



‘Be Kind, Be Creative’ - a city-wide cultural response to COVID-19 in Ballarat

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown measures, the UNESCO Creative City of Ballarat (Australia), launched the programme ‘Be Kind, Be Creative’ to offer its local communities with opportunities to creatively adapt to the new and evolving circumstances.

As a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, Ballarat has commissioned 8 local artists across a wide selection of genres, from music to poetry, ceramics and visual arts, to document the current global crisis and the city's place within it. The collaboration amongst artists has been taking place online, to encourage them to positively respond to the challenge through cooperation and teamwork while respecting social distancing. The outcomes of the works are foreseen to be exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ballarat in 2021.

While the ‘Be Kind, Be Creative’ initiative is underway, the city also launched Ballarat Open Studios, an initiative to celebrate the art of creation by shedding light on the hidden stories and studios of Ballarat's creative community. Initially conceived as a set of activities, including exhibitions, workshops and talks, the initiative has been turned into a virtual experience. The public is invited to go behind the scenes and explore the city's cultural identity via short videos featuring artists and craftspeople directly from their studios. Virtual workshops and guided tours are also planned in the framework of the initiative.

To know more:

<https://www.creativeballarat.com.au/covid-response>

KEY WORDS:

- Access to and participation in culture
- Solidarity and mutual aid