

Arts Centre Melbourne presents
A Mile in My Shoes
By Empathy Museum



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, FRIDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2019 – Arts Centre Melbourne is inviting visitors to **literally** walk a mile in someone else’s shoes as part of a free participatory arts project exploring the practice of empathy. [***A Mile in My Shoes***](#), created by Empathy Museum’s award-winning artist and curator **Clare Patey**, asks participants to step inside a giant shoe shop on Arts Centre Melbourne forecourt from **1 - 17 November** where they will temporarily trade their footwear, slip on some headphones and take a short walk, as the shoe’s owner tells a story about their life.

The Melbourne project, presented as part of the **Betty Amsden Participation Program**, will feature **35 stories** on the theme of water, including 23 stories donated by Melbournians and 12 stories collected during Empathy’s Museum’s travels around the world. Producer by Melbourne-based sound producer **Camilla Hannan**, contributions range from a marine biologist to an Aquaphobic English migrant, a Vietnam War veteran to a 10-year-old contemplating the Yarra River, an 81-year-old rower to a First People of Australia actor.

*“At a time of increasing conflict and division in the world, we hope this new version of A Mile in My Shoes will give visitors a space to practice the art of empathy and to see the landscape and people of Melbourne in a new light, says curator **Clare Patey**.*

“A Mile in My Shoes is an extraordinary example of how art can transform our relationships with others while breaking down prejudices and fighting loneliness by sharing a collective experience,” says Arts Centre Melbourne Creative Producer, Public Realm Yunuen Perez.

“The collection of new stories in Melbourne focus on the impact of bodies of water including the Yarra River and represent the rich diversity of Melbourne’s cultural fabric,” says Perez.

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artscentremelbourne.com.au

The diverse Melbourne-based stories from people that work, live, practice a sport and enjoy the Yarra River and other watercourses in Victoria, explore life experiences such as identity and belonging, social concerns such as the rising water levels and climate change and personal experiences such as insomnia and the calming effect of water.

Established in 2015, Empathy Museum explores how empathy can not only transform our personal relationships but also help tackle global challenges such as prejudice, conflict and inequality. With a focus on storytelling, dialogue and participation, the people that experience the work become active agents in the creation of the work. *A Mile in My Shoes* has toured internationally, including to London's Migration Museum, National Theatre of Scotland, Sao Paulo's Parque do Ibirapuera and Perth Festival in 2016, welcoming more than 30,000 people to walk a mile in a stranger's shoes.

The project is presented by Arts Centre Melbourne as part of its Betty Amsden Participation Program, an annual community event series established by the late Betty Amsden AO and Arts Centre Melbourne to explore and encourage cultural democracy. The large-scale, interactive and free projects are designed to inspire and engage with Victorians and visitors to Melbourne.

HISTORY OF THE BETTY AMSDEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

In **2014**, the streets of Melbourne were filled with music as 24 pianos beautifully decorated by community groups graced the streets of Melbourne for three weeks over summer for anyone to play and enjoy in *Play Me, I'm Yours*.

In **2015**, 7,000 little wooden houses, all individually decorated by people from across Victoria to represent our feelings of home, filled our streets, parks, favourite city spots and social media for *Home*.

In **2016**, in an Australian first the *Dominoes* project saw a 2 km chain of more than 7,000 breezeblocks snaking through the city to bring Melbourne to a stand-still for one day.

In **2017**, *Fun Run* saw artist Tristan Meecham run a gruelling 42 kilometres on a treadmill at Arts Centre Melbourne supported by massive visual effects, a sizzling soundtrack, a silky-voiced MC and hundreds of performers and athletes drawn from the local community.

In **2018** *Play Me I'm Yours* returned when 21 pianos beautifully decorated by community groups graced the streets of Melbourne for anyone to play and enjoy.

In **2019** *Those Who Rock* saw hundreds of community guitarists rock out at Hamer Hall as part of a free concert featuring Australian music icons.

Images can be found [here](#).

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By Empathy Museum

Created by Clare Patey

1 - 17 November, 2019

Arts Centre Melbourne Forecourt

10am – 6pm

Accessibility: Wheelchair access, Audio Description, Auslan Interpreted, Braille

Age recommendation: 12 – 112

Tickets: FREE (registrations at the door)

Visit: artscentremelbourne.com.au

Image courtesy of Perth Festival. Photographer: Natasha Pawlowski.

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OUTDOOR**

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Media Release

For more information about Arts Centre Melbourne, please visit www.artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183. Become a fan of Arts Centre Melbourne on Facebook or follow @artscentremelb on Twitter and Instagram.

For further media information and interviews, please contact: Suzanne Robson, Media Advisor on 03 9281 8526 / 0407 443 271 and suzanne.robson@artscentremelbourne.com.au

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