My Healthcare Story 2022

The Capital Theatre Foyer

Tuesday 8 March to Monday 18 April

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO | bv&e bendigo venues & events

Thank You Penelope

The aim of the exhibition is to profile artwork that tells the story of health and wellbeing from the perspective of people working in the healthcare sector. This includes art that is about the artist's personal experience of illness, role as a carer or broader sense of health and wellbeing.

The participants in this exhibition come from a number of healthcare settings, including students, academics, clinicians and people working in health coordination.

Thanks to the exhibiting artists:

Abdo Abdulkarim & Sarah Foster

Anita Scott

Bronwyn Phillips

Carolyn Maltese

Chris O'Brien

Grace Wood

JL artwork

K.M.

Mary Pomfret

Melanie Thoren

Melinda Kallasmae

Michael Leach

Rhommy Martin

Sz Martyn

Tony Worland

This exhibition is presented by the City of Greater Bendigo as part of its support of Arts and Health initiatives, with the support of Monash Rural Health and the La Trobe Rural Health School.

MONASH University

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO | bv&e bendigo venues & events

Abdo Abdulkarim & Sarah Foster

The season of living life virtually

Photo Collage
A2

This artwork encapsulates our lives as health professionals and students, and the impact virtual living has had on us. It also relates to the lives of many Australian healthcare workers during the pandemic season who sacrificed face to face encounters to ensure Australians' safety and wellbeing.

Anita Scott

Wellbeing Mascots

Photography

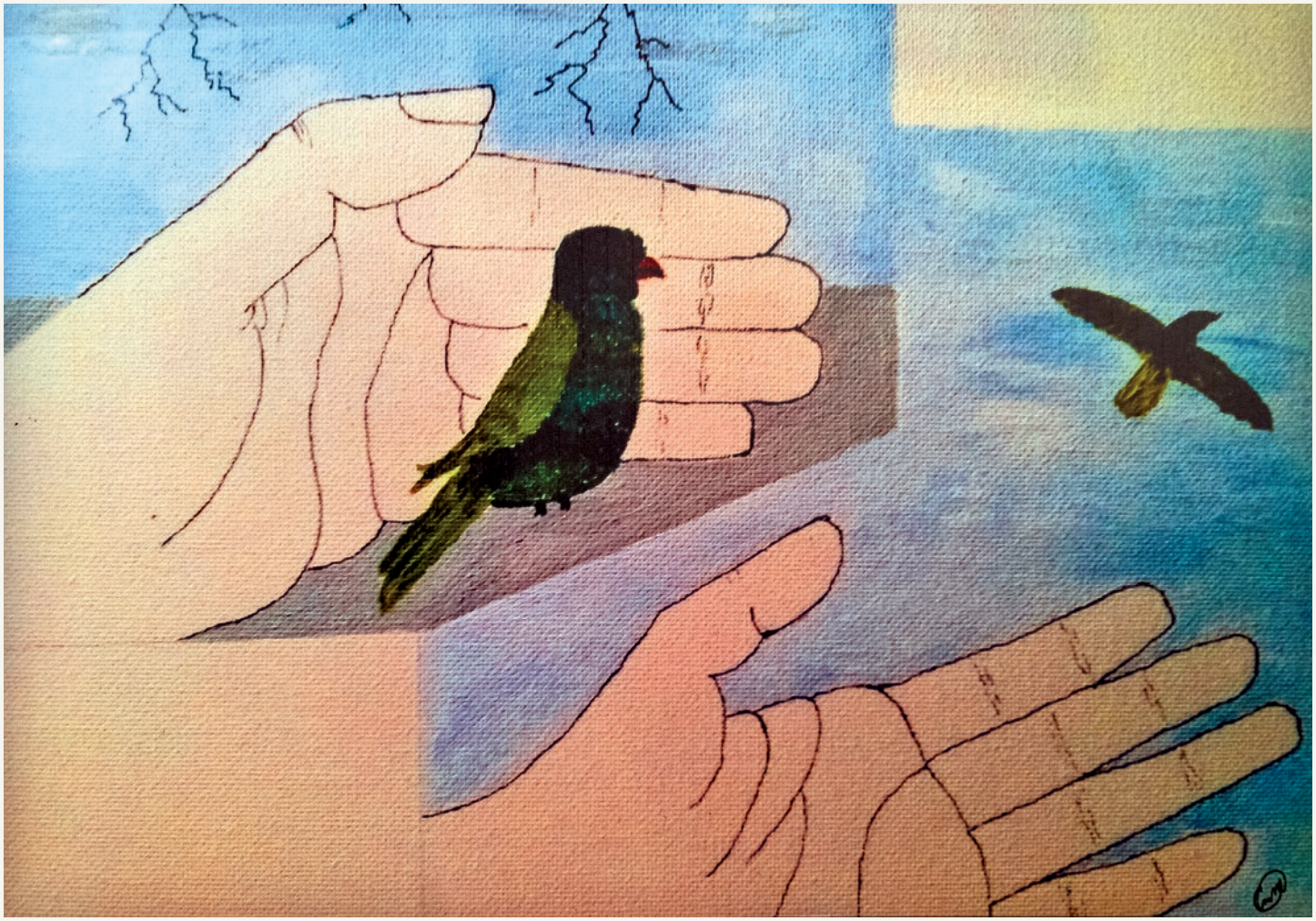
I've been employed for the last 33 years by The Bendigo Home and Hospital for the Aged, The Anne Caudle Centre, The Bendigo Health Care Group and currently at The Bendigo Hospital. My characters and costumes grew from a longstanding love of Dance, Theatre, and the Arts. This combination of health care knowledge and performance experience has produced a great awareness of the need and effect of providing joy and laughter for the whole community, as well as providing diversion, calm, and distraction for physical and mental wellbeing both for the community, health care staff, patients and their families, the performers themselves and me.

Bronwyn Phillips

Many faces, No places

Handmade ceramic vases (Photograph)

Having changed from direct health care delivery to health care funding and administration, my engagement with healthcare the past 2 years has been restricted to video meetings from home. My ceramics remind me that behind the screens, my work assists 'whole' people across many places.



Carolyn Maltese

Helping hand

Painting (reproduction – original in private collection)
30 x 20cm

When life is full of dark clouds and storms, engaging with a mental-health practitioner can give us a sense of safety and support that allows us to see a clear sky and gives us the courage to soar to new heights.

Chris O'Brien

Sunrise piercing cloud filled skies

Digital print on canvas
55 x 80cm

The stretch of beach between Moggs Creek and Aireys Inlet, peaceful and uninhabited at dawn, offers a dependable space for reflection and to revive. While the sustained instability of the pandemic generates a soul deep weariness, sunrise reminds us that light penetrates even the darkest clouds.

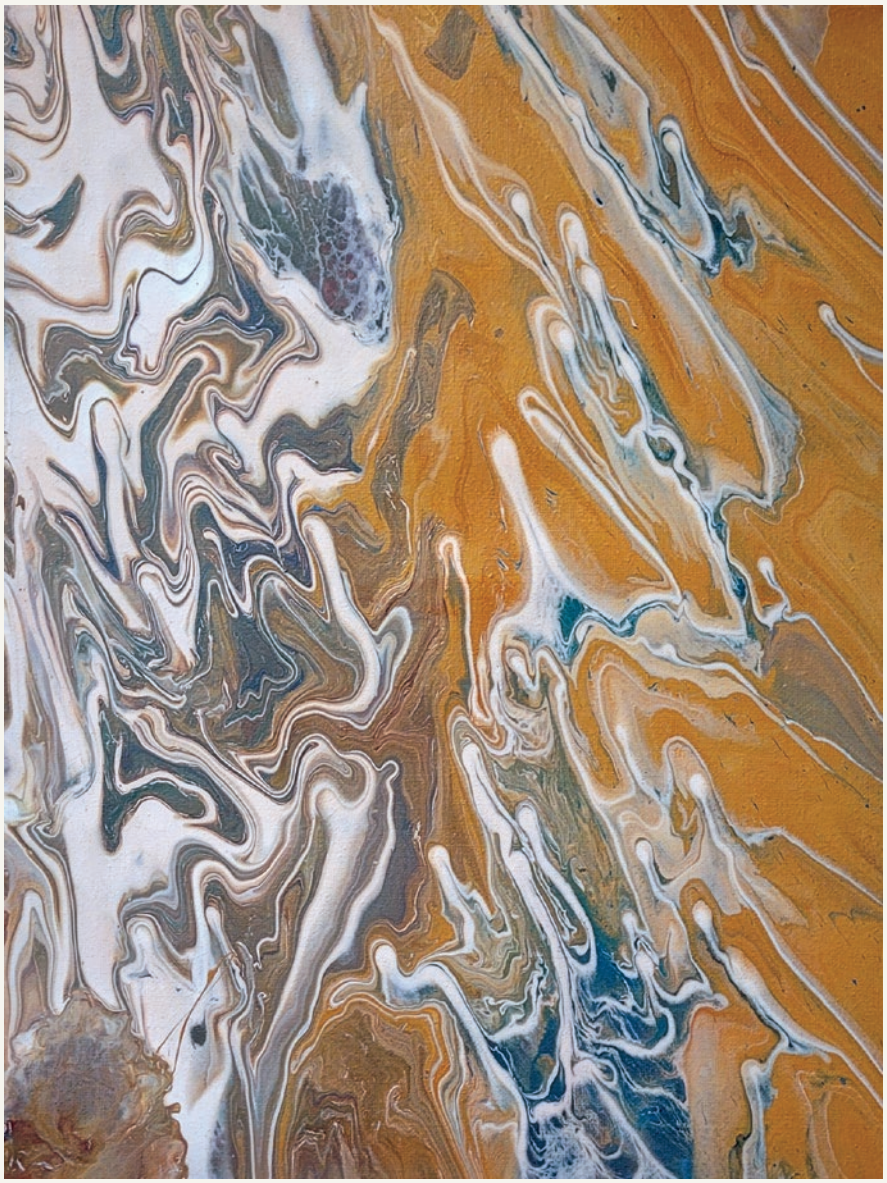
Grace Wood

Colour-19

Acrylic on canvas
50 x 40cm

I am a lecturer in Dentistry and Oral Health at La Trobe Bendigo campus and have seen first hand how challenging the last 2 years have been on staff and students. I asked my 3rd year Oral Health students (who commenced their course at the beginning of the pandemic) to tell me a colour they would use to describe the last 2 years, and a colour to describe their hope for the future.

"Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise" - Victor Hugo



JL artwork

A Beautiful Mess

Acrylic on canvas
30 x 40cm

As a healthcare worker in rural Victoria, my journey is symbolised by the earthy orange-brown hues. Just as we strive to maintain a high standard of infection control in healthcare settings (especially since COVID), this painting represents cleansing or washing away the old and welcoming the new.

Tomorrow and the next

It was like the first day of school,
Pulling me through the doors revolving,
Excitement and naivety grown big and tall,
My heart not yet absolving.

The cloth of a blindfold of youth,
Cushioning my eyelids, nursing them shut,
A culture shock of mighty uncouth,
Feeling small and in a rut.

...

But today, the sun rises.
Tomorrow, the doors again revolve.
Soon, the pain, the fear will be no longer prizes,
Within warfare we have not yet to solve.

For today, day in and day out.
Yesterday's glimmers beam the dull air.
They are these people under such clout,
I stand and thank for such care.

For tomorrow and the next...

K.M.

Tomorrow and the next

Poetry
A4

The impacts of COVID-19 have been more complex and prevalent than I could have imagined. My poem aims to depict my journey from naive excitement, to feeling out of my depth, to a realisation and acknowledgement of the incredible sacrifices of our healthcare workers and quiet optimism for the future.

Skin Hunger

Piano keys tinkle like bones and
I kneel listening to the black box
Hard on my knees.
Light flickers, dim, shadows close in.

Say a prayer for me.
I am a single slick
white female after all.
Exiled
I listen to the humming stars.

On the beach
Pale driftwood floats by on the tide.
Seaweed black and twisted
Scars the sand.

And you?
Can you still reel off
Marilyn Monroe's measurements
Without taking a single breath?
36,22,36
Are you still fishing for mermaids?

Have you forgotten me?

A strawberry moon glows pink.
Broken shells hurt my feet
A sign of life.
I feel the waves lapping my skin.
It is better than nothing.

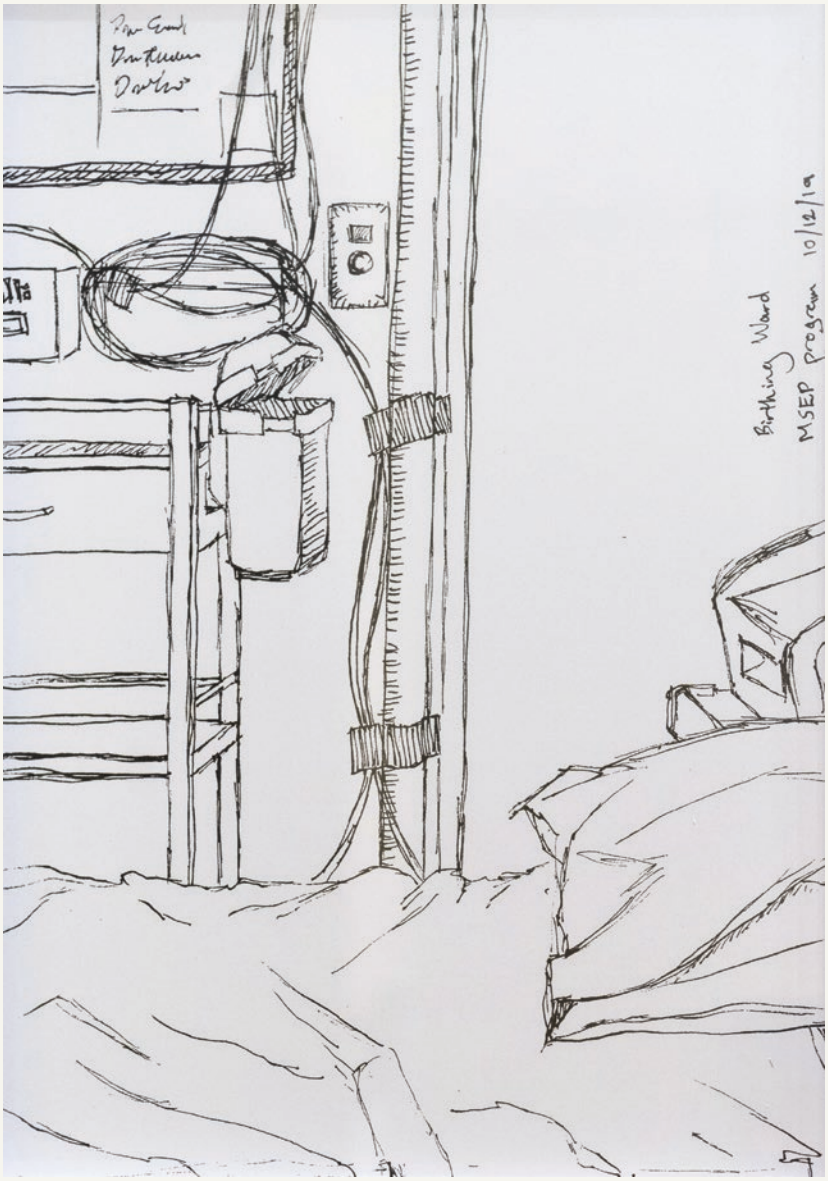
Mary Pomfret 2020

Mary Pomfret

SKIN HUNGER

Poem
A3

I wrote the poem "Skin Hunger" about the impact of the loneliness of lockdown in 2020 on the body. I called the poem "Skin Hunger" as a description of the body's response to the lack of human touch and the need we all have for human connection, both physical and mental.



Melanie Thoren

Birthing Suite Simulation

Pen on paper
20 x 30cm

I work as a simulated patient, which is an actor who takes the place of a real patient for medical training purposes. This can include scenarios for medical students and refreshers for trained professionals. This sketch was completed whilst waiting for a PPH (Post Partum Haemorrhage) scenario at a rural hospital.

Triage Category 5: A Minor Condition

1
Not myself tonight
but hardly emergent
I have taken root
among the least urgent
of the non-urgent
emergency department
presentations.
I am a laceration—a "lac"—
located in the purple gallery
whose cheap seats afford
a fine view of triage
—blood sport, often rude.

The purple-seated, sighted healthy
—curiosity intact—
may tune in to dialogue
tossed between the nurse-in-charge
and those who come to wait
on the opposite side
of tempered glass.

2
Paint-spattered boots hurry a man
to his stop along the windowed wall.
His question is muffled; the answer is clear.
"Her GP was lazy, too lazy to see her.
Nothing wrong with her this time
apart from pneumonia.
She's back at 'The Willows'.
Our outreach service will call in tomorrow."

3
I picture a woman
old bones uncertain
who peers now through fog
and hears now through wool.
Airway obstructed
heartbeat eccentric
her shortness of breath
is shorter today.

Nothing wrong, said the expert.
Carers and outreach
should keep her away
from emergency rooms
where she doesn't belong.

4
Workdays, my ID tag
swings from scrubs—
casually commands
a hospital-wide *open sesame*.

Tonight, hardly emergent
with name-band on wrist
and no swinging tag
I feel my apology.

Not myself, I am
a thin-skinned, clumsy imposter
-occupant of a purple seat
meant for anybody else.

Melinda Kallasmae

Triage Category 5: A Minor Condition

Poetry
A4

Poetry is a medium through which clinicians may express feelings and tell stories, as we reflect upon what caring (or being cared-for) means.

My poem, 'Triage Category 5: A Minor Condition', inspired by an emergency department wait, considers the healthcare worker-as-patient scenario. Such an experience can be humbling.

Rural Pharmacy Placement

i.
names of drugs & people
on my mind—
labels on my fingers

ii.
i speak with the patient—
a fresh face
for a new name

iii.
in borrowed gumboots,
i shadow the vet
as she numbs the horse's flank

iv.
i pour water into
graduated
glassware
—meniscus rises

v.
alone
at night in my motel
room—i journal
then study

vi.
end of placement—
the kind pharmacist gives a gift
from front of shop

Michael Leach

Rural Pharmacy Placement

Poetry
A4

This multipart poem is about one of my past rural placements—a mid-noughties stint at a community pharmacy in Gippsland. Each part captures a memory from the placement. My use of 'i' instead of 'I' emphasises the fact that healthcare should always be patient centred rather than practitioner centred.

Rhommy Martin

The End Before The Beginning

Digital Art
A3

A self portrait that encourages viewers to experience the raw emotional aspect of nursing.

The unfiltered emotion we cope with everyday.

Sometimes it feels as if we are at the end of a journey, before it has even begun.

Sz Martyn

Seen Better Days

Oil on canvas
40 x 50cm

At the onset of the Covid Pandemic my work in supporting health staff and systems tripled and it became necessary to find a means to stop thinking. Art classes allowed mindful time focused on what was in front of me. This piece is a reflection of the chaos of the time and the toll it took.

Tony Worland

Light at the end of the tunnel

Acrylic
120 x 120cm

I am a long-time resident of Bendigo and currently working in aged care. I find this work extremely satisfying despite the major underfunding of this crucial sector.

Melinda Kallaoman
Melanie Thomas
Carolyn Maltese

Photography Bill Conroy/Press1

To find out more about the City of Greater Bendigo's Arts/Health initiatives call **03 5434 6100** or email **arts.info@bendigo.vic.gov.au**