



GEELONG ARTS CENTRE
MEDIA RELEASE

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STRIKING FIRST LOOK AT GEELONG ARTS CENTRE FIRST NATIONS ARTWORK

Today, the first of four specially commissioned First Nations artworks was unveiled, revealing one of the most exciting design elements of the Geelong Arts Centre Little Malop Street Redevelopment.

Appearing on the external Western Façade of the Geelong Arts Centre Little Malop Street Redevelopment, proud Wadawurrung Woman and award-winning contemporary artist Kait James' work focuses on presenting Indigenous perspectives with familiar pop-cultural references using Aboriginal Souvenir Tea Towels from the 1970-80s that generalise and stereotype her culture.

Kait James today revealed a section of her 193-panel work, alongside Geelong Arts Centre CEO & Creative Director, Joel McGuinness, and Wadawurrung Woman, Corrina Eccles.

The remaining 184 panels will be uncovered across the next week, with the vibrant full artwork on full display to the Geelong community as the redevelopment continues to progress.

Using humour and vivid colours, Kait addresses the way white western culture has dominated Australia's history, and endeavours to develop and use her art in ways that encourage responsiveness, unity and optimism.

Sourcing her chosen canvas largely from op shops, Kait uses a punch needle to embroider over the top of Aboriginal

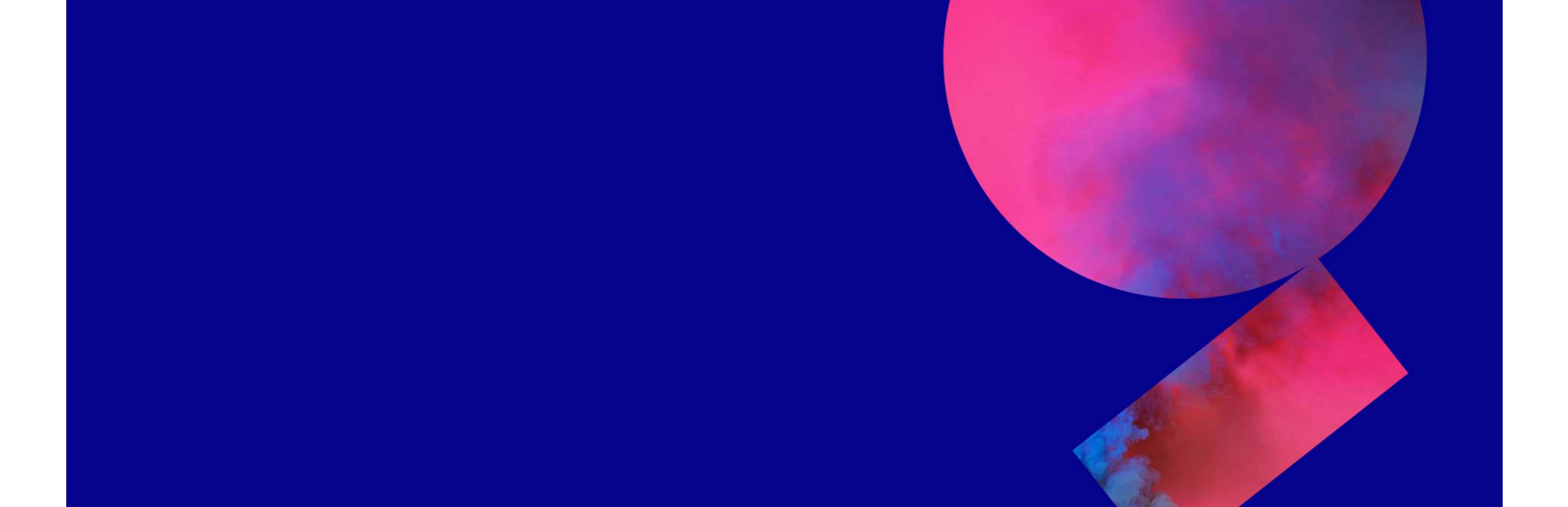
calendar tea towels to change the narrative, give the tea towels new life, and give herself a voice. This careful and time-consuming method can see individual artworks taking up to a month to create.

To create the panels, Kait used high resolution images of her original artworks, scaled up and adjusted digitally to ensure the colour saturation matched the originals and that imagery was clear. ARM Architecture provided Kait with a panel template which made sure the images were the correct size and resolution. There are 23 different 'tea towel' artworks and to ensure the colours worked alongside each other avoid repetition, Kait spent many hours rearranging the panels both on paper and digitally before they were able to be printed onto the metal panels visible on the Geelong Arts Centre Western Façade.

Coming together as co-designers, ARM Architecture, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and the wider First Nations community have woven traditional stories of the land, water and sky, and the colours and textures of Moonah trees, ochre, and granite stone throughout the campus.

Amplifying the voices of the local First Nations community, ARM Architecture have worked closely with Wadawurrung artist Kait James, and local First Nations artists Tarryn Love, Gerard Black and Mick Ryan to showcase First Nations stories through the campus and present their works in new and fascinating ways.

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An integral part of the Geelong Arts Centre Little Malop Street Redevelopment has been building a meaningful connection to Country and the wider Geelong community through its design.

Having shared the stories behind their unique artworks in May 2022 through a collection of captivating videos, this morning's unveiling marks the much-anticipated first look at any of the First Nations artworks in situ, and sets an exciting precedent for what's to come.

These artists' works were selected through an Expression of Interest process promoted by Geelong Arts Centre in 2021.

The Geelong Arts Centre Little Malop Street Redevelopment is backed with a \$140 million investment from the Victorian Government and is on track for completion in the second half of 2023.

For further information regarding Geelong Arts Centre's Little Malop Street Redevelopment, visit geelongartscentre.org.au/about-us/little-malop-street-redevelopment

QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE

"As we draw ever closer to the completion of the redeveloped Geelong Arts Centre, we could not be more honoured to showcase Kait James' rich work upon the building's façade.

The opportunity to connect with First Nations artists has been incredible, and we can't wait to unveil each of their works as they are completed."

Quotes attributable to Geelong Arts Centre CEO & Creative Director,
Joel McGuinness

"What a great occasion to see Kait James' work revealed on the exterior of the Geelong Arts Centre To see the colour, culture and creativity of this artwork displayed at such great scale is truly special. These artworks will be long enjoyed and appreciated by visitors to Geelong Arts Centre and our region."

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong,
Christine Couzens MP

"I am so honoured and proud to be a part of this important project. Never in my wildest dreams did I think my artwork would be on the facade of such a prominent and iconic building on Wadawurrung Country, and at this massive scale! I hope this artwork starts conversations, changes perceptions but also celebrates culture and visibility."

Quote attributable to Wadawurrung Woman and Artist,
Kait James

"Art, stories, song and dance started 60,000 years ago on this land, and to have Kait, Wadawurrung Woman, and other First Nations artists bringing a narrative of Art, stories, sound and the layers of Country throughout the building will educate many."

Quote attributable to Wadawurrung Woman,
Corrina Eccles