



COUNIHAN
GALLERY
IN BRUNSWICK



Merri-bek City Council

Applying for a Counihan Gallery exhibition for 2026

May 2025

Image:

Deanna Hitti's *K is for Kitab
Tabakh*, 2024.

Photo: Simon Fazio

Acknowledgement of Country

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We are on Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Country

We recognise their continuous connection to culture, community and Country and embrace their traditional and contemporary cultural and creative expression.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging, and to all First Nations people who are part of the community today.



Image:

Peta Clancy's artwork in
*Future River: When the past
flows, 2024.*

Photo: Simon Fazio

About the Counihan Gallery



Our context

The public gallery for Merri-bek City Council

- All exhibitions and programs are free
- We are not a commercial space, which means we don't handle sales or take commission
- We support local artists
- We have a Merri-bek Arts Advisory Committee made up of members of the Merri-bek community; representatives of the Committee sit on the exhibition selection panel

Our focus

Art as activism

- Art that explores political, environmental or social justice issues
- We are named after Noel Counihan, an artist and activist who championed workers' rights and free speech

Contemporary art

An exhibition program that is diverse

- A range of media
- Group and solo shows
- Backgrounds and perspectives that represent Merri-bek's demographic and Human Rights Priority Groups
- Local artists
- Mix of early and mid-career artists

About the Counihan Gallery Team

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Merri-bek
City Council

Linda Short

Team Leader Gallery & Arts Program

Josh Simpson

Visual Arts Officer

Jessica Ibacache

Arts Development Officer

Gallery Attendants & Installers

Leon Van de Graaf

Eamon Sprod

Steph Siu

Vicki Nguyen



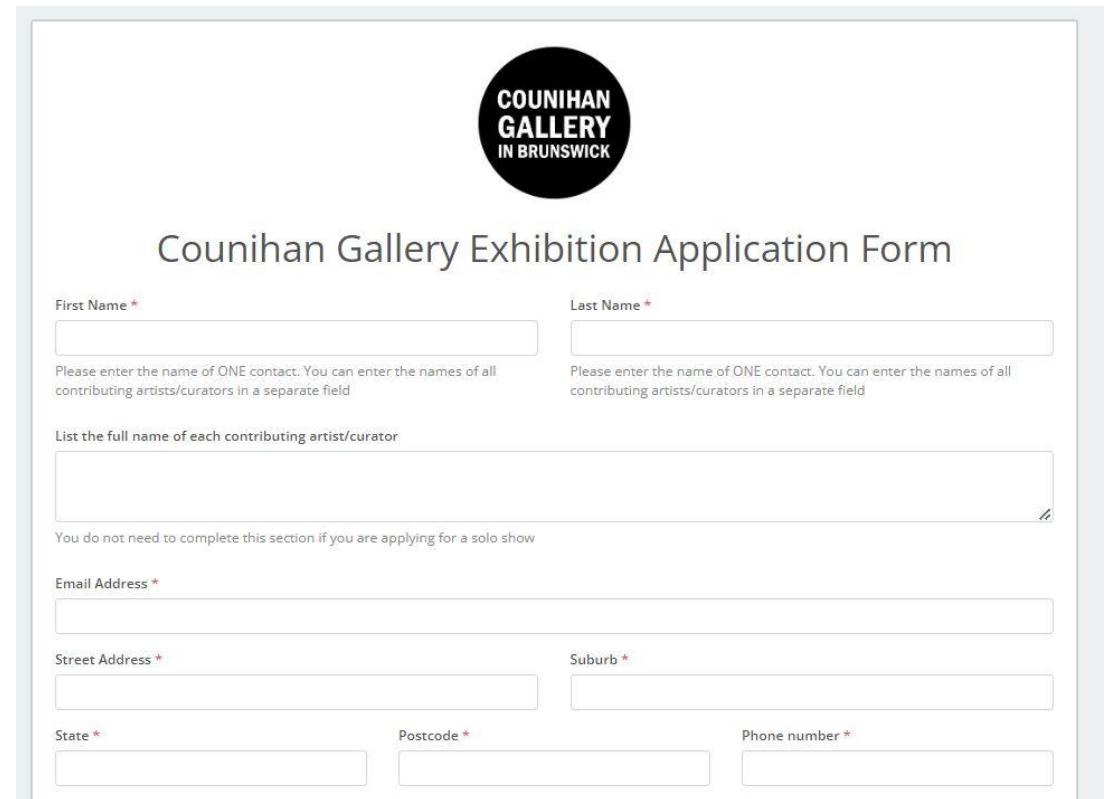
About the exhibition call out

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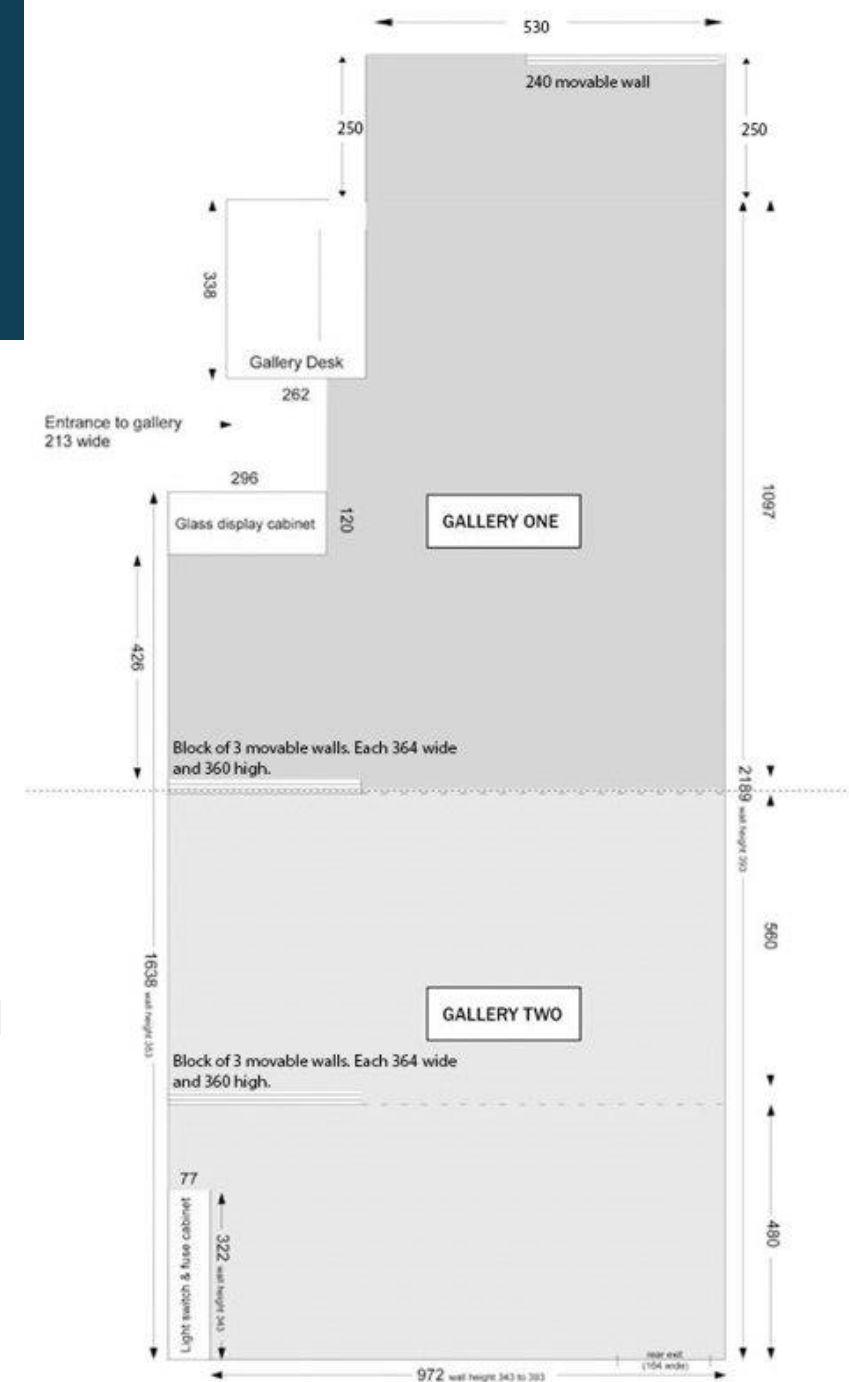
- One call out per year. Open until Friday 13 June, 5pm
- Applications can be submitted at any time during the proposals period but will only be assessed after the application deadline.
- Applications are submitted through an online form. We also accept hardcopy forms or video applications on request
- Artists can apply for the Middle Gallery or Rear Gallery, with the front space reserved for invitational exhibitions
- We schedule exhibitions a year in advance
- We receive up to 100 applications annually, and have up to 6 exhibition slots to offer
- Applications are assessed by Council arts and culture staff, members from the Merri-bek Arts Advisory Committee and an independent arts professional



The image shows a screenshot of the 'Counihan Gallery Exhibition Application Form'. At the top right is the 'COUNIHAN GALLERY IN BRUNSWICK' logo. The title 'Counihan Gallery Exhibition Application Form' is centered. The form contains several input fields: 'First Name *', 'Last Name *', 'Email Address *', 'Street Address *', 'Suburb *', 'State *', 'Postcode *', and 'Phone number *'. There are two large text areas for 'contributing artists/curators' with instructions to enter the names of all contributors in a separate field. A note states: 'You do not need to complete this section if you are applying for a solo show'.

About the exhibition spaces

- The Gallery can be divided into two spaces
- All together, the Middle and Rear Galleries have approximately 55 running metres of wall space (not including partition walls)
- There is up to approximately 30 metres of additional wall space using partitions
- Groups can apply for one or both spaces, but individuals will only be considered for one space
- The Front Gallery is not available through the application process and is programmed separately
- We offer \$1000 honorarium per exhibition space for successful applicants.



Winter Night Screen



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About the Night Screen

- New to the EOI process
- Runs for the month of August, nightly from 5pm to 11pm
- Two-week slot
- \$250 honorarium per slot
- Video work, can include sound

Amrita Hepi's work in 2017
Photo: Sam Mapplebeck



Tips on applying for a show

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Good images

High resolution

A combination of installation views of previous exhibitions and individual artworks

Images should be representative of the proposed exhibition



Project description

Use plain English (avoid jargon, art-speak, overly wordy sentences)

Ensure the description matches the images

Explain why the exhibition should be shown at the Counihan Gallery

Website and social media

We often refer to this when whittling down the shortlist

A good idea to have a website, which gives the opportunity to showcase your entire body of work

Realistic and deliverable

Is your application dependent on funding?

Are all artists confirmed and committed to the exhibition?

Have you considered the tech requirements? The size of the exhibition space?

Have you considered your schedule?

Gallery alignment

Political, environmental and social justice themes

Contemporary and innovative

Unique perspective and something important to say

How to avoid taking bad images

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What to avoid:

- 'Dutch tilt' or 'fish eye' (do not distort your image, or take your image on an oblique angle)
- Extreme cropping
- Blurry or low-resolution images
- Inconsistent colouring of images (either through yellow lighting or post-production editing/filters)
- Over or under exposed images (too washed out/bright, or too dark and grainy)
- Black and white images
- What might be good for social media is not necessarily good for an exhibition proposal



How to take good images

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Tips for good documentation:

- Photograph your artworks straight on
- If documenting an exhibition, it can help to take your photos from each corner of the room
- Use a tripod or flat surface to rest your camera on
- For close-ups of artworks, use a neutral background such as a white wall

Good quality images (examples)



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Images by Chris Crocker of Hootan Heydari's show *Yeki Bood, Yeki Nabood*, 2022.



Good quality images (examples)

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Images by Janelle Low of *Peonies*, *Still Life* and *a Duck*, 2023

What the Counihan Gallery provides

- Professional assistance from Gallery staff in the development and coordination of the exhibition
- Staffing of the Gallery during opening hours
- Major aspects of marketing the exhibition, such as eNewsletters, social media engagement and exhibition listings
- Media release distribution
- Signage for exhibitions
- Assistance with exhibition design, installation and lighting
- Access to Gallery tools and audio-visual equipment including: DVD players, media players, sound system, digital projectors and televisions
- A variety of support structures for display purposes
- Gallery staff assistance at exhibition openings
- Catering for exhibition openings
- After hours alarm protection and security
- Resourcing for accessibility requirements
- An exhibition honorarium of \$1000, or \$250 for the Winter Night Screen

What you will need to provide



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- Deliver the exhibition as proposed in your application
- Professionalism (punctuality, communication, integrity)
- Provide gallery staff with an exhibition description and artwork details for the promotion of the exhibition
- Provide a selection of high-quality digital images for marketing and publicity purposes
- Assist with the installation and deinstallation of the exhibition
- Organise the delivery and collection of artworks to and from Gallery (costs to be met by the exhibitor)
- Provide any additional advertising or publicity materials to Gallery staff for approval before distribution (costs to be met by the exhibitor)
- Consider developing public programs in conversation with Gallery staff, such as artist talks or workshops
- Maximise audience engagement by sharing your project with your networks and being available for publicity opportunities
- Ensure the accessibility of your exhibition (to be assisted by Gallery staff)



Planning for accessibility

- Low-level or disorienting lighting
- Moving or flashing images
- Sound
- Captioned audio of people speaking
- For uncaptioned audio of people speaking, consider including a transcript
- Optical illusions
- Trip hazards (such as floor-based works)
- Installations that may be difficult for wheelchair users to navigate
- Adult or sensitive content (please specify)
- Other (please specify)
- Consider possible online programs as well as in person events

Counihan Public Programs

- Artist led programming for the community
- Examples include creative workshop, panel discussion, performance
- Free or low cost for the community
- Artists are paid an artist fee, plus materials
- Purpose to increase audience engagement for the gallery & attendance for the artist's exhibition

Other opportunities at the Counihan Gallery

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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
- There is a cash prize for an outstanding artwork that engages with political, environmental or social justice themes
- Free to apply, free to exhibit

Do you have any questions?

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