

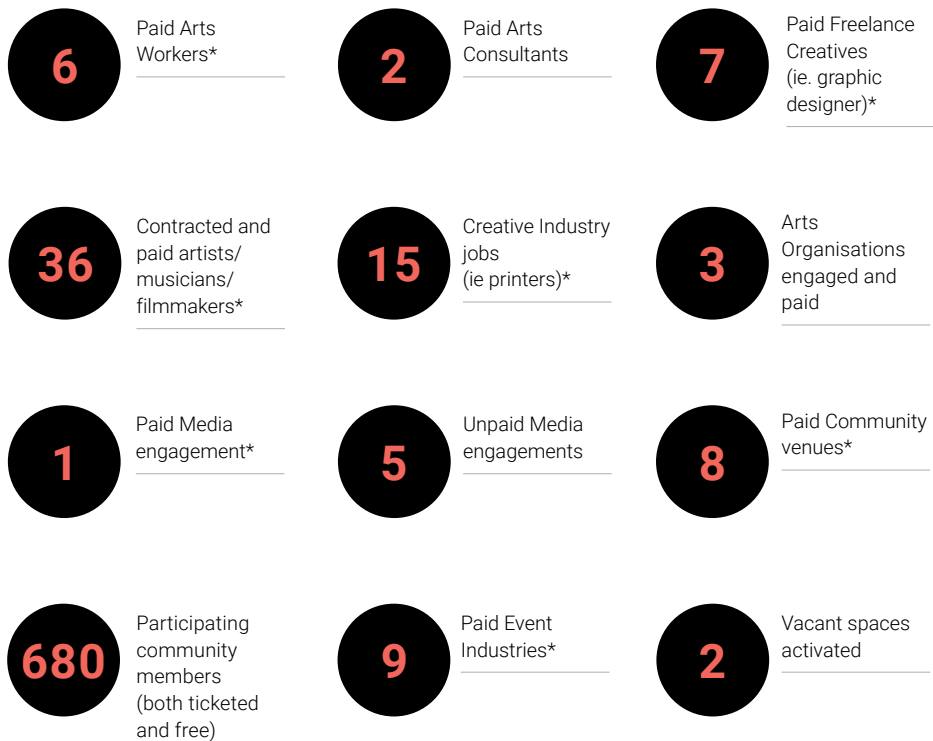
A very big thank you from South Gippsland Shire Council to all that were involved in making the *COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program* such a great success.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| F02 Corey Thomas
Great Southern Bale Trail | F12 Mandy Gunn
Artists in Spaces | F21 Allana Young
Writers in Libraries |
| F03 Rachel Warren
Great Southern Bale Trail | F13 Beatrice Imbert
Writers in Libraries/
Story writer for
Great Southern Bale Trail | F22 John Tebutt
Writers in Libraries |
| F04 Anne Miller
Great Southern Bale Trail | F14 Samara Cunningham
Big Art, Small Hall | F23 Melissa Austwick
Writers in Libraries |
| F05 Meg Viney
Great Southern Bale Trail | F15 Kate Stuart
Big Art, Small Hall | F24 CS Hughes
Writers in Libraries |
| F06 Amanda Diamond
Great Southern Bale Trail | F16 Beth Arnold
Big Art, Small Hall | F25 Jillian Durance
Writers in Libraries |
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| F10 Ge Warburton
Artists in Spaces | F20 Joel Evans
Writers in Libraries | F29 Janie Gordon
Big Sound, Small Hall |
| F11 Lucy Hersey
Artists in Spaces | | F30 Wilson Blackley
Big Sound, Small Hall |
| | | F31 Invy Horn Jam
Big Sound, Small Hall |



The Statistics

The figures below describe a breakdown of direct benefits from the COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program across the South Gippsland Arts and Creative Industries and broader community.



PLUS unknown number of visitors to the *Writers in Libraries* and *Artists in Spaces* programs*

*All local to South Gippsland Shire

Arts across the Shire



● Represents a COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program event or project that has taken place or is planned to take place

i sent a postcard

One of the first projects to launch was *i sent a postcard*.

Collaborative and creative, *i sent a postcard* was designed to both celebrate local artists and to express the COVID-19 experience for the South Gippsland community.

In this project, three postcards were commissioned by local graphic designer, Emma Bartlett of Empire Design, to incorporate the themes of *isolation*, *connection* and *emergence*, while providing space for an artwork on each card. Sets of postcards were posted directly to South Gippsland artists, and distributed throughout the Shire in community galleries and art spaces. Artists made their works on the cards, responding to each of the themes, and returned them to the Shire by mail.

All the works received by the Shire are included in this document. Together they describe this extraordinary time for the future, bringing imagination, possibility and humour to the world we are now adjusting to. The next phase of this project is to redistribute a sample of these artworks into the community, re-printed as postcards once again for people to pick up in their local gallery or cafe and send on to someone who might benefit from a message of art and kindness.



F32

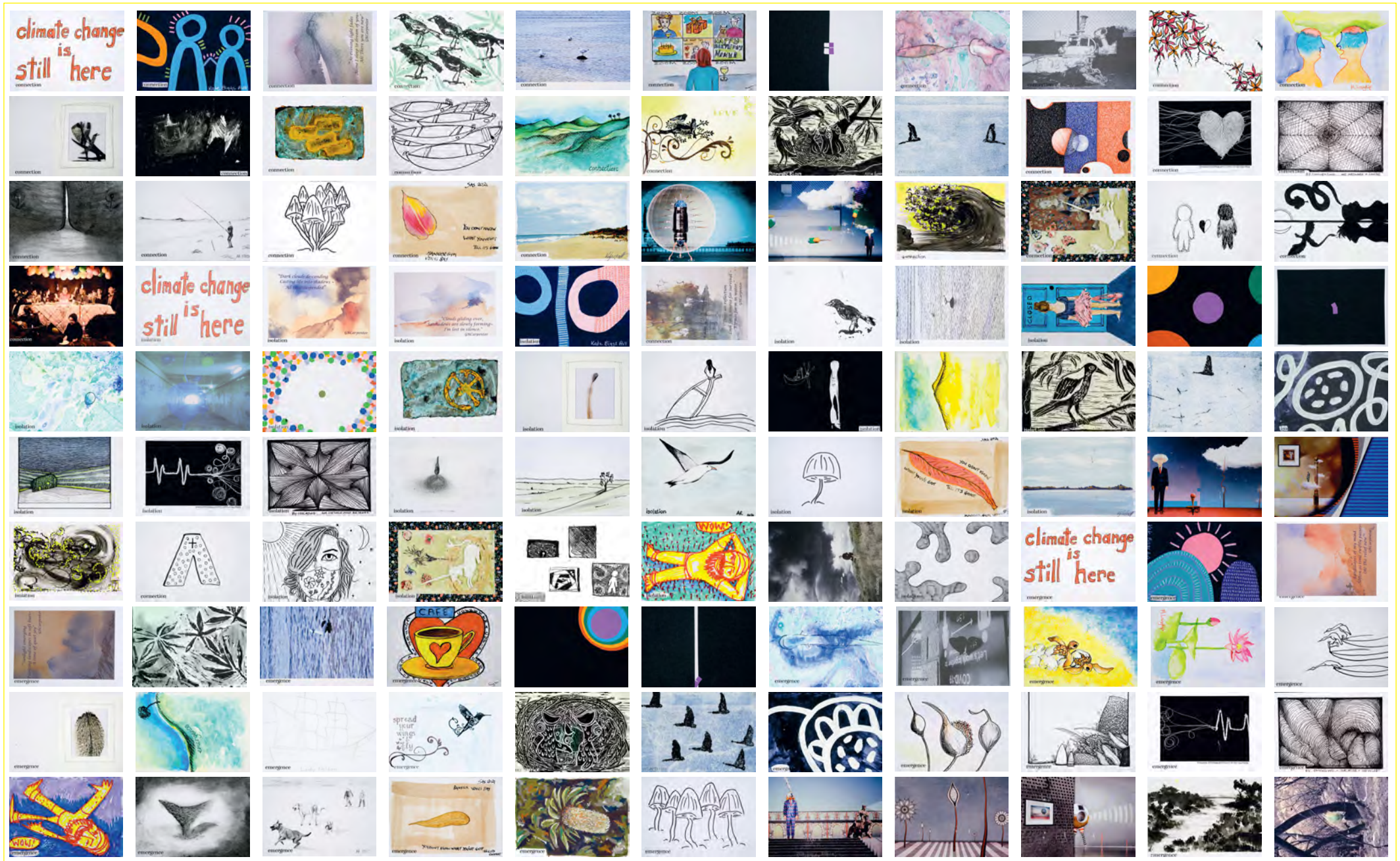
F32
Isolation 2020
Jan Learmonth

isolation

connection

emergence





Writers in Libraries

In February 2021, four local writers and one writers group undertook a one-month residency called *Writers in Libraries*. In this time, the writers developed a single piece of work, again based around the themes of *isolation, connection and emergence*.

Writers in Libraries was designed to provide professional opportunity for local writers, to help bring visibility to creative endeavor that is by nature, isolating. This project was also intended to help connect local writers to one another, and to the communities they live among, particularly in this COVID affected reality.

The residencies were hosted by West Gippsland Regional Libraries Corporation (WGRLC), with each writer basing themselves in and around their local library within the Shire, including Korumburra, Leongatha, Mirboo North and Foster.

Some of the writers could be found in their libraries on a daily basis, while others travelled to libraries on the other side of the Shire. Some reached out to the broader community to undertake interviews and research. Most of the writers were solo in their endeavors, while one worked as a group, meeting and trading ideas and drafts on a weekly basis.

Each writer submitted a final piece of work, which are now collated and published both as a small booklet (and online as a PDF), and as nine posters, featuring excerpts of each piece. These printed works are to be distributed around the Shire for broader enjoyment, so please do look out for copies in your local library, shopfront or café.

Jillian DURANCE

Jillian enjoys writing local community history in book and essay form. For the past few years, she has been working on a memoir of the historic house in which she lives. The memoir weaves together the stories of past inhabitants with an account of her own contemporary experience of restoring the place as a beloved home. In 2007 Jillian won the Victorian Community History Prize for her work 'Still Going Strong: The Story of the Moyarra Honor Roll' and was again short-listed in 2017 for her publication 'The Shrine on the Mountain: The Story of St. Peter's Memorial Church, Kinglake.

C.S. HUGHES

CS Hughes is a local poet but he has also written short stories, articles and essays. He has produced several poetry collections including 'The Book of Whimsies', 'The Little Book of Funerals', 'The Book of Bird & Bear' as well as the illustrated children's verse, 'Sweet Christmas'. At the start of last year, CS edited a poetry collection called 'From the Ashes' which featured some of Australia's most renowned poets – as well as those just starting out – to provide a unified response to the 2019-20 bushfire crisis and to raise funds for charities that were working to rescue injured animals.

Jenny TAYLOR

Jenny started her writing life as a poet before taking up song writing. With a 30-year career as a singing/ performance teacher and a choir director, she is well versed in producing written technical and procedural documents related to music and is a published song writer. The subjects she writes about are diverse, with the moods ranging from gentle and joyful to quite confronting.

John TEBBUTT

John Tebbutt is currently one of a number of South Gippsland Shire's 'Writers in Libraries'. John is an essayist and specialises in factual writing. His project for the Shire program is to write about how the COVID pandemic has affected artists and those associated with the arts (including gallery owners, journalists and administrators) composition, and they particularly focus on micro-fiction which sets a word limit on each written piece of 500 words or less.

Loch WRITERS

The Loch Writers Group is made up of five local residents who all share a love of writing: Anne Taib, Allana Young, Heather McCloy, Melissa Austwick and Joel Evans.

The group meets weekly for two hours and shares texts they have each produced around a common theme or prompt. They recently displayed examples of their work at an exhibition of local artists at the Artspace at Loch. They explore a wide range of writing forms including personal narrative, poetry and short articles as well as musical composition, and they particularly focus on micro-fiction which sets a word limit on each written piece of 500 words or less.

Artists in Spaces

Kim MCDONALD

Leongatha

Mandy GUNN

Leongatha

Lucy HERSEY

Mirboo North

Ge WARBURTON

Korumburra

Artists in Spaces celebrates four local artists, each who worked in one of three local shopfronts in the main streets of Leongatha, Korumburra and Mirboo North.

In this project, each artist made their shopfront their own, creating artworks on site in among installations of previously made artworks. Each shopfront was open to the public as the artist worked, available for conversation and questions from visiting art lovers and the wider community. Two of the shopfronts had long term vacancies, while one was set in an artists' space.

Originally intended for a four-week duration, the artists had to shuffle and stretch their time due to COVID lockdowns. These adaptations were not easy, but did bring an energy to each street in a highly successful program that included workshops, unexpected collaborations, sales, and increased visibility for each of the artists.



F33

F33
Installation and performance with
red circle and dancer 2021

Dancer Jasmine Susic
Artwork Kim McDonald, Ink on paper
Photograph Karli Duckett

‘

The Artist in Spaces program provided me with a unique opportunity to make new work and be financially supported while doing so. It demonstrated that having a space for artists to work in is extremely viable and successful on multiple levels. During the four and a half weeks of having the Artist in Spaces residency I was able make work that would have been impossible for me to make in my small home studio. The residency period also provided a great opportunity for me to be able to invite other artists into the space to connect, collaborate and create.

– Kim McDonald



F34

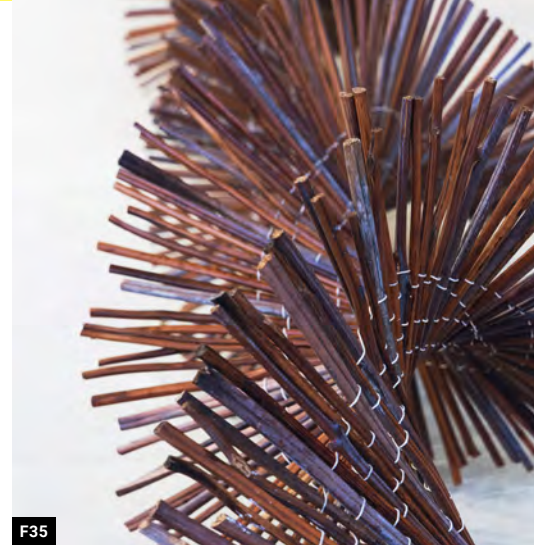
F34
Lucy Hersey's space, 2021
 Mirboo North

Photograph: Karli Duckett

Artists in Spaces is a standout project in that it brings together the possibilities and benefits of tourism and economic benefit for the regional hubs that it involved. A great example of this is illustrated by the lease of Lucy Hersey's Mirboo North shopfront, which had been vacant for some years, to a design business before her residency had completed.

Artists in Spaces also engaged skills and expertise of local Arts Worker, Melanie Caple.

Executive Officer of Mirboo North Community Foundation, Ruth Rogan, describes the benefits of this project from a town perspective;



F35

F35
Installation by Mandy Gunn 2021
 Leongatha
Photograph: Karli Duckett



F36

F36
Installation by Ge Warburton 2021
 Korumburra
Photograph: Karli Duckett

‘

This project was wonderful for Mirboo North in that it not only showcased the space as engaging and attractive, it brought the arts into the town, in a very available format. Lucy's space became an integral part of the everyday happenings of the street. People could just drop in, something they don't always do with galleries, which is a great win for a small regional town.

– Ruth Rogan,
 Mirboo North Community Foundation



F37



F38

F37
Weaving

F38
Preparation

F39
Final piece
Mandy Gunn 2021
Leongatha

Photograph: Karli Duckett



F39



F40

F42
Process

F43
In progress
Ge Warburton 2021
Korumburra

Photograph: Karli Duckett

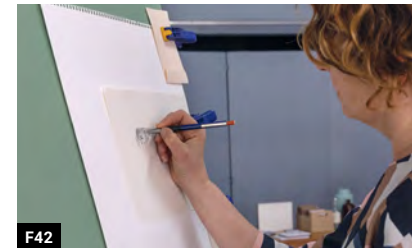


F41

F40
Lucy's space

F41
Process
Lucy Hersey 2021
Mirboo North

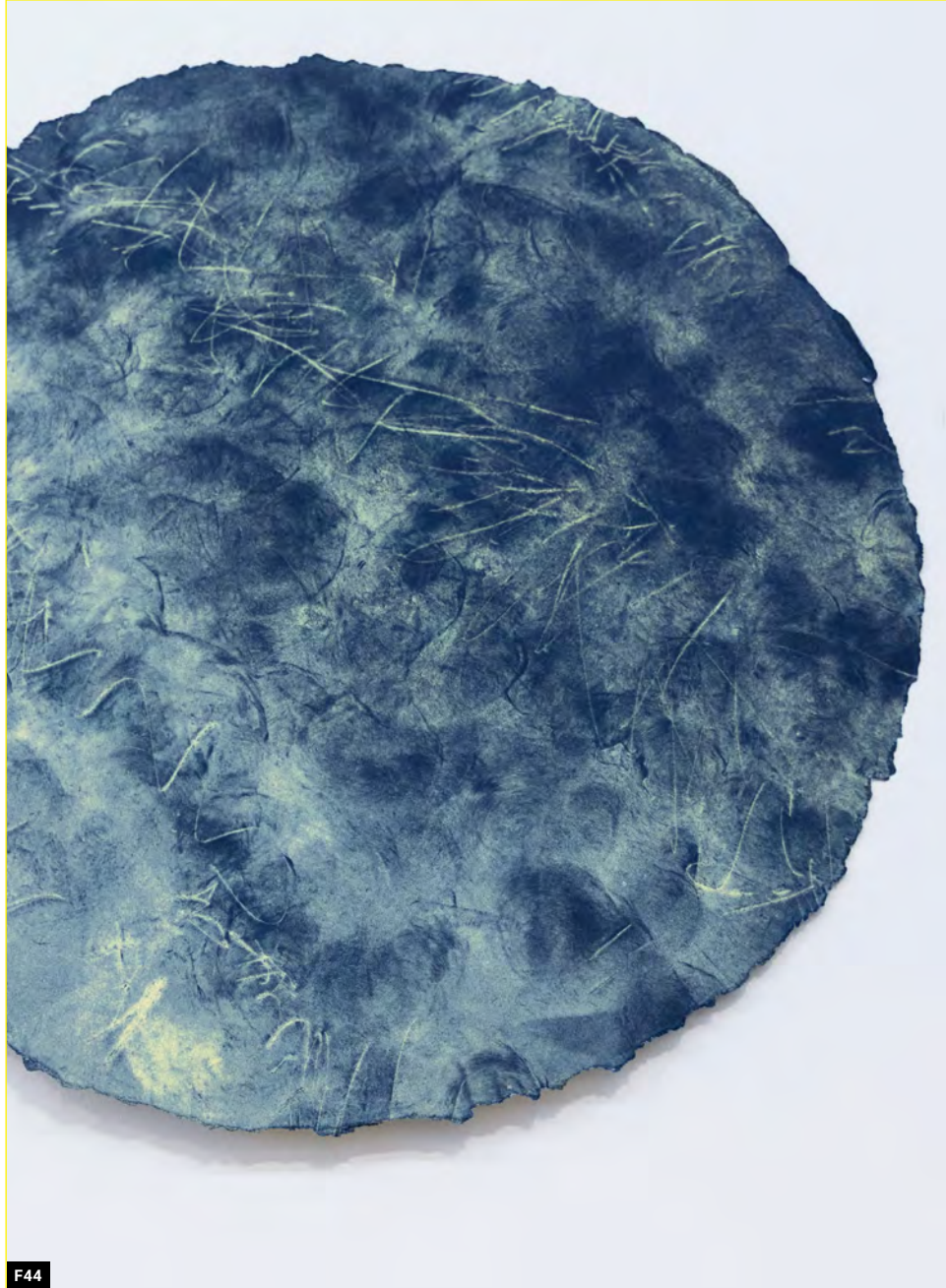
Photograph: Karli Duckett



F42



F43

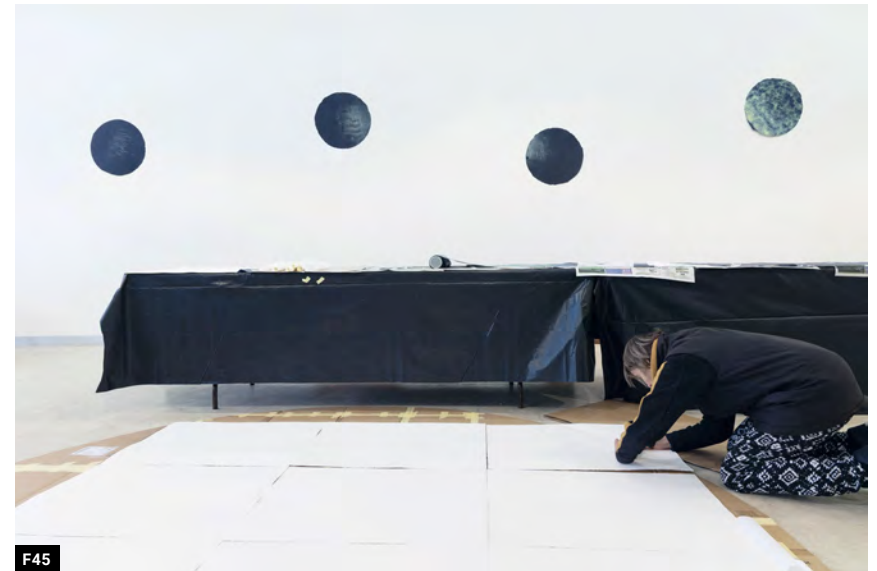


F44

Excerpts from Kim's JOURNAL

*I went in with an open mind. I wanted to make new work... .
I didn't know that I would do the work that I did.*

All nighter: *got to art space at 5.30pm and left at 10.30am the next morning. We had some food and wine when we first got there...
Jasmine did a couple of hours dancing while Anne and I worked.
Anne worked on her small circle assemblages and I worked on cutting out the circle sections from the Hosho paper. I then started printing onto it in red. We ended up working throughout the night, not stopping until about 6.30am.*



F45

F44
Harnessing Forces 2019
Kim McDonald
Ink on paper

F45
Kim working in her space 2021
Leongatha

Photograph: Karli Duckett

Big Art, Small Hall

Big Art, Small Hall is an ambitious project that engaged four local artists to run creative workshops in four community halls across the Shire, originally intended over a month.

The artists were selected for their outstanding contemporary practice as well as their capacity to deliver a professional program. The idea was to bring a range of creative opportunities for locals to engage and participate in that may not otherwise have been available to them. The workshops all encouraged participants to gather and connect, and to possibly share the difficulties of the times through collaborative making. Some required full commitment to the month's program, while others were designed to encourage drop-ins.

Again, these projects must be commended for their flexibility and persistence in a very unsure space, as they experienced three COVID-related postponements. Three of the four projects were able to complete their programs (the fourth at Mt Best Hall anticipates completion this coming summer).

These projects were enormously successful, with wonderful creative and connecting outcomes reported across all three. Each of the host halls also benefited from the activation and hire of their spaces, especially in the context of so many cancellations.

This project also benefitted from the facilitation and background work that Melanie Caple contributed, as an Arts Worker.

6

a sensory storytelling adventure to unearth the stories we each carry... exploring the ancient art of letter writing, creating a gratitude wheel, exploring intuitive poetry both in the written and spoken format whilst listening to music and foraging through some of nature's discarded beauty.

– Beatrice Imbert

F46



F46
Beatrice Imbert discusses the project with a participant in the Loch Artspace

Photograph: Karli Duckett

Beth ARNOLD

Shell

Mt Best Hall

Beth and a local dyeing practitioner proposed to create a walk-through art installation on the Mount Best Hall tennis court. The workshops were to involve natural dyeing, hand sewing and installation practice, with participants taking home a keepsake as well as contribute to the final artwork.

While Beth was unable to deliver her proposed workshops as originally intended, she has redesigned her project to ensure she can deliver a final piece - a textile sculpture to connect with the local space and to get people thinking about place. This will happen early 2022.

Gunnai artist, Ronald Edwards Pepper, will also be producing an artwork that will be displayed alongside the installation at Mt Best Hall. Beth would like to thank and acknowledge Ronald's contribution and consultation throughout the project.



F47

F47
Test piece 2021
Cotton hand dyed with
Blackberry plant
Beth Arnold

Photograph: Beth Arnold

Beatrice IMBERT

Why stories matter

Loch Artspace

Why stories matter was a story telling workshop, designed and led by local creative, Beatrice Imbert.

The intention of these workshops was;

...a sensory storytelling adventure to unearth the stories we each carry... exploring the ancient art of letter writing, creating a gratitude wheel, exploring intuitive poetry both in the written and spoken format whilst listening to music and foraging through some of nature's discarded beauty.

– Beatrice Imbert

A participant describes having *...a wonderful time, experiencing a world of words, nature and sentiment equally personal and beautiful.*

F48
Installation 2021
Loch Artspace

Photograph: Karli Duckett



F48

Kate STUART

we're laying the table

Sandy Point Community Centre

we're laying the table invited the community into conversation and exploration using clay as a medium.

Here participants discovered new techniques in making, while sharing stories, exploring ideas, and building relationships with one another. Throughout a series of workshops, the group created over one hundred objects in clay. Each work responded to the participant's own stories around hospitality while celebrating creativity and community connection. Together the works formed a temporary installation for the hall, which was (of course!) accompanied by a community afternoon tea.

Participant's stories and ideas were also recorded over the course of the workshops, producing a soundtrack of the workshop process.

Congratulations to everyone who came and contributed to this project, for embracing the concept, stretching their creative skills, supporting and encouraging each other and working together to make the idea of a collaborative artwork a reality. All our lives were enriched by the experience.

– Kate Stuart

It was wonderful for the soul to gather together and create the pieces...

– From a participant



F49

F49
Participant 2021
we're laying the table

Photograph: Karli Duckett



F50

F50
Over one hundred objects were made in clay 2021
we're laying the table

Photograph: Karli Duckett

Samara CUNNINGHAM

Fill the Void

Meeniyah Hall

Fill the Void was a dance theatre workshop, designed to build performance skills and encourage individual spontaneity, creativity, improvisation and group work. The project explored movement and acting, as well as film projection and sound design. The project encouraged participants and artistic collaborators to be crucially involved in the production of a performance that represents their lives in this region.

Fill the Void culminated in a final performance, an outcome that was always intended. Due to restrictions at the time, the performance took place as a closed event.

This project was special in many ways, one of these being that it involved collaboration between the following local creative professionals;

Samara Cunningham – Lead Artist

Mayumi McPhee – Costume Designer

Michael Shirrefs – Sound Designer

Kate Russell – Projection



F51
Fill the Void workshop 2021
Meeniyah Hall

Photograph: Karli Duckett

In many ways, a project that brings people out of the periphery and into a collaborative creative process, is needed now more than ever.

– Samara Cunningham

This was the first time I have ever done dance theatre and performed in front of friends and family and it took me and my daughter out of our comfort zones and it was truly fantastic, we loved it and I think it changed us forever and for the better.

– From a participant



F52

F52
Fill the Void workshop 2021
Meeniyah Hall

Photograph: Karli Duckett

Big Sound, Small Hall

One weekend in April, the first round of *Big Sound, Small Hall* gigs took place at Mirboo North Hall and the Tarwin Lower Mechanics Institute. Both shows were a howling success, with sell out audiences loving the quality of both local and touring music. These gigs are a great reminder of the magic that happens when live performance meets a welcoming audience in the unique setting of a small hall.

South Gippsland Shire is well known for live performance in small community halls. Our Shire features around 50 community halls, many run by committed committees, keen to activate their spaces through gigs. Council has long partnered with these committees to deliver a range of live performance, from music to comedy and theatre. The *Big Sound, Small Halls* program was designed to build on this history, bringing funding and support to a program that had been entirely shut down by COVID restrictions.

While we have yet to deliver the full suite of *Big Sound, Small Hall* shows, these two events clearly provided; paid professional opportunity for local and touring performers, and local sound technician, Brett Van Hoorn and local programmer, Aidan McLaren. They bought a great night of fun and connection for local music lovers in two small towns and beyond, as well as an opportunity for halls committees to showcase their venues while raising revenue for future events.

Mirboo North Town Hall

Jack Botts
Janie Gordon
Wilson Blackley

Tarwin Lower Mechanics Institute

Jack Botts
Invy Horn Jam
Janie Gordon

Aidan McLaren

– Event programmer

Brett Van Hoorn

– Sound technician



Brian Doherty from Hi-Tech Visual Productions livestreamed footage from the Mirboo North gig. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZrFXkn_0k4



F53

F53

Brian Strating from the Invy Horn Jam
Tarwin Lower Mechanics Institute

Photograph: Luke McNee

Big Film, Small Hall

In *Big Film, Small Hall*, our small halls have been further activated by film events featuring local film makers, as well as a local musician and touring magician. With one event delivered at Tarwin Lower Mechanics institute and one postponed at Mirboo North Hall due to restrictions, this program highlights the creative talent rarely experienced in the Shire and provides paid professional opportunity for a number of local filmmakers and performers.

This program has engaged and inspired local film groups to continue to program local content – a truly positive outcome. We look forward to COVID restrictions allowing the second event take place.

Local filmmakers featured;

Dr Tracie Bettina Mitchell
Stephen Noble

Plus performers;

Felix the Magician
Steve Cousins

F54
Still from *Whole Heart 2005*
Dr Tracie Bettina Mitchell



Great Southern Bale Trail

The *Great Southern Bale Trail (GSBT)*, was another ambitious initiative that intended to connect and celebrate local artists and farmers. In this project, artists were matched with volunteer farmers and asked to create a roadside installation on the properties that both utilised the farm materials and responded to the theme of 'seasonal cycles'.

The *GSBT* resulted in an amazing trail of six unlikely works across the Shire. People were invited to tour the artworks, discovering both a wonder of creativity and ingenuity as well as new pockets and parts of their local area. This project benefitted greatly from the engagement of Arts Worker (artist and farmer), Louisa Vale, and her invaluable local know how, and from local graphic designer (and artist). Anne Miller who designed a wonderful map as well as her own installation piece.

All the stories behind the farms and farmers involved in this project were collected and documented by local writer, Beatrice Imbert, along with local photographer Karli Duckett.

Signage was placed at each of the six sites to give context to the installations and to direct curious visitors to the greater stories behind each of the works. This meant that, as a viewer, you could not only read about the artists and their creative practices, you could learn about the property the works were on, and the farmers themselves.



We encourage you to check this site to learn more about this project <https://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/gsb>



F55

F55
Trevor and Lou Wheeler
in their workshop Sandy Point 2021

Photograph: Karli Duckett

FOSTER

Big Farmer and The Holy Cow is made by father and son team, Trevor and Lou Wheeler. The work represents the passing of time, the cyclical nature of seasonality, and the relationship a farmer has with the tools, creatures, and landscape that they live and work with.



F56



F57

F56
Big Farmer and The Holy Cow 2021
 Trevor and Lou Wheeler
 Foster

Photograph: Karli Duckett

F57
Pearlescent 2021
 Anne Miller
 Leongatha

Photograph: Karli Duckett



F58

F58
Goose and Gosling 2021
 Amanda Diamond
 Tarwin Lower

Photograph: Karli Duckett

LEONGATHA

In this work, *Pearlescent*, artist Anne Miller installed thousands of oyster shells onto a couple of old concrete tanks that cluster together in a paddock on top of a hill, repurposing the shells while creating a beautiful visual graphic and a sense of reuse.

OUTTRIM

Rachel Warren's *Paint hay while the sun shines* was made of silage stacks, paint and recycled farm objects and was inspired by the colours, textures, movement and stillness of her environment. Her monolithic work represented the various stages of dairy farming that rely on the weather throughout the changing seasons.

TARWIN LOWER

Amanda Diamond's *Goose and Gosling* perch side by side elegantly at the entrance of the farm gate, Flock, Stock and Basil. Inspired by the animals that roam through this property, the geese represent for Amanda the pure joy of being on a farm surrounded by organic plants and free-range animals!

WOOREEN

The project was unique in that it involved over 15 local families across three generations, who dropped in daily at Tom Daffy's and Deb Brown's Black Duck Farm and cottages to help create *WooMoo and Poppy*. This artwork is a tribute to mother cow and baby calf and the farming community. Led by artist, Meg Viney, the group comprised of dairy and beef farmers, and local residents. Both long timers and newcomers all contributed in various ways, from donating hay bales and time, knitting udders, collecting fallen tree limbs, and building a movable structure to allow for *WooMoo* to be relocated to her final destination.

F59
Paint hay while the sun shines 2021
 Rachel Warren
 Outtrim

Photograph: Karli Duckett



F59

F60
WooMoo and Poppy 2021
 Meg Viney and the community of Wooreen

Photograph: Karli Duckett



F60



WELSHPOOL

Corey Thomas's installation consists of corrugated iron salvaged from disused and collapsing sheds from both his own property and from the host farmer's. By reimagining their twisted rusting metal forms, the work suggests the movement of carting, baling, and stacking hay whilst nature in turn throws in a storm, whipping it up like a ribbon, and then strewing it across the landscape.

F61
Untitled 2021
Corey Thomas
Welshpool

Photograph: Karli Duckett

F61

ArtsACTION

The *ArtsACTION* program was offered for free to any local creative to participate in, providing opportunity for artists to learn and develop a range of practical tools to combat the economic impacts of COVID-19.

This online upskilling and professional development program was specifically designed for regional creatives. Encouraging an active, collaborative approach to work, *ArtsACTION* teaches participating artists how to develop their own arts enterprise models, pathways, and networks, while building and fine tuning their own business models, and to achieve greater market reach and art sales.

Participants reported a very positive experience, with the following feedback;

‘

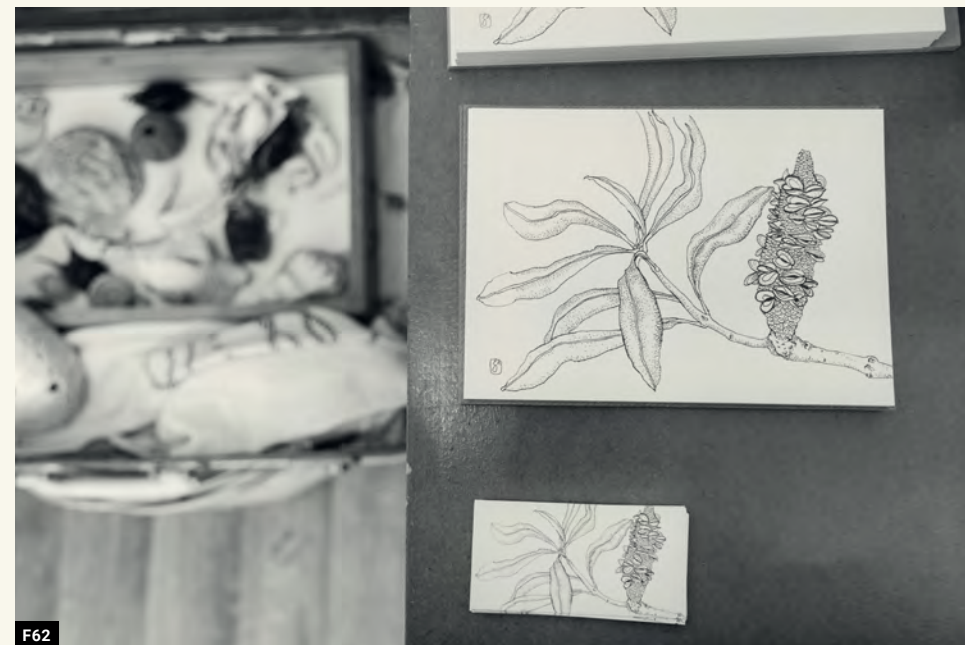
The ArtsACTION Group is so timely for me to meet like minds and use the fab resources to connect and gain knowledge as I emerge into my own potential artist business.

F62
Ge Warburton's shopfront 2021
Artists in Spaces

Photograph: Karli Duckett

‘

I really enjoyed meeting and hearing from other artists /creatives. I found it really helpful to be given further resources and links to look at as well. I really liked how this program was run and that it was engaging and participatory. There is a lot of information to digest but I feel better equipped now to pursue my goals for my business. Thank you!



The Documentors

All of these projects have been thoroughly and professionally documented by;

Karli DUCKETT

Karli is a South Gippsland based photographer who contacted us at the beginning of the program to ask if she could voluntarily document the projects. After seeing the first round of incredible images Karli took from the Great Southern Bale Trail, we were fortunate enough to contract her to photo document the rest of the Trail, as well as the Artists in Spaces and *Big Art, Small Hall* projects.

Most of the images you have seen in this document are taken by Karli. She has a wonderful eye for detail, a great capacity to relate to her subject, as well as an impressive commitment to the project at hand. We cannot thank you enough for this record you have bought to us.



F63
Karli Duckett
In front of the camera

F63

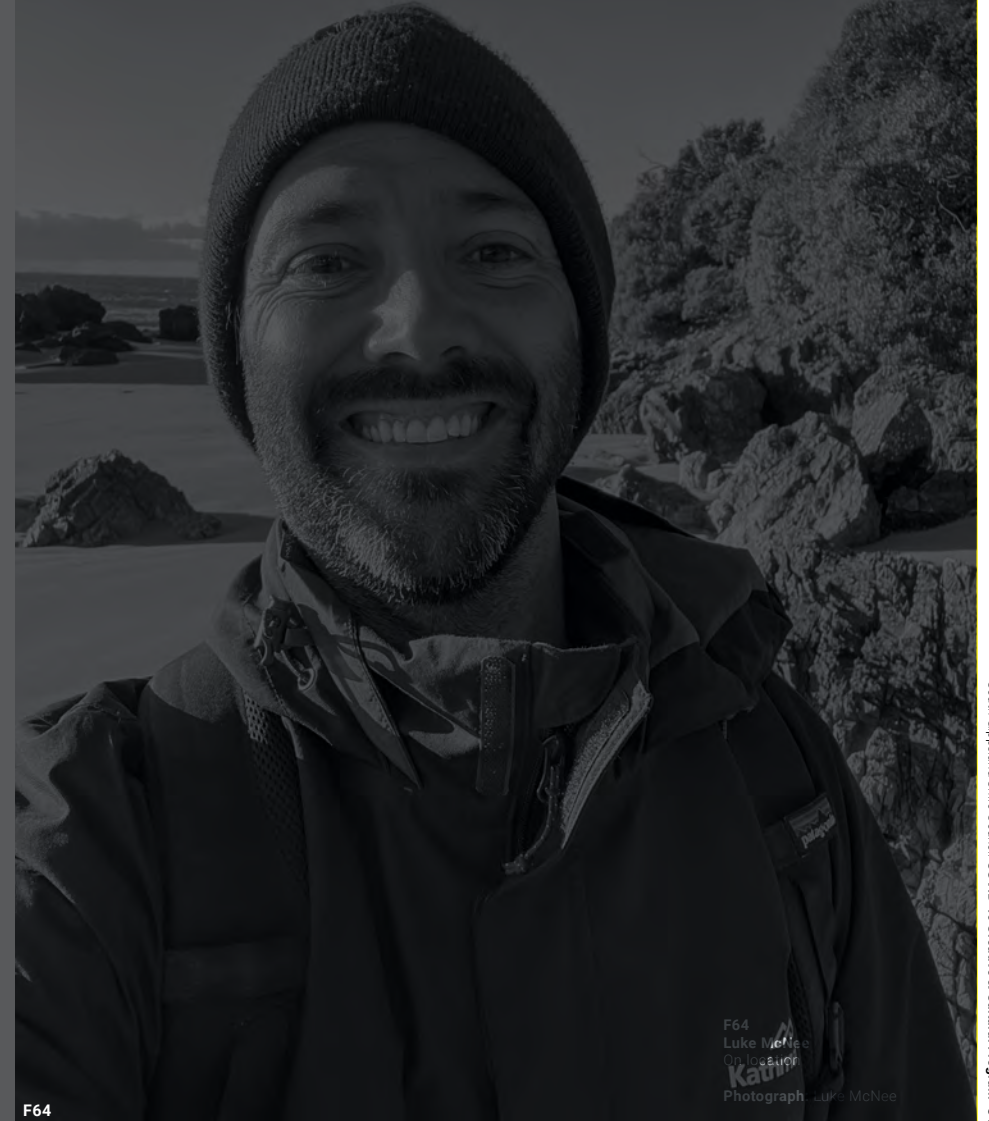
6

Karli describes her own experience –

Working on this project sparked a real sense of connection to community and enabled me to quickly build my own confidence as a local artist practicing photography. I had also enrolled in and commenced the ArtsACTION program and this provided me with many skills to help bring my artwork to market. The timing of these two experiences couldn't have been more fortuitous, as I was able to actively put into place ideas born from the workshop series, and use my new skills to help build my professional art career...

In a more general sense, I feel I have gained valuable insight into professional opportunities for artists in South Gippsland, the importance of building new local networks and extending existing ones, aspects of small business management, education on local community needs/issues/desires, and most strikingly, I have witnessed a definite desire for local artists to have a vibrant and connected community. Every artist I worked with expressed the same gratitude in having the opportunities made available by the South Gippsland Shire and a hope for ongoing opportunities within their local area. This highlights the importance of supporting our incredible local art community and the far-reaching benefits that come from these opportunities.

Luke McNEE



F64

F64
Luke McNee
On location
Karli
Photograph Luke McNee

Local filmmaker, Luke McNee was invited to document our project as we had worked with him on a Council film previously, and he did such a fabulous job. Luke operates under the business name Seagrass Films and, pre-COVID, has based his working life elsewhere - either around Australia or the world. Very rarely in our patch. Since COVID hit, Luke's capacity to travel has changed radically, bringing his projects much closer to home. While this cannot have been easy for him and the business, we are thrilled to have had the opportunity to work with him, documenting the *COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program*. We are counting his collaboration on this project as one of the rare positives that have come from this pandemic.

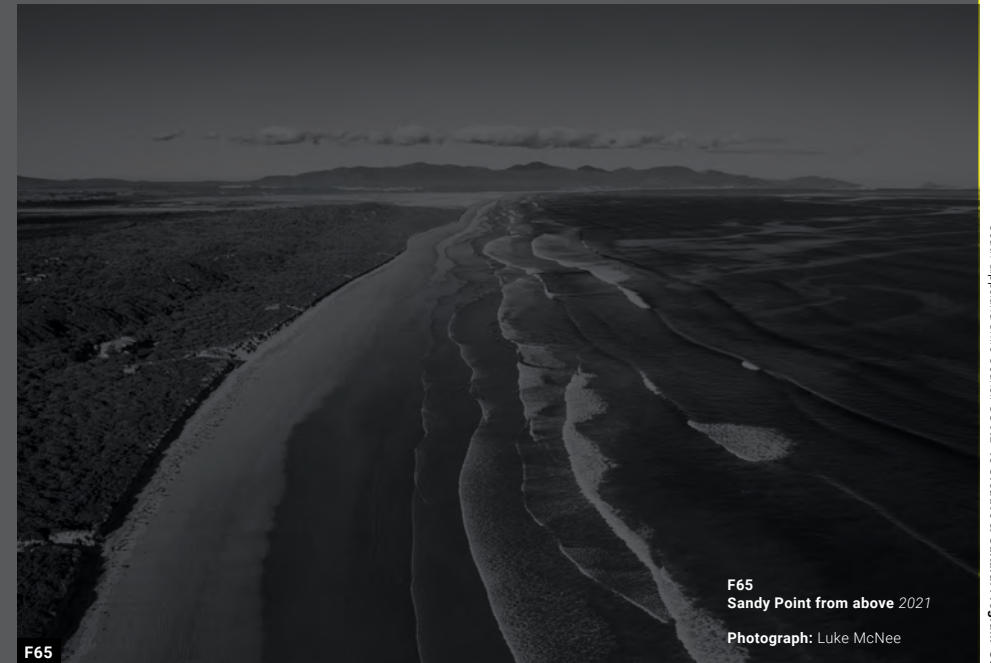
Luke's skills span the full range of filmmaking, from editing, directing and cinematography;

From chasing dust trails in the Dakar Rally in South America to working with the world's best surfers in the World Surf League, Luke has developed his skills focusing on adventure, sport and lifestyle...He has created a company that is focused on telling meaningful and inspiring stories...

For Luke, the task of documenting the *COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program* project bought welcome opportunity to work locally, and to finally put some roots down.

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When I started the project, I had no idea as to the number of talented artists that live and work in the area. Taking my cameras out onsite for each of the projects gave me a great new appreciation of the level of professionalism that exists here, that I definitely didn't expect. Perhaps the artists' existence is a bit more hidden and so it was a really nice experience to nice uncover it...or at least shine a light on it.



F65

F65
Sandy Point from above 2021

Photograph: Luke McNee

Thank You!

The COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program has brought South Gippsland Shire great opportunity to showcase the extraordinary talent of our local creatives, as well as the capacity of our community to support and participate in local creative projects. The stories that have come out of these happenings over the past year are amazing in their depth of connection, meaning and enthusiasm.

These difficult COVID-19 times are by no means over. And while these projects may not bring a complete solution to the pandemic, we do believe that the new knowledge and creative and economic potential that have been revealed hold value and possibility for our community as a whole. These projects are experimental; however, they are also built on very solid creative foundations and have the potential to develop and inspire future collaborations and initiatives, both within the sector and beyond.



Click to see the work and hear what our creatives have to say about their experience

The aim of COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program was to engage and employ a range of creative people and industries, not just artists. A very big thank you goes out to the following businesses whose work is to support the creative sector;

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Anne Miller (Millers Road)

for various poster design

Emma Bartlett (Empire Design)

for *i sent a postcard* original design

PRINTERS

Clancy's Printing Service

Foons Photographics

Signspec

A very big thank you to Anita Belia for all of her amazing design work across the *COVID-19 Creative and Cultural Program*, including the design and layout of the website, *Big Art, Small Hall* posters, *Writers in Libraries* posters and publication, *i sent a postcard* final cards, *GSBT* posters and cards, *Artists in Spaces* posters and this beautiful publication.

