

24 Eastern Rd South Melbourne
Victoria Australia 3205
Voice 03 / 9699 8299
TTY 03 / 9699 7636
EASE Bookings 03 / 9699 8497
Facsimile 03 / 9699 8868
Email info@artsaccess.com.au
Web www.artsaccess.com.au



7 October 2009

MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARTS ACCESS VICTORIA AND ABC TV INVITE YOU TO TAKE A PEEK BEHIND 'THE WALL'

Arts Access Victoria is thrilled to announce that ABC TV will be screening this enchanting documentary entitled 'The Wall', about the creation of a special art project.

Between May and August 2008 a group of art students, guided by professional artist Michael Knight, created a massive mural on a courtyard wall in the mental health unit of Casey Hospital, as part of a project coordinated by Arts Access Victoria.

The students, all clients of ERMHA, were attending arts classes run by Arts Access Victoria when they were approached by staff at Casey Hospital to contribute their talents to a grey and oppressive, 35 metre x 3.5 metre wall in the hospital courtyard. A long consultation process ensued as the practicalities of creating such a big artwork were grappled with.

The students set out to paint an artwork that would help people in their recovery process, to give back something to a place that had helped them through their own illness.

The project and the process behind it was documented by filmmaker Jonathon Chong. The film, entitled **The Wall**, tells the heartwarming story of creating the mural and the people involved in its creation. **The Wall** will screen on ABC2 on Sunday 18 October at 10pm and on ABC1 on Sunday 25 October at 4.30pm. 'The Wall' will also be shown online for two weeks after each broadcast on iView at www.abc.net.au/tv/iview/

This project has been a partnership between Arts Access Victoria, the Eastern Regions Mental Health Association and Southern Health, with assistance from Brookfield Multiplex. The partners gratefully acknowledge the support of the Berwick Opportunity Shop and the Department of Human Services in funding the project.

Arts Access Victoria is supported by Arts Victoria, Australia Council for the Arts and Department of Human Services.



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STATEMENTS FROM SOME OF THE ARTISTS WHO WORKED ON THE PROJECT

Working on the mural project has been interesting. I've been doing different paintings. I don't draw at home. I like the mural because it's colourful. It stands out. I've enjoyed doing the paintings and the dot patterns. I like my snake, the colourful fish and the wiggly worms.

Muriel Radle

Painting on to 'The Wall' has been the most interesting part of the project. The seahorses are my favourite part of 'The Wall'. It's helped my health by giving me something to do on a Friday, and at Thursday art classes. It feels good to have my work up on 'The Wall'.

Mark Mays

Working on the mural has made my life improve. It's been interesting and a commitment. It makes you feel good inside. The mural expresses the road to good health. I've put a lot of interest in to the mural, coming closer and closer to an achievement. I do drawings at home too, not just here. I do fashion drawing and designing.

Cheryl le Maitre

I was apprehensive to start because it was such a big project. It was good to map it out in the first place. But the best part has been chalking it and painting it on 'The Wall', adding to it each time I come in. It's been very rewarding seeing it come to where it's been finished. I think it has encouraged me to become involved in other community projects. I discovered the strength of collaborating, drawing on everybody's ideas. I used to be very individualistic.

Lisa Mitchell

When I first heard of it I thought, 'It seems impossible, but I'll give it a go'. And I enjoyed it. I particularly enjoyed designing the cityscapes because it let my imagination go riot. It has encouraged me to do something I have been thinking about for a while, namely changing my garden shed in to an art studio. The design was the most interesting part of this process. The mural has created what was a concrete jungle in to a place of happiness and fun for the patients.

Peter Guild

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BIOGRAPPHIES

SANTHA PRESS – Project Manager

Santha Press is a performer and community artist, sound designer and lecturer in performance who works at Arts Access Victoria as an Artistic Project Manager. She is a founding member of community arts collective Burning Sensations, who have generated over 25 large scale outdoor community arts performances throughout Australia. Other companies she has worked with in this context include Natimuk based company, Y-Space (VIC), PGR Inc. (VIC), South West Arts (NSW) and Outback Theatre(NSW).

Santha has written, produced, performed and toured original theatre works both within Australia and internationally. She is particularly interested in the accessibility of creative processes to the broader community and the use of arts and culture to facilitate communication, self-expression and well-being.

MICHAEL KNIGHT - Artist

Michael Knight completed his BA at the University of Western Australia in 1992. He has worked as an artist for 12 years and has had 7 solo exhibitions throughout Australia. Michael has also worked extensively with people with disabilities in both Perth and Melbourne. This experience included running art workshops, curating exhibitions and developing art related projects.

www.mhknight.com

JONATHAN CHONG – Filmmaker

From a background in art and design, Jonathan Chong, started to delve into and experiment with the world of film. His first film titled 'Interchange' explored the world of Synaesthesia. The film was the winner of Best DVD/ Video Work at the Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP) Kodak Autumn Salon in 2005 and screened in Berlin and Tokyo.

After this initial success Jonathan Chong created a film about his life in a multi cultural family in Australia. The work titled, 'My middle name is Chang- Li' won the 2005 ABC Video Lives competition for best film and paved the way in 2006 for 20 video diaries on his life commissioned by ABC2 digital.

<http://abc.net.au/tv/australiawise/videolives/jono.htm#stories>

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Recently Chong has completed a music video for UK hip-hop producer/MC Lotek, an animated music promo for electronic producer Spoonbill and has released a documentary exploring art and mental health. In tandem with his moving image work Jonathan continues to produce illustrations, photography and installation pieces and has exhibited at the London Designers Block 03, Federation Square 04 Noise Festival (04-05) and Next Wave Biennial Festival 06.

RICHARD PRICE - Team Leader for ERMHA Day Program, Casey / Cardinia

Richard over the past two decades has been working with marginalised groups both in Mental Health and in Alcohol and other Drugs field to help reconnect individuals and groups back into their communities, through Art and recreation.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Catherine Leos
03 9699 8299
cleos@artsaccess.com.au
www.artsaccess.com.au