

DISTIL IMMERSIVE  
BELONGINGS

18 SEPTEMBER – 2 NOVEMBER 2024



Dear Boundaries : Transcended Artists,

On behalf of The University of Newcastle and the University Galleries we would like to thank you for exhibiting at Watt Space Gallery and extend our congratulations for a beautiful and highly successful show.

We have compiled a summary of the show for your records and look forward to working with you on future projects.

Warmest Regards,

**GILLEAN SHAW** | Art Curator  
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**UNIVERSITY  
GALLERIES**



**VISITORS**

Days Open – 4 September to 2 November	40
General Visitors	528
Number of Events	17
Attendance of Events	1111
Total Visitors	1668

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Posts**

Facebook Posts	8
Instagram Posts	8
Instagram Stories	5

**Social Media performance during Exhibition Period**

Facebook Reach	1.4k
Facebook Page visits	294
Instagram Reach	1.6k
Instagram profile visits	276
Instagram follows	65 new followers

**Sample of the social media posts**

**Watt Space Gallery**  
Published by Uni Gal  
4 September

Join us for the Opening of Boundaries: Transcended  
Watt Space Gallery is pleased to invite you to the launch of Boundaries: Transcended this Saturday, 7 September, at 2 PM.  
Join artists at our launch event, featuring an afternoon of dance, music, song, and food. We look forward to welcoming you to an afternoon of art and community engagement.... [See more](#)

**Watt Space Gallery**  
Published by Uni Gal  
17 September

The Unity Project is an incredible community collaboration art project by Alice Niekirk and Mojgab Habibi that's in our new exhibition BOUNDARIES: TRANSCENDED - just launched.  
Discover the story, the installation and so much more at Watt Space Gallery this season.  
Watt Space Gallery | OPEN Wed-Fri 10-5 | Sat 12-4... [See more](#)

**Watt Space Gallery**  
Published by Uni Gal  
22 October at 20:00

So much colour and wonder! It's been a joy to watch this artwork grow as viewers have added to it during this exhibition duration.  
Join in - there's still time to add to this community weaving piece as part of artist Emma Stanistreet's work. Exhibition ends 02 Nov.  
📍 WATT SPACE GALLERY | OPEN Wed-Fri 10-5 Sat 12-4... [See more](#)

## PRESS AND PROMOTION

Exhibition promoted in:

Art Guide Australia website and printed edition

Art Almanac Website and printed edition

University of Newcastle Website

NEW ANNUAL Website

Featured event at VisitNewcastle.com

Featured in the Loop internal university press

Exhibition promoted on staff and student screensavers

The Internal Loop article below.



New Annual Festival is fast approaching, running from Friday 27 September to Sunday 6 October this year, owned and operated by Newcastle City Council and is a significant milestone in the local arts and cultural scene.

Our University is a presenting partner and within that is the role our Galleries play as a major cultural touchstone, facilitating a strong connection between our region's vibrant arts scene and our communities.

This article offers a sneak peek into the people and stories of the University Galleries for New Annual 2024. Both exhibitions will run until Saturday 2 November. Discover more about our University's involvement in the [What's on for New Annual](#) article.



View the full list of offerings on the [New Annual](#) website and we hope to see you there!

### Belongings by Distil Immersive

Award-winning interactive installation [Belongings](#), presented by Distil Immersive shares the stories of six refugees who have taken asylum in Newcastle.

Through the lens of their most cherished belongings, this installation invites audiences to step into the shoes of those who have faced unimaginable challenges. A multi-user experience, it combines documentary storytelling with smartphone technology to create an intimate encounter.

Each story is a testament to the human spirit. For one, Arabic poetry keeps his homeland alive in his heart; for another, it is her father's hat that carries the scent of home.

These objects are more than just items - they are vessels of memory, identity, and resilience. As you navigate this experience, you'll uncover the deep connections between these belongings and the lives they represent, challenging the boundaries between 'us' and 'them.'

You are invited to an exclusive preview of Belongings at 4pm before it is launched to the public on **Friday 27 September** at the Watt Space Gallery. Immerse yourself in the artworks, read the stories, interact with the installation and meet the models of the virtual portraits, who will be at the launch.

Afterwards, go onto the grand Street Party, kicking off New Annual's celebrations at 5pm at King St and Civic Park.

### Boundaries: Transcended

Running concurrently at our Watt Space Gallery is [Boundaries: Transcended](#) which explores themes of migration, community, and memory.

The Unity Project is a collaborative project initiated Dr Alice Neikirk, from the School of Law and Justice and ceramicist and alum Dr Mojgan Habibi. Working with a number of local schools and community groups\*, this project created over 700 miniature houses acknowledging refugee resettlement in the Hunter Valley.

Also contained in the exhibition is another project that Alice and Mojgan have worked on together, which uses sound to highlight the experiences of migration and diaspora, echoed through the ceramic forms of traditional Iranian water urns.

These works are exhibited alongside text, AI images, video and neon sign installation works by Dr Carolyn McKay exploring Australia's refugee detention policies. Carolyn McKay has previously taught at our University and is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Sydney.

Boundaries: Transcended also encapsulates Emma Stanistreet's handmade clay vessels and interactive wall weavings. Come in and try your hand at adding a weaving to the wall. Emma is also an alum of our University.

Dr Alice Neikirk will be running a workshop on **Sunday 29 September** at 10-11.30am at Watt Space Gallery, where people can try their hand at making tiny clay houses, like those currently on exhibit.



#### Spotlight on: [Louis Ndagijimana](#)

Louis is a staff member who works in the [Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education \(CEEHE\)](#) and is a refugee from Burundi. Through his current role within CEEHE, Louis facilitates weekly drop-in sessions that provide refugee students with a safe place to exchange dialogue around their education.

Louis is featured in the exhibition as one of the portraits and his chosen belonging is a French-English Dictionary.

Louis says of the experience: "It was another world of adventure. I felt like a 'utopian Hollywood movie star' because I was surrounded by studio experts in producing image or video in a professional way and it was lengthy process because I had to do rehearsals for a couple of days."

He hopes to share with viewers of the exhibition:



#### Spotlight on: [Dr Alice Neikirk](#)

Alice Neikirk is a lecturer in our School of Law and Justice is working to improve the experiences of less privileged groups to create a more equitable world.

In 2023, Alice Neikirk and colleagues from the School of Education and School of Business started the [Newcastle Migration Research Network](#). The network brings together academics, service providers, practitioners, and people with lived migration experience to develop creative solutions to complex issues that occur across migration journeys. This exhibition mirrors the broader goals of the network – connecting people and supporting a dialogue around issues in our communities, particularly in relation to forced migration.

She says of her collaboration with Mojgan:

"I met Mojgan through the Newcastle Studio Potters group. I was immediately struck by her generosity of spirit and the way that comes through in her pottery. She started the Moree Arts Community Centre in 2023, which she was generous enough to invite me out to visit. There was so much love evident in the building they converted into a studio space.

She is doing exceptional work facilitating a space where people from all different backgrounds can connect through clay. I feel so privileged that she was willing to share her talents on this project – both in terms of the technical expertise she brought to workshops, the exhibition in the gallery, but also the conversations we had in developing the ideas that are woven through the exhibition."

When asked what she would like to share with the exhibition audience she says,

*My everyday dream and hope is to empower the powerless, advocate for access and recognition for those who are excluded because of language barriers, being poor, and not knowing the culture.*

To hear more of Louis's story, come along to the exhibition.

"The best thing about the project was the workshops. When I started reaching out to organizations with this idea of building 600 tiny houses, everyone was immediately excited. The project just kept growing! We ended up with over 700 houses. To hear so many incredible stories and share my love for pottery with people from all different backgrounds – wow!

I couldn't ask for a better way to spend my time. We did lots of workshops with young children as well and in these workshops we had very gentle conversations around why someone might become a refugee. Many had never heard of the word 'refugee' or knew what it meant. My hope is that this first conversation, coupled with the joy of building with friends then seeing their work in the gallery, will leave a lasting, positive impression that they will carry with them into adulthood."

Visit the exhibition and explore our human connections, and make your own tiny house to take home with you.

Save the date: CEHEE Book Launch at Watt Space Gallery on Tuesday 1 October at 5:30pm.

Please join us to celebrate the publication of *'Equity in Higher Education: Time for Social Justice Praxis'* by Professor Penny Jane Burke and Dr Matt Lumb.

The book draws on a decade of work from the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education to provide insights and tools with which to challenge the entrenched inequalities at play within and through higher education.

The book will be officially launched by Jane Kenway, Emeritus Professor at Monash University and Professorial Fellow at Melbourne University; Nathan Towney, Pro-Vice Chancellor Indigenous, Strategy and Leadership and Head of the Wollotuka Institute, the University of Newcastle, Kristen Allen, Convenor Enabling Pathways, Pathways and Enabling Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre, the University of Newcastle, and Professor Jennifer Milam, Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic Excellence, the University of Newcastle.

For more details, keep an eye out for a further article in The Loop next week.

#### Other events:

##### Tantrum Youth Arts presents Wonder:City

*WonderCity* invites you to step into a version of Newcastle as imagined by young people, embarking on an intricate journey to uncover surprising realities, alternate perspectives and imagined futures of our city.

Curated by young artists, *WonderCity* is part game, part performance and part wayfinding adventure, weaving through the CBD among some of Newcastle's most iconic cultural institutions and landmarks, including our very own Watt Space Gallery. Registrations are free but essential- for more information and to secure your place, visit [the New Annual webpage](#).

Banner image: Emma Stanistreet's weaving works in *Boundaries: Transcended 2024*.

## VISITOR COMMENTS

*"Wonderful & inspiring exhibition! Well done to all of the creators xx"*

Daisy Nugent

*"Amazing to see it all come together!"*

Isabella Crebert

*"Thank you for the beautiful exhibition from a child of immigrants visiting from Sydney originally from China"*

*"Beautiful Thank you"*

Call McGathy

*"Moving"*

Janet & Louisa

*"Very innovative and inspiring"*

Chloe Hooper

“Very moving”

“Inspirational to see the resilience against what happens to people coming to Newcastle as refugees”  
Mary & Hugh

“Very high quality. Exceptional. Important Art Stories.”

“A very important opportunity to learn more about our wonderful refugees”

“A lovely moment to hear the lives others have lived”  
Ngairé

“Such a moving exhibition! Many thanks to all who participated!”  
Lisa Barron

“Absolutely wonderful!”  
Sarah Griffin

“Very touching! Thank you”  
Zoe Muscardin

“A very emotional exhibition”  
Jon Keep

“It’s a fantastic exhibition, very impressed!”  
Josephine Kan

“Very touching – great presentation”

“Very interesting exhibition”  
Di Dorotis

“Thoughtful and Emotional show – Beautiful!”

“So unique, so interesting and so touching”  
Kark Doddy

“Heartfelt thanks to artist and their meaning-making”  
Michelle Bates



Name	Comment
Tula Brougan Wise Barton	Small Treasures, Big lives, Universe in Walls Such a moving exhibition! Many many thanks to all who participated! I loved <sup>too!!</sup> writing on the wall. It's Absolutely wonderful! ☺
Sarah Griffin Zoe Muscardin	Very touching! Thank you ☺
Jan Keep	A very emotional exhibition.
Josephine Kan	It's a fantastic exhibition, very impressed!
Johanna Ullrich	Very touching - Great presentation
Ji Dorottis Chris Brennan	Very interesting exhibition + BEAUTIFUL + EMOTIONAL SHOW - BEST EVER!
Karl Duddy	So unique, so interesting + so touching
Michelle Bates	heartfelt thanks to artists + their meaning-making. - love this space - a city treasure.



Name	Comment
Terry	Brave souls still facing persecution by small minded in this city.
Julie Mandy Hugo	Very moving. Inspirational to see the resilience against what happens to people coming to Newcastle as refugees
A. J. Lee	V. High Quality. Exceptional. Important Art stories.
Lesley	A very important opportunity to learn more about our wonderful refugees.
Raeann	Thankyou for all the efforts!
Ngairé	A lovely moment to hear the lives others have lived.



Name

Comment

Sui Mexiang

Good to see all those works

Natalia Soeters

Love you, my brother Ghassan.

Daisy Nugent

Wonderful + Inspiring exhibition!

Well done to all of the creators xx

Isabella Crebert

Amazing to see it all come together!

thanks you for the beautiful exp. from a child of immigrants visiting from Sydney. Originally from China

Callie McGilley

Beautiful Thank you.

Sarah Polomka

"In the Palm of my Hand" is <sup>emotionally</sup> moving & simple in the presentation. Brilliant ☆

Luke & Anna

Thank you ☺

Janet + Louisa.

Moving ♡

Chloe Hooper

Very Innovative and inspiring <sup>definitely</sup> coming back