



Walls that Talk

I AM...

This edition of Walls that Talk is an exhibition by Mai-Wel. Since 1960, Mai-Wel has been a cornerstone of the Maitland community, dedicated to empowering people with disability and young people. They support individuals to achieve their goals and dreams, enabling them to live a life 'Full of Possible'.

Their vision is: Empowering People. Changing Lives. Mai-Wel offers incredible programs that inspire and empower individuals. Evident in this exhibit, their passionate artists have showcased their true selves, becoming their own muses.

Traditionally, the muse is an external figure, an ethereal inspiration separate from the artist. In this installation, the artist becomes a powerful muse, drawing from their lived experiences and artistic journeys to fuel their creativity.

The headpieces featured in the exhibition serve as a central element, a physical manifestation of this internal muse. Crafted from paper, paint and other materials, these pieces become canvases for their artistic processes. Each creation reflects the multifaceted nature of inspiration.

By becoming their own muses, the seven artists delve into themes of self exploration and expression and the transformative power of artistic creation. The portraits of each artist transform the creator into the creation.

Maitland City Council is proud to have partnered with Mai-Wel to bring this exhibition to the wider community.



I AM...

Full of Possible



I AM... Sunshine

Briety, a seasoned artist with numerous exhibitions with Mai-Wel, embraces a diverse and ever evolving art practice marked by vibrant colours and expressive brushwork. Drawing inspiration from her recent assemblage series showcased at 'MUSE' in Lake Macquarie Gallery, Briety's latest piece reflects her effervescent personality and affinity for bold hues.

'I always have fun making art, I'm really excited to represent my art and be on the Library.'



I AM... Country

Trudi, an emerging Indigenous artist, celebrates her cultural heritage through bold and striking artistic expressions. Inspired by her deep connection to country and the influential women in her life, Trudi's crown symbolises strength and pays homage to her cultural roots, encouraging other Indigenous women to explore and express their artistic talents. Trudi utilises some of her favourite native florals such as the golden wattle to adorn her crown with 'jewels'.

'I hope to inspire other Indigenous women to create art, and pay respect to the women who have raised me to have a strong connection to country.'



I AM... Imagination

Michelle, deeply rooted in her love for nature and maternal instincts, embodies her muse as a nurturing 'mother nature' figure. Drawing inspiration from the earth's elements and the melodic calls of magpies, Michelle's artwork resonates with themes of interconnectedness and harmony with the natural world.

'I feel inspired by the magpies that visit me while I'm gardening and the songs they sing.'



I AM... Springtime

Alex, a dedicated artist, draws from her deep appreciation of nature, particularly floral motifs, evident across her artistic portfolio. Integrating 3D paper sculptures into her exploration of floral themes, Alex's distinctive pink hair serves as a focal point in her cohesive colour palette, melding seamlessly with her botanical creations.

'Working on walls that talk has been so much fun, I've liked trying something different.'



I AM... A Rainbow

Emma, an illustrator and author, weaves a tapestry of themes including friendship, family, animals and nature throughout her work. Her wearable sculpture is a joyful and magical expression integrating beloved motifs such as rainbows and illustrations of her cherished angel pets, evoking a sense of warmth and connection to loved ones past and present.

'I've had so much fun turning myself into my art, it's like I'm in my book! I love having my angel doggies with me.'



I AM... Unique

Ben, a visual artist and writer, seamlessly merges his dual passions into visual representations of creative exploration. Inspired by his spirituality and fascination with crystals, Ben's art mirrors the transformative properties of Moldavite, symbolizing energy shifts and personal growth. Utilising 3D paper sculptures and experimental writing techniques, Ben's work embodies his artistic journey and introspective spirit.

'I've liked using my writing with my art.'



I AM... Sparkling

Gabi, a multifaceted artist enamoured with visual, musical, dramatic and dance arts, channels her vibrant spirit and admiration for Taylor Swift into her artwork. Inspired by Swift's performances, Gabi's colourful butterflies reflect her exuberance and love for sparkle, capturing the essence of her joyful creativity.

'The workshops have been so fun; I feel pretty in my crown just like Taylor Swift.'



Collaborative design

'This journey has resulted in a stunning collection that is a testament to their collective artistry and individual brilliance. Witnessing a seed of an idea blossom into such unique treasures, carefully tended and nurtured by each artist individually and collectively, has been an incredibly rewarding experience. Weeks of discovering more about each artist, their sources of joy and their inner selves culminated in the creation of these elaborate wearable sculptures that embody their personal muses. I can see each portrait shining with their personality.' – Denise Duffy, Practice Lead

Artists

Alex Rennie
Briety Dorahy
Ben Bulmer
Emma Parks
Gabrielle Reibel
Michelle Schafer
Trudi Manning

Mentors

Sophia O'Connor
Helena Newcombe
Jaymie Maley

Photography

Carly Skinner
Photography

Makeup

Denille Briggs –
Danni J Makeup