



Presence II

By Sarah Northcott



Women's &
Children's Hospital
Foundation

Arts in Health

Adelaide artist, Sarah Northcott makes small scale mixed media works that record the visual details observed while walking and exploring her local surrounds. The act of recording these observations offers a reminder to be 'present'; connected to place; and invites an exercise in mindful looking.

Sarah has worked as a researcher, lecturer, curator, and in arts administration. Recently her research in the field of art and health has focused on how spaces in the community for arts can promote wellbeing through 'connectedness'.

This project of making postcard size paintings began in 2020, during the pandemic and following the birth of Sarah's second child. Most of the works were made at the kitchen table with her baby son in a sling. The small scale of these works and being able to create the content while taking regular strolls around the neighbourhood, a common activity for all new parents, offered the artist a way to carry on a creative project whilst caring for young children.

Walking offers a sense of freedom, despite the limitations on how far you can travel with small children, and those imposed by the pandemic. It also offers respite from everyday stresses and the gravity of current contemporary issues.

'These works are a visual documentation of my neighbourhood and part of a strategy for maintaining mental health through mindfulness. Being largely confined to our local area for a period following the birth of my second child I looked at our surroundings with new eyes. Creating these works is a reminder to be 'present' in the moment. They reflect the way I connect with 'place' and my local community, despite the paintings being unpopulated by people. This, and the possibilities for connectedness through art as a promoter of wellbeing, is behind my desire to exhibit these works in a health context. The possibilities for art a way of maintaining 'connectedness' is especially important through a period where keeping physical distance has formed part of a strategy for keeping the community healthy.'

Sarah Northcott, 2020

To see more of Sarah's artwork visit: Instagram @sarahnorthlee

To read more - Sarah and Connal James Lee have written a paper 'Art for Health's Sake's community art galleries as spaces for well-being promotion through connectedness': <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2020.1740602>



Image top left: detail of *Handrail and canopy*, Image top right: detail of *Painting with Clancy in sling*,
Image bottom: detail of *Bike path and tram line*

The Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation (WCH Foundation) raises funds to support the health of women and children under the care of the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, South Australia. The WCH Foundation is committed to ensuring that mums, children, and their families have access to the very best in medical care, hospital facilities and support services at a time when they need it the most.

The WCH Foundation Arts in Health program creates an interactive and vibrant hospital environment that improves the health and wellbeing of the hospital patients, their families and staff. Through art, play and music, we encourage curiosity and creativity and reduce the stress of being in hospital.

The Arts in Health Exhibition Program provides a space away from the stresses of treatment to distract, entertain and inspire by improving the hospital environment. The artworks displayed in the exhibition spaces come from a range of sources – internally from hospital staff, patients (women & children) and their families, through specific Arts in Health activities and externally from local artists and art collectives.

This exhibition was planned and exhibited on the lands of the Kurna People, we pay our respects to the Kurna Elders past and present and to the Elders of the lands this brochure reaches.

Cover Image: detail of *Number 35 blue fence and palm*



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