



Merri-bek
City Council

Counihan Gallery

Merri-bek Summer Show 2025

Application Pack



Merri-bek Summer Show 2025: Love in Crisis

About the Merri-bek Summer Show

The Merri-bek Summer Show is an annual exhibition held at the Counihan Gallery. Each year, local artists are invited to submit an artwork that explores a chosen theme.

This year's Merri-bek Summer Show theme is:

Love in Crisis

How do we unite a world that is so often divided?

This question underpins the 2025 Summer Show theme: **Love in Crisis**. The theme invites Merri-bek artists to explore love – in all its forms – as an act of resistance and repair in increasingly fractured times.

Responses could reflect on:

- Love as activism.
- Kindness, generosity, and empathy as forms of resistance and catalysts for change.
- Everyday resilience – from small gestures of support to caring for culture and community and standing together.
- How we give and receive love in troubled times.
- What a world that prioritised people over profit might look like.

This year, we are excited to introduce a children's gallery and activity station alongside the exhibition. Young people can respond to the theme by creating postcard-sized drawings, which will be exhibited on the front windows of the Counihan Gallery throughout January. The activity station will be available in the Gallery during the exhibition and the completed drawings will be installed in the windows once the exhibition has closed.

Awards

Noel Counihan Commemorative Art Award

The Counihan Gallery is pleased to present the 9th Noel Counihan Commemorative Art Award.

The Award celebrates an artist whose work explores the exhibition theme and engages with social, political, or environmental ideas. All exhibitors at the Merri-bek Summer Show are eligible for the Award.

The Award recipient will receive \$4000. This prize is generously sponsored by Merri-bek City Council. The Award is non-acquisitive.

The Award is judged by Counihan Gallery staff, a panel member from the Merri-bek Arts Advisory Committee and an independent arts professional. The recipient is announced at the exhibition opening event.

People's Choice Award

The People's Choice Award is a cash prize of \$1000 and is proudly supported by the Sydney Road Street Association.

The Award is voted by visitors to the Merri-bek Summer Show and the recipient is announced at the end of the exhibition.

Climate Activism Award

This award celebrates an artist whose work engages with climate justice ideas. The prize is a \$500 CERES voucher.

Accessibility and Inclusion at the Counihan Gallery

We are committed to accessibility and encourage applications from d/Deaf and Disabled artists. If you would like to submit a hardcopy application, a video application, or an application in an alternative format or language, please contact the Gallery. at CounihanGallery@Merri-bek.vic.gov.au or on 9389 8622.

For more information about the accessibility of the Counihan Gallery venue, please visit our [Access and Inclusion at the Counihan Gallery page of our website.](#)

We endeavour to meet the access requirements of all Merri-bek Summer Show exhibitors. If your application is successful, we offer resourcing to support your access requirements.

| Gallery contact information | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| In person | 233 Sydney Road Brunswick VIC 3056 Wednesday to Saturday, 11am to 5pm Sunday 1pm to 5pm |
| Phone | 03 9389 8622 |
| Email | CounihanGallery@Merri-bek.vic.gov.au |
| Social media | Facebook: facebook.com/counihanGallery Instagram: @counihanGallery |

Cover image: Installation detail of Merri-bek Summer Show 2024: (Be)Longing.

Photographer: Jess Ibacache

Application Process

It is free to apply for, and exhibit in, the Merri-bek Summer Show.

The application deadline is Saturday 27 September, 5pm.

As part of the application process, you must submit:

1. A completed [Application Form](#)

If you would like to submit a hardcopy or video application instead of an online form, please [contact the Gallery](#)

2. An artwork statement, which describes how your work relates to the exhibition theme (150 words maximum). **If you are accepted into the exhibition, this statement will be published in a printed room sheet together with a full artwork caption.** On the Gallery wall, a small label will appear next to your work. This label will include: your name, the artwork title and date, and the medium/s. Each artwork will also have a number on the wall that matches the numbered entries in the room sheet.
3. A brief biography and/or a website or social media handles (150 words maximum)
4. A high-resolution image of your proposed artwork, or a 1-minute excerpt of a video work. The artwork does not need to be complete at the time of submitting your application. Image files must be JPEGs; video files must be MP4.

Before submitting your application, please read the Conditions of Entry.

Important Dates

Application deadline

The application deadline is **Saturday 27 September, 5pm.**

Submit your application online using [our Merri-bek Summer Show Application Form on SnapForms](#). SnapForms is an online survey platform.

For a Microsoft Word Document or PDF version of this form, please [contact the Gallery](#).

Late applications will not be accepted.

Acceptance of your artwork

Applicants will receive confirmation that their entry has been accepted from **Wednesday 15 October 2025.**

Delivery of artwork

If you are accepted into the exhibition, you must deliver your completed work to the Counihan Gallery **between 11am and 6pm on Wednesday 29 October or Thursday 30 October 2025.**

Exhibition dates

The Merri-bek Summer Show opens on **Saturday 8 November at 2pm** and closes on **Thursday 18 December 2025 at 5pm.**

Winner announcement and exhibition opening event

Saturday 8 November, 2pm to 4pm.

Collection of artwork

At the end of the exhibition, you are required to collect your artwork from the Counihan Gallery **between 11am and 5pm on Friday 19 December 2025, or between 11am and 5pm on Saturday 20 December.**

If you are unable to collect your work on these days, please arrange for someone to collect your work on your behalf. Works cannot be stored at the Gallery during the summer closure period.

Conditions of Entry

Please read the Conditions of Entry before submitting an application:

- ☐ You must be 18 years old or over at the time of entry.
- ☐ You must live, work, study or currently base your art practice in the Merri-bek municipality.
- ☐ You can only submit one application.
- ☐ Your artwork must be your own original work
- ☐ Your artwork must be created or completed in 2025.
- ☐ Your artwork must explore the exhibition theme.
- ☐ **Your artwork cannot be bigger than 125 cm along any axis** (including sculptures/installations). Please note, the size restriction has been changed this year due to the increasing number of entries we receive.
- ☐ **Your artwork must be a single artwork.** Applications to submit a series of works, even within the size constraints, will not be accepted. You can submit a single artwork composed from multiple panels or parts providing it does not exceed the size constraints.
- ☐ If your artwork is an installation, you must submit detailed installation instructions with your application, including images of how the artwork should look once installed.
- ☐ You must submit your application before the deadline (see [Important Dates](#)). Late entries will not be accepted.
- ☐ You must ensure the [Application Form](#) is complete, and that all information is correct at time of submission. No changes will be made to artwork details or artist statements after the application deadline.
- ☐ If accepted into the exhibition, artworks must be delivered to the Gallery before the exhibition commences. See the [Important Dates](#) for the delivery days and times. The work delivered must be the same as the work submitted in your application.
- ☐ At the end of the exhibition, artworks must be collected from the Gallery on the dates specified by the Gallery. See [Important Dates](#) for the collection days and times. If you are unable to collect your artwork, you must organise for someone to collect the work for you. Artworks cannot be stored at the Gallery during the summer closure period.
- ☐ The Gallery takes no commission on sales from artworks in the exhibition. Sales enquiries will be directed to the artist or their nominated representative. The Gallery is not responsible for the handling of money, the coordination of artwork sales, or pick up/delivery of sold artworks.
- ☐ The artwork cannot be removed from the exhibition before the exhibition closing date.
- ☐ Artworks must be delivered ready to hang or install (with wires, D-rings or other fixtures already attached). Installation instructions must be included if necessary.
- ☐ You must include your name on your artwork when you deliver it.

- ❑ The Gallery reserves the right to refuse display of any entry that is deemed unacceptable for exhibition. The Gallery reserves the right to remove such works at any time at its own discretion.
- ❑ You must accept full responsibility (and associated expenses) for packing, transport and insurance of your artwork.
- ❑ The Gallery will exercise reasonable care when handling and installing artworks but will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to artworks.
- ❑ Gallery staff will install and curate the exhibition at their discretion.
- ❑ The Gallery may reproduce biographical information and images of your entered artwork for print and electronic media for publicity purposes and for archival purposes in relation to the exhibition and awards.
- ❑ Employees of Merri-bek City Council who are not involved in the judging of the awards are eligible to enter the exhibition; however, they will not be eligible for awards.
- ❑ The decision reached by the judges of the awards is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.
- ❑ Lobbying or canvassing Councillors or Council Officers in relation to any exhibition applications or awards is prohibited. This includes asking Councillors or Council Officers to recommend your artwork to assessment panel members or to discuss the application with assessment panel members on your behalf. Any application submitted where the applicant, or applicant's representative, has canvassed or lobbied a Councillor or Council Officer will be deemed ineligible.

| IMPORTANT DATES: | |
|--|---|
| Applications Close | Saturday 27 September, 5pm |
| Acceptance Notification | From Wednesday 15 October |
| Artwork Delivery | Wednesday 29 October, 11am–6pm Thursday 30 October, 11am–6pm |
| Exhibition opening date | Saturday 8 November, 2pm |
| Exhibition opening event | Saturday 8 November, 2pm–4pm |
| Winner announced: Noel Counihan Commemorative Art Award | |
| Exhibition closes | Thursday 18 December, 5pm. |
| Winner announced: People's Choice Award | Friday 19 December |
| Artwork Collection | Friday 19 December, 11am–5pm Saturday 20 December, 11am–5pm |

Privacy and Information Statement

Merri-bek City Council is committed to protecting your privacy in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

The personal information requested on this form is being collected by Merri-bek City Council for the 2025 Merri-bek Summer Show exhibition applications and may also be used to update your personal information otherwise held by Council (for example, contact details including email address, phone number).

The personal information may also be used by Council for related purposes (e.g. to contact you about the exhibition or use of your images). It will not be disclosed to any other external party without your consent, unless required or authorised by law. If the personal information is not provided, then your exhibition application will be deemed ineligible.

You can gain access to the personal information you have provided to Merri-bek City Council, and/or alter it, by contacting Council's Privacy Officer via telephone on 9240 1111 or e-mail at Privacyofficer@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.