

Merri-bek City Council

# **Counihan Gallery**

## **Applying for an exhibition**

Image:

Artwork detail from Noah Spivak and Emme Orbach's *Chemigraph* series, 2022

# About the Counihan Gallery

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GALLERY  
IN BRUNSWICK



Merri-bek  
City Council

## Our context

### The public gallery for Merri-bek City Council

- All exhibitions are free for the public to attend
- We are not a commercial space, which means we don't handle sales or take commission on sold works
- We are in service to our community
- 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 of Merri-bek's demographic and Merri-bek's Human Rights Priority Groups
  - Local artists in the mix
  - Mix of early and mid-career artists

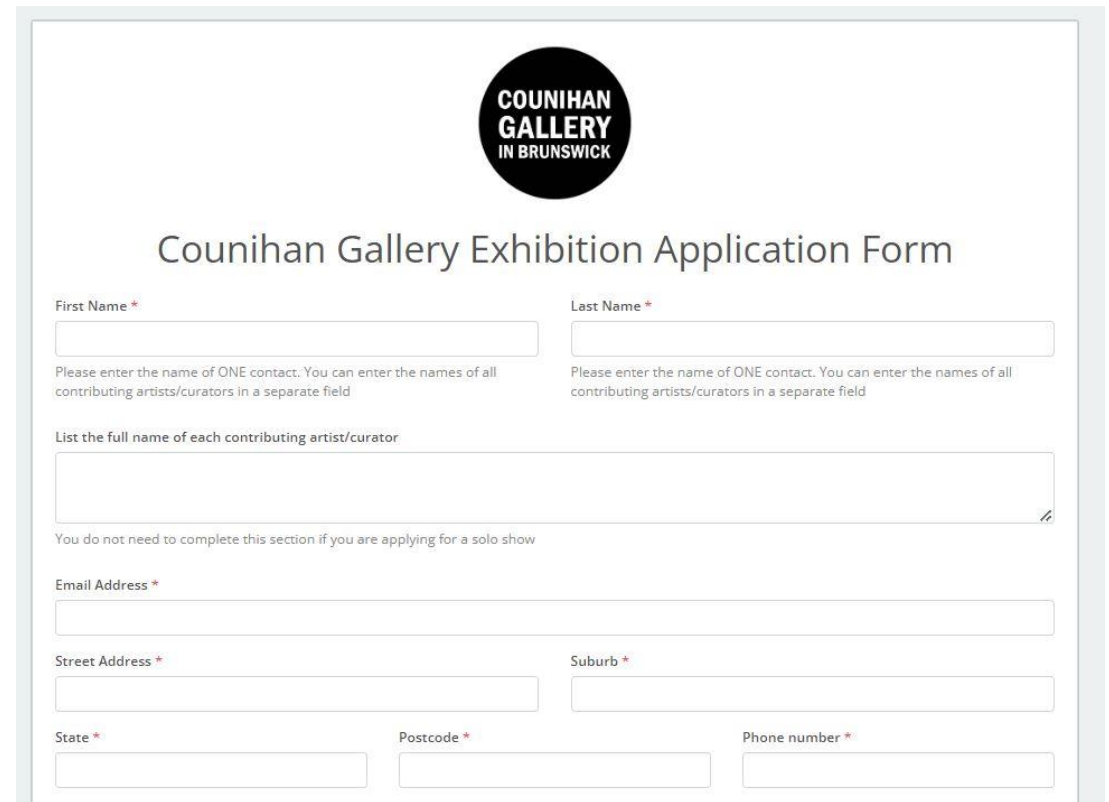
# About the exhibition call out

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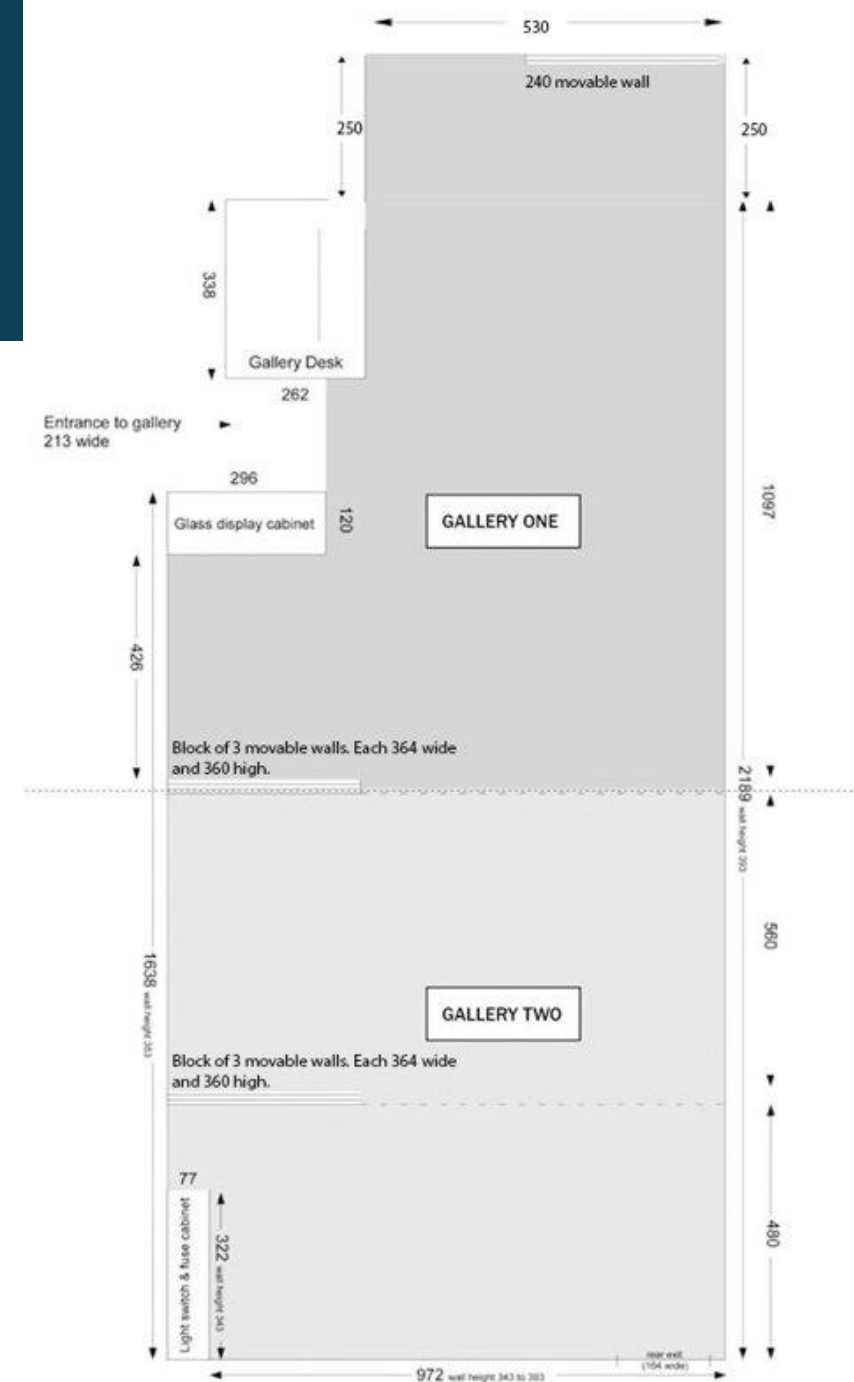
- One call out per year, open from early April to late June
- Applications can be submitted at any time during the proposals period but will only be assessed after the application deadline. The application deadline is Friday 30 June 2023, 5pm
- Applications are submitted through an online form. Hardcopy forms or video applications are also accepted on request
- Artists can apply for Gallery 1 or Gallery 2, with the front space reserved for invitational or collection exhibitions
- We schedule exhibitions a year in advance
- We receive approximately 100 applications annually, and have up to 6 exhibition slots to offer
- Applications are assessed by the Gallery Officer, the Gallery Curator, the Unit Manager of Arts and Culture, two members from the Merri-bek Arts Advisory Committee, and one independent arts professional (total of 6 members)



The screenshot shows the 'Counihan Gallery Exhibition Application Form'. At the top center is the COUNIHAN GALLERY IN BRUNSWICK logo. Below the logo is the title 'Counihan Gallery Exhibition Application Form'. The form contains several input fields: 'First Name \*' and 'Last Name \*' (each with a text box and a note: 'Please enter the name of ONE contact. You can enter the names of all contributing artists/curators in a separate field'); a large text area for 'List the full name of each contributing artist/curator' (with a note: 'You do not need to complete this section if you are applying for a solo show'); 'Email Address \*' (with a text box); 'Street Address \*' and 'Suburb \*' (each with a text box); and 'State \*', 'Postcode \*', and 'Phone number \*' (each with a text box).

# 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



# Tips on applying for a show



## 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

Diverse

# How to avoid taking bad images

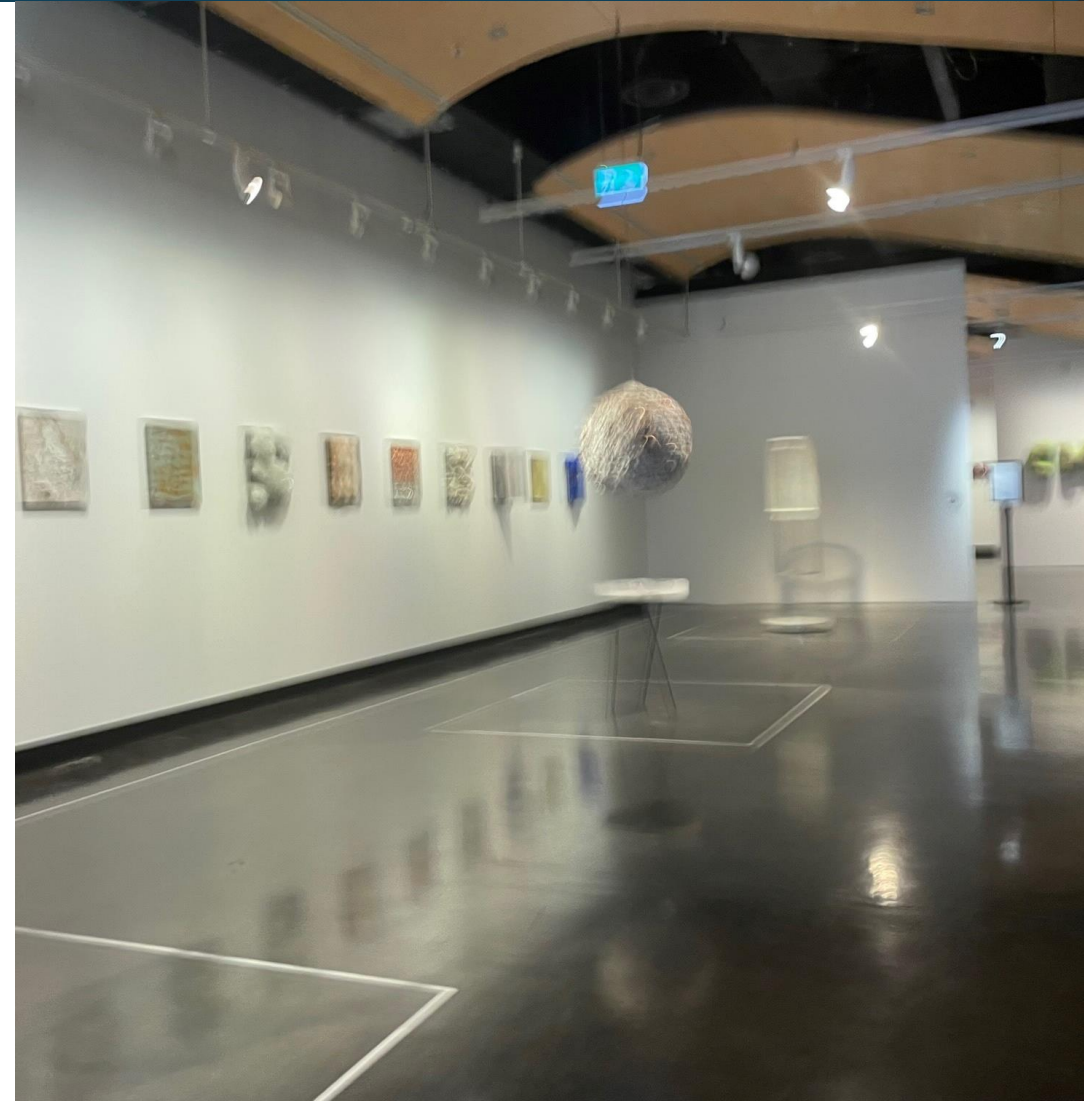
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## What to avoid:

- '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

Image 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 the Counihan Collection, 2022

# What the Counihan Gallery provides



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- 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



# What you will need to provide



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- Deliver the exhibition as proposed in your application
- Professionalism (punctuality, communication, integrity)
- Provide the Gallery Curator 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)



# Other opportunities at the Counihan Gallery

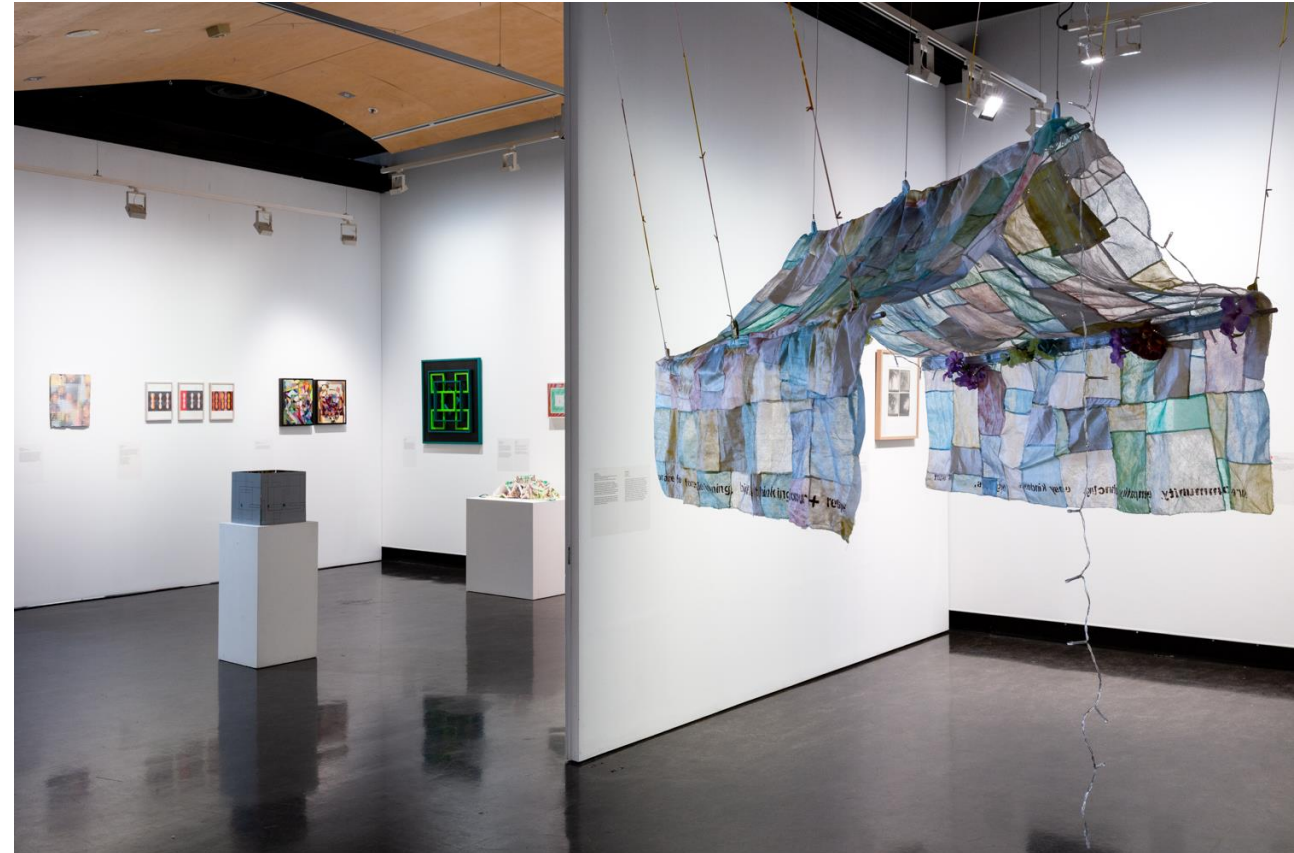
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## Merri-bek Summer Show

- 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



# Other opportunities in Merri-bek

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## Making it in Merri-bek

- An annual series of free workshops and discussions for our local arts and creative industry held in May/ June each year

## Maker Spaces

- A creative studio space where the community can come together to create, connect and learn
- The space has equipment such as 3D printers, sewing machines, and overlockers, wet areas with a fume hood for painters, sound equipment, etc.
- Free, you just need to sign up for a free library membership
- Maker Spaces are found at the library (Brunswick, Coburg and Glenroy)

**Do you have any questions?**

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