



**17.1 RUPERT BUNNY FUND VISUAL ARTS FELLOWSHIP AND
SPECIAL PROGRAM FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Council with funding recommendations for the Rupert Bunny Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship (RBFVAF) and Special Programs, following consideration of submissions by the RBFVAF Reference Committee.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Rupert Bunny Foundation (RBF) is a perpetual fund, for which Council is the sole beneficiary. The Deed of Trust that informs the application of funding to outcomes stipulates that funds are used to:
 - 2.1.1 Further the development of the visual arts, particularly art in public spaces within the municipality;
 - 2.1.2 Enlarge and enhance the Port Phillip City Collection.
- 2.2 The RBF Fund was established using a \$170,000 insurance payment received after a Rupert Bunny painting was irreparably damaged during the 1991 St Kilda Town Hall fire.
- 2.3 Following endorsement by Council in 2004 a Fellowship program was established, commencing in 2005. This program has dispersed funds to artists biannually since this time through an Expression of Interest process and assessment by the Council appointed RBFVAF Reference Committee.
- 2.4 Per the framework of the Foundation, income accumulated via the fund's investment portfolio is drawn down on an annual basis. These funds are then transferred to a reserve account managed by Council.
- 2.5 The reserve account has over a period of time accumulated additional funds due to productive investments resulting in increased income for the portfolio. Although there is no designated minimum amount to be held in the reserve account, the purpose of the reserve account is to act as a receptacle through which income from trust investments can be transferred to be applied to endorsed programming. The Reserve account is not intended to accumulate funds over a prolonged period of time.
- 2.6 Council noted, at a briefing on 22 September 2021, the recommendation to proceed with expending these additional funds. The total value of funds within the reserve requiring expenditure at this time totalled \$83,581.36. Accordingly, it was determined that \$30,000 (inclusive of on costs of superannuation and work cover) of this amount be designated to the existing RBFVAF program, with a figure up to the maximum remaining balance being dispersed under a Special Program developed leveraging the specialist expertise and advice within the RBFVAF Reference Committee.



- 2.7 The RBFVAF Reference Committee met on 1 December 2021 and determined to establish a Special Program to expend the residual funds via four to six projects of up to \$10,000 plus on costs of superannuation and work cover on artist fees which make up one aspect of overall project budgets. The selection criteria were determined to encourage applications from artists with a deep connection to the City of Port Phillip; with a particular focus on projects that were collaborative and activated local spaces. Assessment by the RBFVAF Reference Committee was identified as taking into consideration the local connection of artists, artistic merit of the proposals and the benefit to the City of Port Phillip community. Applications that included collaborative projects, artists from underrepresented groups, activation of outdoor spaces, or low-cost ephemeral projects were determined as being highly regarded.
- 2.8 Submissions for both the RBFVAF and Special Programs round opened on 14 June 2022 and closed on 25 July 2022.
- 2.9 Nine submissions were received for consideration under the RBFVAF program, with five of these submissions noting that they would also be open for consideration, in a scaled back manner, for the Special Programs round. A further four submissions were received for the Special Programs round, i.e. Nine distinct submissions were considered by the RBFVAF Reference Committee for the RBFVAF and Special Programs funding respectively.
- 2.10 The RBFVAF Reference Committee met on Wednesday 24 August 2022 and considered all applications, ultimately reaching unanimous agreement on recommendations in each instance.
- 2.11 Projects recommended for funding are as follows:

Recommended RBFVAF Recipient: Dr Lisa Anderson

Dr Lisa Anderson was selected as the recommended recipient of the \$30,000 award (inclusive of on costs) for her proposed project *Beguiling: Slow Burn*. A series of photographic images and videos that draw in audiences with beauty to experience climate change differently. Dr Anderson proposes to research and photograph the iconic landscapes of Port Phillip and place those images alongside a selection of so far unseen images she has made in Polar Regions. The resulting photographic, moving image exhibition and installation will place the seascape and beachside views of the Port Phillip area into an international project that pleads for us to understand the timing for action in climate change challenges.

The RBFVAF Reference Committee were impressed by the completeness of the proposal and its links to the Climate Change topic. Dr Lisa Anderson is a well-respected artist of international renown with a professional career spanning over 40 years. Dr Anderson's career includes many ground-breaking projects such as the first ever image projection onto the Sydney Opera House.

Recommended RBF Special Program Recipients:

- **Ross Coulter:** Selected as a recommended recipient of \$10,000 award plus on costs of \$330 superannuation + \$90 work cover costs for his *(All) Together* work proposed to be developed in collaboration with fellow artist Meredith Turnbull.
'(All) Together' is a collaborative photographic portraiture and fabric quilting project. Working with local communities' artists Ross Coulter and Meredith Turnbull propose to combine their skills in mis-en-scene, choreography, photography and textiles to create representations of groups that subvert idealised



traditions of photographic portraiture. This project was particularly praised for its proposal to engage local community groups, organisations and businesses as part of the development of the work. The RBFVAF Reference Committee were also impressed by the proposed workshop element of the project and the intention to present the resulting exhibition in a vacant local shopfront.

- **Tracey McIrvine & Devon Cartwright (for and on behalf of Gasworks Art Park):** Selected as a recommended recipient of \$9,925 award plus on costs of \$38.50 superannuation and \$84 work cover for a group exhibition featuring local 15 artists, whose disciplines range from sculpture, ceramics and two-dimensional works including painting and drawing.

The proposed exhibition will be held at Gasworks Arts Park with works displayed over three venues. Exhibiting artists will make new works specifically for the show and each work will relate to the park with all artwork materials being organic and sustainable. The exhibition's theme of '*Renewal*' will highlight a sense of optimism, resilience and recovery through the artists' individual visual and aural interpretations of the organic nature and life force of the Gasworks Arts Park.

The RBFVAF Reference Committee was particularly impressed with the number of artists this submission supported as well as the sustainable theme of the outcomes. Furthermore, they were complimentary as to the commitment for the exhibition to include time to engage with the community through artists' talks, performances and workshops over a three-week period, throughout which the exhibition would be open 7 days a week to reach as broad an audience as possible.

- **Chelle Destefano:** Selected as a recommended recipient of \$10,000 award plus on costs of \$660 superannuation and \$180 work cover for the project *In the Field of Sound Vulnerability*. The artist proposes to create a video performance work of Auslan poetry on sound-making, with additional components to deliver an installation-based exhibition at local venue, Temperance Hall.

The proposed exhibition by a deaf artist, sets out to present community with exposure to the deaf experience. Through performative works the artist sets out to provide the viewer with insight as to how sounds are visualised and how this is adapted and reflected in Auslan language.

- **Sarah Tracton:** Selected as a recommended recipient of \$10,000 award plus on costs of \$297 superannuation and \$81 work cover for the project *Acoustic Light*.

Development of porcelain lighting and drawings for exhibition during Melbourne Design Week (at a Port Phillip based venue). *Acoustic Light* conceptually conveys Sarah's journey from silence to sound; rehabilitating her deafness with cyber-technology. An Auslan interpreted Artist Talk is also proposed to occur in conjunction with the exhibition to engage community awareness around hearing loss.

- **Serene Lau:** Selected as a recommended recipient of \$5,000 award plus on costs of \$165 superannuation and \$45 work cover for the project *Fish-Safe Paints*. An art project that explores how modern paints affect our local aquatic environment, *Fish Safe Paints* features an exhibition of original artworks depicting marine creatures using fresh paints made from South Melbourne Market food and food waste, live art workshops for the public and live artwork presentation. The



exhibition and workshops have been supported in principle by the South Melbourne Market to proceed.

The RBFVAF Reference Committee felt that this project was worthwhile to support given the particularly participatory nature of the project. However, given there was a commercial enterprise element to the project, with the applicant proposing to sell their works, and as a reflection of the scale of the budget the committee supported only a partial commitment to the funds initially requested. Officers will therefore work with the applicant to ensure they are able to deliver outcomes within the funded amount.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Endorse the recommendations of the Rupert Bunny Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship (RBFVAF) Reference Committee to extend funding to the following:
 - 3.1.1 Rupert Bunny Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship: Dr Lisa Anderson (\$30,000 award inclusive of on costs)
 - 3.1.2 Rupert Bunny Foundation Special Program: Ross Coulter (\$10,000 award plus on costs of \$330 superannuation + \$90 work cover costs)
 - 3.1.3 Rupert Bunny Foundation Special Program: Tracey McIrvine & Devon Cartwright for and on behalf of Gasworks Art Park (\$9,925 award plus on costs of \$38.50 superannuation and \$84 work cover)
 - 3.1.4 Rupert Bunny Foundation Special Program: Chelle Destefano (\$10,000 award plus on costs) of \$660 superannuation and \$180 work cover
 - 3.1.5 Rupert Bunny Foundation Special Program: Sarah Tracton (\$10,000 award plus on costs) of \$297 superannuation and \$81 work cover
 - 3.1.6 Rupert Bunny Foundation Special Program: Serene Lau (\$5,000 award plus on costs of \$165 superannuation and \$45 work cover)

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 The current RBFVAF Reference Committee was appointed by Council via a Council Report dated 4 September 2019, with the Terms of Reference reviewed at this stage. The scope of advising on applications of additional funds accumulated are not explicitly referenced within the Terms of Reference. Accordingly, a briefing was prepared for Councillors to note the intention to extend scope to cover these parameters. This briefing was presented to Councillors on 22 September 2021.
- 4.2 In developing the Special Programs framework, the RBFVAF Reference Committee were encouraged to consider outcomes that provided best value in outcome and broadest reach in supporting creative community. Officers recommended that the Special Programs considered lower value, high community impact projects that supported emerging artists and engaged the community in activated outcomes.
- 4.3 Both the Fellowship and Special Programs funding round were released concurrently, framed as a COVID relief package for our local creative community.



5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Consultation was undertaken with appropriate internal Council departments in developing the programs including: Governance, Finance, Arts, Festivals & Events and the Executive Leadership Team.
- 5.2 The Special Program framework was developed and assessed by the RBFVAF Reference Committee. The committee includes practising artists and members of our local community.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Officers consulted with Council's Governance team in developing the Special Program framework to ensure that any governance risks are mitigated and best practise is followed.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The funds in question are linked exclusively to the terms outlined within the Rupert Bunny Foundation Deed of Trust. Accordingly, they are ringfenced for use within these parameters.
- 7.2 The funds are currently free, clear and available for dispersal in Council's reserve account.
- 7.3 The RBF Trust Declaration requires the sub-committee to advise the Trustee annually about the disposal of the net income and if in any year this does not occur, the Trustee has the right to dispose of the net income as fits the purpose of the Trust. The Trustee has been consulted in the development of the recommendations outlined within this report and approves of the outcomes provided.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 Council's Sustainability team were consulted in the development of Guidelines for both the Fellowship and Special Programs to ensure that funded programs meet with Council's organisational position on limiting our environmental footprint and supporting sustainable outcomes.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The Deed of Trust for the RBF Fund stipulates that outcomes should favour the development of visual arts, particularly public art. The RBFVAF Reference Committee considered this whilst developing the Special Program outcomes and whilst assessing submissions.
- 9.2 Funded projects will be presented to community participation and engagement upon completion.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The outcomes of the Special Programs were developed specifically with the strategic directions of "Inclusive Port Phillip" and "Vibrant Port Phillip" in mind. The Guidelines for the Special Programs were developed to be inclusive and accessible, aiming to support positive social impacts to artists funded and the local community.



11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

11.1.1 The recommendation for next steps are as follows:

- October 2022: Funding agreements to be executed (pending Council endorsement)
- 1 November 2022 – 31 October 2023: Projects to be undertaken

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 Following Council endorsement successful applicants will be advised of the outcomes.

11.2.2 A media release will be prepared to advise on the successful applicants.

11.2.3 Officers will continue to work alongside funding recipients to ensure project outcomes are promoted appropriately to encourage community participation.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil