

Artistic Support Material

Case Study – Sensory Art Lab by Slow Art Collective Children and Families

'Just wanted to say we took our 4 1/2 year old to the Sensory Art Lab on Friday. We loved it! We loved all of it - the interactiveness of it, the use of all senses, the fun for all ages! We'd love to see more of these events and more widely advertised. I work at a specialist school and would love to take students to similar events in the future. Loved it all!! Looking forward to similar events in the future.' **Sensory Art Lab attendee parent**

Sensory Art Lab by Slow Art Collective was a free interactive art play installation presented by Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres, located in the F Block Hall, Gorman Arts Centre, Friday 29 April - Sunday 1 May, and Wednesday 4 May - Sunday 8 May 2022. The project was originally slated for August 2021 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related state border closures it was postponed to October 2021, then January 2022, and finally presented in April 2022.

Arts Capital at Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centres (A+G) commissioned Melbourne-based Slow Art Collective to deliver a range of play based activities, transforming the F Block Hall at Gorman Arts Centre into an art space that invited children, their families and their carers to explore creativity.

This project supported Arts Capital's organisational goals of creating great experiences for children, their families and their carers, enriching their experience by positioning them as key collaborators with the artists.

With a focus on environmental sustainability, material ethics culture, activism, and collaboration, Slow Art Collective created an experience that was open and accessible to all participants. Participants could stay for as little or as long as they liked to explore all the activities on offer and with the artists on hand to engage and interact with participants in a gentle and playful way, guiding and assisting when appropriate, and ensuring participant safety.

Activities included:

- Archiloom – a large-scale woven installation on bamboo scaffolding, made from mixed materials including recycled wool
- Sonic Archery– firing soft archery arrows to target drum sets, creating great sounds and beats
- Audible Touch Space – creating collaged sound worlds by touching and feeling electronic musical devices
- Fluorescent large scale marble run - staged in a dark space, visitors are invited to make old tennis balls run through a series of fluorescently lit plastic tubes to land on a sound making objects.

The members of Slow Art Collective were also joined by ACT visual artist and Ainslie and Gorman's 2021-2022 Kids x Art Program resident artist, Michelle Day, to assist in the delivery of the activities and as part of a mentoring opportunity to learn about the execution of large-scale installation work for children and families. Day also assisted with invigilation of the work. A duty manager was employed across all event days, to check in participants and help manage the venue, and for continuity of event delivery.

The project enabled the professional payment of 3 artists, including one local artist who was mentored by the visiting artists through direct engagement; Arts Capital committed to paying artists at a critical time with the impacts of COVID-19 being felt across the sector. This opportunity would not have been possible without project funding. All artists reported an overwhelmingly positive experience, with interest in furthering the partnership with Arts Capital. It also provided a significant networking opportunity, specifically with National Gallery of Australia.

Arts Capital worked closely with Ainslie Primary School to provide special sessions for their students to engage with Sensory Art Lab in the second week. The project provided a fantastic opportunity for Arts Capital to further build on the relationship with Ainslie Primary School and provided them with the opportunity to enrich learning programs with arts engagement, all within walking distance to the Centres.

During the two Saturday sessions, local business Stephanie's Donuts sold milkshakes and donuts onsite and thus allowed us to foster a robust partnership with a much-loved Canberra business. The food offering was set up in the Gorman Main Hall with participants invited to stay and relax in the heritage gardens and courtyards as part of their event experience with both venues adjacent to the F Block Hall at Gorman Arts Centre. The project enabled Stephanie's Donuts an opportunity for the business to reach new customers and to experiment with a new business delivery model. Stephanie's Donuts reported a positive experience from the opportunity and will be working again with Arts Capital on future events.

The project enabled new audiences to engage with Arts Capital programming and to explore Gorman Arts Centre as a place of community value and to feel welcomed. The project also contributed to the vibrancy of the Canberra CBD, where audiences also had opportunities to engage with other activities taking place at Gorman Arts Centre adjacent to Sensory Art Lab session times.

Arts Capital saw the Winter Events Fund as opportunity to successfully partner with Events ACT to deliver a high-quality arts experience for Canberra children, their families, and their carers. The funding was approximately 50% of the total cost of the project, and was instrumental in Arts Capital being able to commission Melbourne's Slow Art Collective to deliver a unique and specifically crafted experience for the ACT community - Sensory Art Lab.