

SHOW YOUR WEST-SIDE A SMASHING SUCCESS



By Sally Walshe

It was wall-to-wall people at the recent opening of the *Show Your WEST-SIDE* Art Prize and Exhibition with more than 400 attending the inaugural event.

At one point you couldn't even see the artwork – which ranged from graffiti art, sculptures, paintings, photos, prints, textiles and more.

I initiated *Show your WEST-SIDE* because I saw a real and desperate need to support local creatives, and the response was amazing. With no website, no dedicated social pages, and limited paid advertising, I received more than 200 applications, and was able to exhibit around 210 works.



Show Your WEST-SIDE is different from other art exhibitions in that it's personal, warm, inclusive, free of charge and 'for the artist'. There are no commissions retained for the sale of the artworks. All sales go to the artist, and wow, there were so many sales being made on the night. (Don't worry, there are still plenty of fabulous works available for purchase!)

Show your WEST-SIDE also encourages collaboration between local artists to nurture the Footscray arts-scene, and in the past few months artists have reached out to me to flesh-out their own event ideas which I wholeheartedly encourage. The wilder, the wackier, the better.

I know we have some, but think we need more. Despite the extraordinary work involved, having your artwork exhibited is both enriching and encouraging. It generates income, builds your profile and your creative resume. Creating opportunities like *Show Your WEST-SIDE* is also beneficial for our neighbourhood giving it a cultural heart and pulse, attracting like-minded people to the area.

The slogan for the exhibition 'art for the people, by the people' was courtesy of designer Liana Lucca-Pope and I think it perfectly embodies all of us who are involved with this exhibition; none more so than the youth and first-timers who faced the fear of publicly hanging their art for the world to see!

I am so grateful to those who made the *Show Your WEST-SIDE* exhibition possible; from sponsors to judges, the artists, the helpers and to everyone who turned up to celebrate our artists, big and small.

This project was supported by Maribyrnong City Council's Love Your West Grants Program and the Greater Western Water Thriving Communities Grant program. Over \$5,000 worth of art prizes were donated by our generous local business sponsors. Each business attended on the night and presented the winners with their prizes.

These local businesses didn't have to, but still donated such generous prize money. Even as late as the day before the exhibition opening, I had to add extra prizes to the pool from more local businesses that wanted to support our beloved arts community.

Thank you to each artist for applying for and believing in this exhibition. The calibre of art demonstrates the talent here in the Inner West!

Art fosters a vibrant community in which to live, and creative people need to be nourished and supported. We need more opportunities for artists and for the wider community. I hope to run this exhibition again next year, as well as other creative events soon, because we are better with more art and especially when we do it together.

Show Your WEST-SIDE Art Exhibition is open Weekdays, 9am to 5pm, at Footscray Connectivity Centre, 183 Nicholson Street, Footscray, until 11 August, 2023.



Sally Walshe (aka LaDY MoHaWK) is a passionate local Footscray Artist. To contact her email sally@ladymohawk.com.au. Instagram [@lady.mohawk](https://www.instagram.com/lady.mohawk)

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