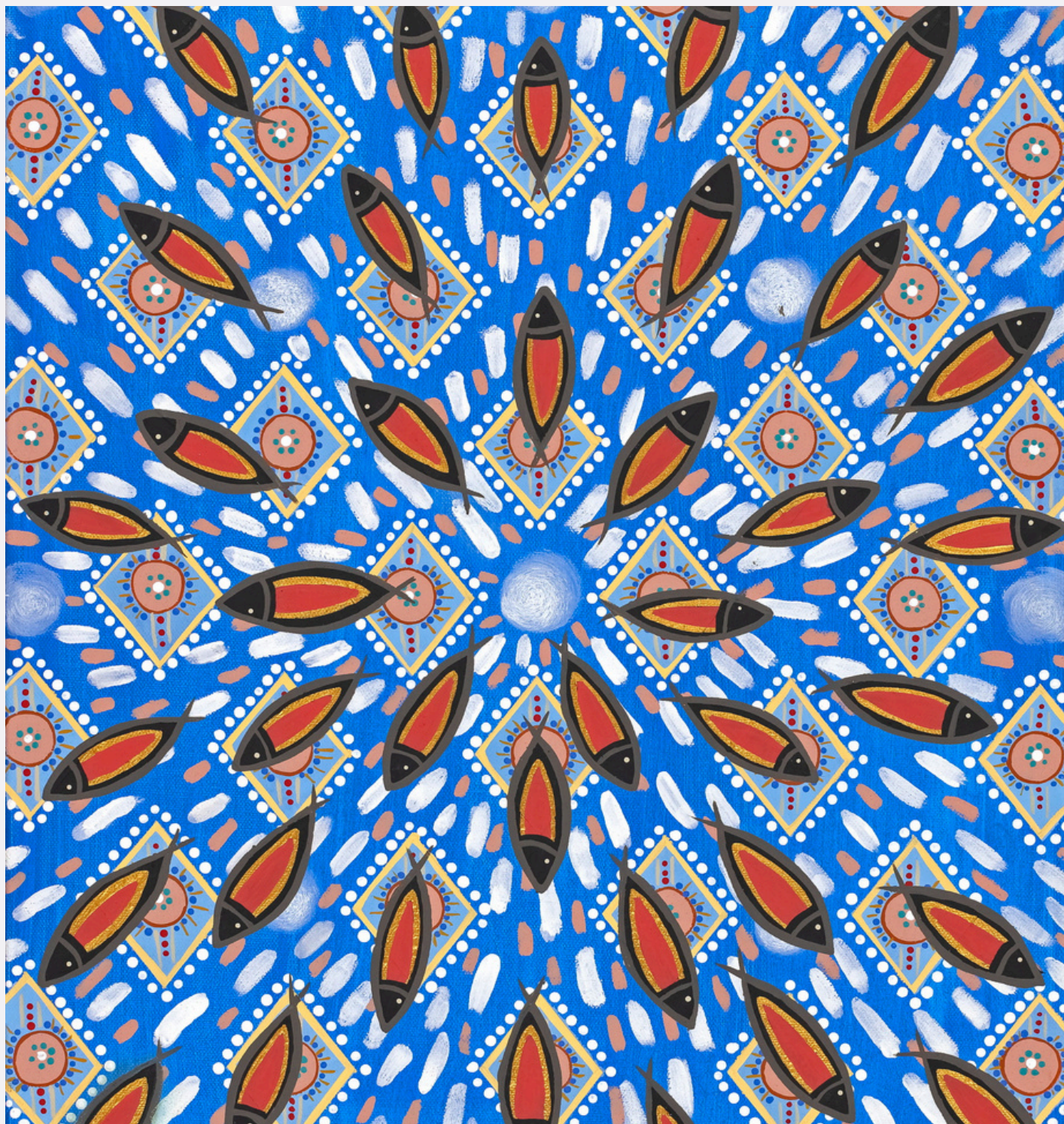


S^oUTHEAST ARTS

www.southeastarts.org.au

Annual
→ *Report*

•••
2023



Painting: *Gwiyaala*, Bronwen Smith

South East Arts

What We Do

South East Arts is the regional arts and cultural development organisation covering the Bega Valley, Eurobodalla and Snowy Monaro council areas. We actively support the ongoing development of, and participation in, arts and culture throughout the NSW South East region.

Supporting:

Artists and Arts Organisations – helping them to become viable by achieving artistic and business goals.

Communities – building capacity for communities to develop their own arts projects to create social connectedness and wellbeing

Local Councils – working across a variety of council responsibilities to support and augment their work in areas including arts, tourism, economic development and community, cultural and strategic planning



Headland Writers Festival 2023. Image by Angi High Photography



South East Arts → *2023 Overview*

In 2023 South East Arts continued to support and develop arts and culture in the NSW South East region. As one of the 15 Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs) in NSW, we maintain a strategic focus on fostering creativity and participation in the arts, especially in the wake of the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The collaboration between South East Arts, Create NSW and our three member councils highlights the importance of partnerships in promoting cultural experiences and building audiences. The success of South East Arts' events such as Headland Writers Festival and Giiyong Festival, as well as the touring exhibition *Of Pigs and Whistles*, contributes to the vitality and profile of the arts in our community.

The release of both *Revive: National Cultural Policy* and the NSW *Creative Communities Policy* in 2023 provides a framework for further growth and development in the arts sector. The emphasis on prioritising First Nations culture aligns with South East Arts' long-standing commitment to Indigenous cultural development, paving the way for continued collaboration and support for Aboriginal cultural experiences in the region.

The focus on Creative Industries in the NSW policy underscores the importance of nurturing artistic talent and supporting cultural entrepreneurship. South East Arts' role in providing arts business skills training, capacity building, and promoting cultural tourism opportunities is vital in fostering a thriving creative ecosystem.

South East Arts' involvement as the lead RADO in a strategic state-wide cultural tourism project further underscores its significance in driving arts development and promoting the region's unique cultural heritage. Through these initiatives, South East Arts continues to play a crucial role in shaping the cultural landscape of the NSW South East region and contributing to social and economic outcomes for the community.



Headland Writers Festival 27-29 October

The third annual festival was the most successful to date, with 785 people attending writers sessions, live music, theatre, poetry and an Aboriginal dance and storytelling performance on the headland. The overall responses from both audiences and writers were extremely positive, noting the quality programming, connection to community and intimate nature of the festival.

The main program in the Tathra Hall was live-streamed to further increase the reach and the exhibition *Juvenilia* featuring Australian children's authors and illustrators was visited by 1886 people at Bega Library over a two-week period, either side of the festival. In addition to the festival, our Headland Presents series continued throughout the year with 5 stand-alone events presented in Tathra, Bega and Merimbula.

“The Headland Writers Festival really filled my creative cup this year. The authors and interviews were insightful, funny, moving and honest.”

“This festival was the standard of a national & international event, with the intimacy that is only possible in a well-connected community.”





Olga Masters Short Story Award

This annual short story competition has continued to grow, with entries from around Australia, exploring the theme of regional life. In 2023 the winner and runner up were announced by Chris Masters at Headland Writers Festival, acknowledging the financial support provided by the Masters family.

The winning story, *A Major Theft* by Emma Rosetta, was featured in Island Magazine in the November edition of this literary publication. Linda Atkins, the runner-up with her story *The Doula*, attended the festival announcement and spoke of the personal experiences that inspired her writing. Both winner and runner-up stories and previous year's are available on the website:

www.olgamastersshortstoryaward.com



Above: Winner of the 2023 Olga Masters Short Story Award, Emma Rosetta

Right: Chris Masters and Andrew Gray at the festival



Giiyong Festival

16 November

This year was the first of a three-year run of presenting Giiyong Festival annually, thanks to support from Create NSW. This multi-arts Aboriginal cultural festival held at Jigamy is presented in partnership with Twofold Aboriginal Corporation. The event celebrates culture through visual arts, dance, music, film, demonstrations, traditional cooking, presentations and storytelling.

Almost 2500 people attended the event, which saw a packed program across three zones, including performances from Emma Donovan and J-MILLA, contemporary violin virtuoso Eric Avery and many local performers, artists and dancers from up and down the south coast.

In the evening of the festival, four South Coast dance groups - Duurunu Miru, Gumaara, Gadhu and Djaadjawan - came together for *Dhilwaan Yarrkural* (Nightfall Dance) - a spectacular and moving performance that sent the dust flying and was heralded as the emotional highlight of the 2023 festival.

“

“The festival creates an opportunity to not only unite the Aboriginal community, but to bring the whole community together providing a platform for everyone to indulge in the rich and diverse culture that the south coast has to offer.”

(Alison Simpson A/g CEO of Twofold Aboriginal Corporation)



Image by Angi High Photography

Narawan Dha (Our Country)

A multi-media installation in Narooma developed through a series of inter-generational workshops bringing together local Elders with young Aboriginal participants. The workshops included storytelling and sharing of culture, creating an immersive video/sound projection piece, along with craft objects and presented to the public during the April school holidays.



Installation from the Narawan Dha Project

Gum Leaf Band Music Video

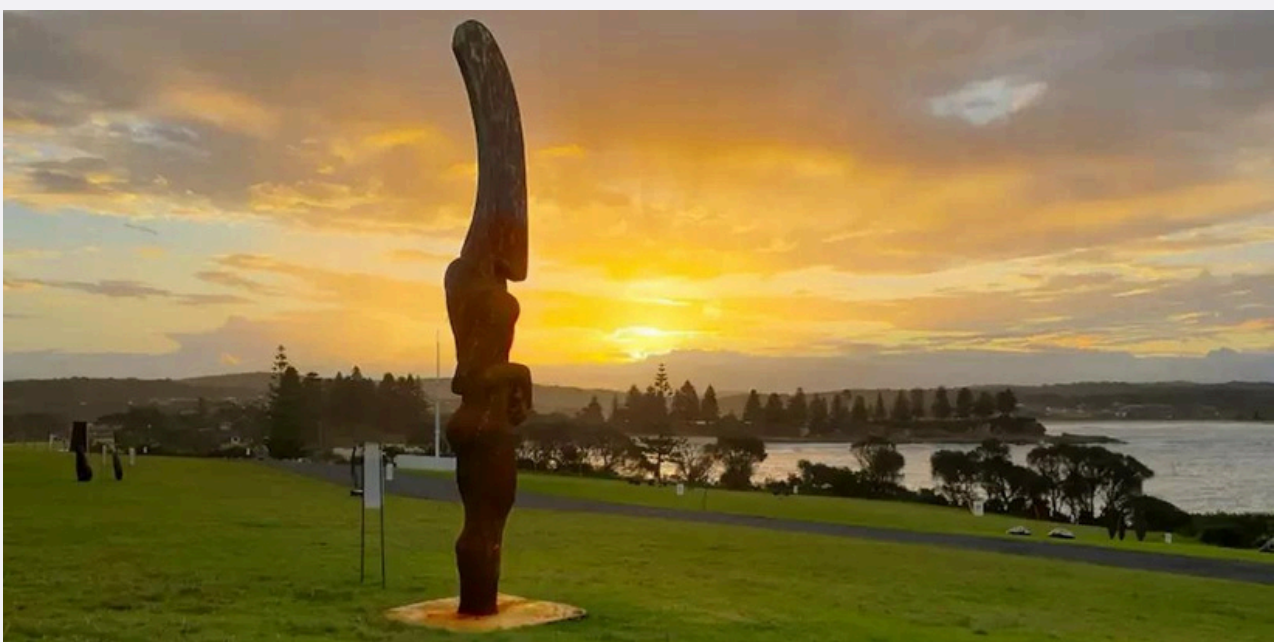
The music video captured one of the highlights of 2022 Giiyong Festival – the formation and performance of gum leaf players initiated by Uncle Ossie Cruse. The Gum Leaf Band project brought together five players from around the country to rehearse and perform at the festival, celebrating the history of gum leaf bands in Australia. The week-long project was captured by a film team, with the music video featured at the 2023 Giiyong Festival and a short documentary to be released in 2024.

Cultural Tourism

South East Arts is the lead Regional Arts Development Organisation in the NSW network for a state-wide Cultural Tourism project to conduct research and identify strategic priorities. The project aims to highlight the contribution that festivals, galleries, museums, public art, music venues and creative retail make to tourism in regional NSW. The research report will be released in June 2024 and will assist in guiding projects and initiatives across the State to build cultural tourism.

The **Creative South** website continues to provide visitors with information on festivals, galleries, museums, public art and live music venues across the region. Initially covering the South East and Southern Tablelands regions, 2024 will see the addition of the South Coast region. See www.creativesouth.com.au

South East Arts continued to support Sculpture Bermagui as a leading cultural tourism event in the region, sponsoring an Achievement Award for a Regional Artist. As part of the Sapphire Coast Whale Trail tourism campaign, we presented two Aboriginal cultural experiences in August at Bermagui and October at Tathra, both featuring the Gulaga Dancers. A total of over 400 visitors and locals attended these free cultural experiences.

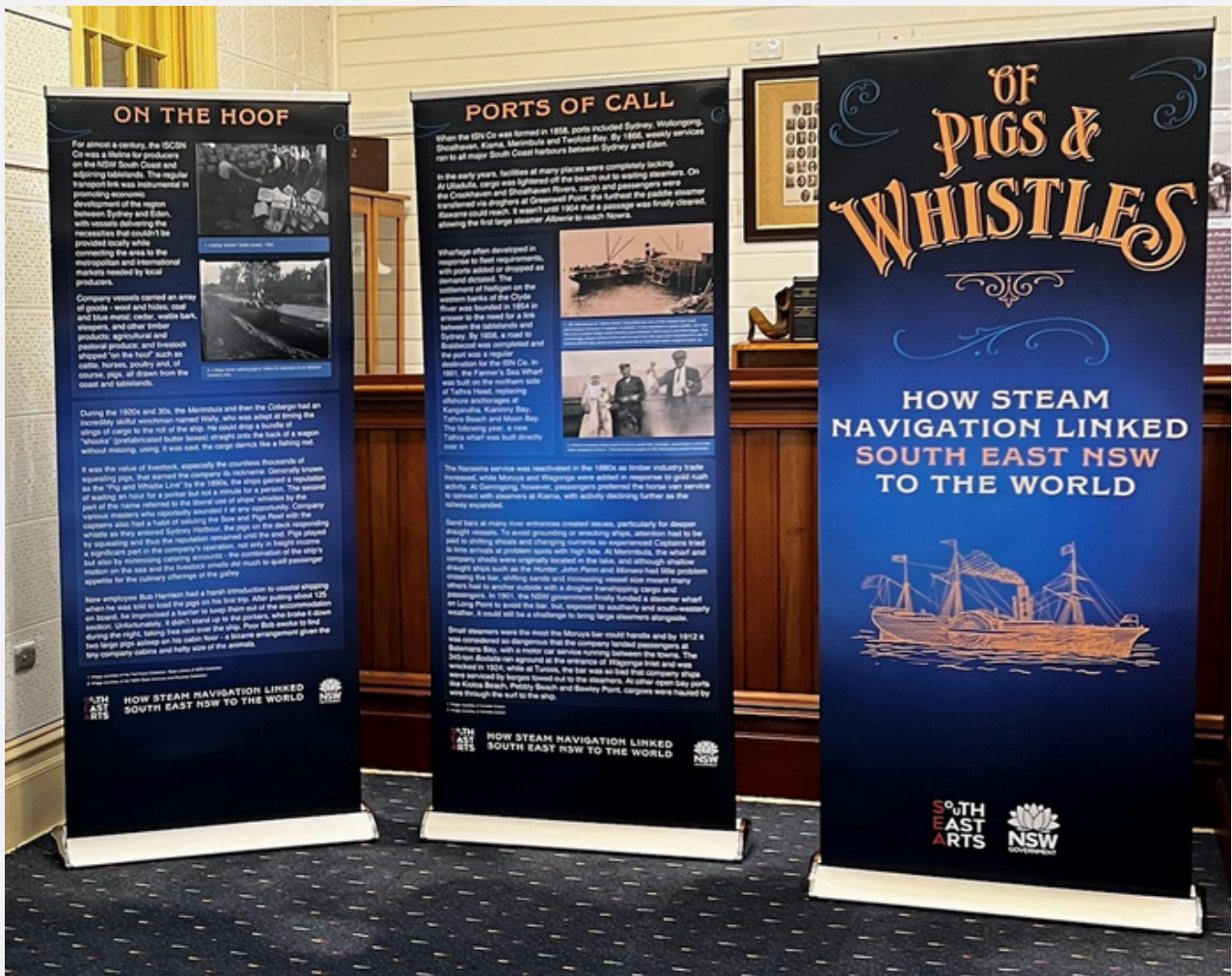


Father and Child by Ross Camneron @ Sculpture Bermagui

Of Pigs & Whistles

A research, exhibition and database development project highlighting and celebrating a shared history of our region, through the story of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company.

The travelling exhibition opened at Eden Killer Whale Museum in Dec 2022 and during 2023 was presented at Tathra Wharf Museum, Moruya Museum, Batemans Bay Heritage Museum and Bermagui Museum. The exhibition will continue to be presented at South Coast venues in 2024, as well as supported through the website: www.ofpigsandwhistles.com.au



Visual Arts Exhibitions

South East Arts presented and supported a range of exhibitions across the region in 2023, showcasing the work of local artists, telling local stories and bringing audiences to galleries.

Embers, Epicorm II: Art of the Eurobodalla – Basil Sellers Exhibition Centre, Moruya

Seven female artists from Eurobodalla Shire share their personal creative responses of experiencing the devastating Black Summer bushfires and the aftermath.

South Coast Indigenous Artists Exhibition – Spiral Gallery Bega

Featuring Indigenous artists from the South Coast celebrating Indigenous culture in our region through painting, drawing, shell and woodwork.

Fishing Season, Bronwen Smith – Bundian Way Gallery, Delegate

A collection of works by Walbunga artist Bronwen Smith, exploring coastal country, stories and connections.

Time For A Moment, Wendy McDougall – Raglan Gallery, Cooma

A photographic series of images capturing random moments, flavoured with humour and taken over all eras of Wendy's 40 plus years career.



Photograph by Wendy McDougall



Country Arts Support Program (CASP)

CASP is a long-running small grants program managed by South East Arts with the recipients of Small Projects funding of up to \$3,000 in 2023 including:

- Embers, Epicorm II – Epicorm Collective
- Bega Show Society Taste & Talent Festival – Bega AP&H Society
- Munggara-dha/my home – River of Art Inc
- Art After Hours – Raglan Gallery and Cultural Centre Inc
- Art exhibition in Tilba Halls – Tilba District Chamber of Commerce
- Orchestra Workshop – Eurobodalla Chamber Orchestra



Image: *Hope in the bones* by Jo Victoria
One of the artists featured in the Epicorm Collective



Financial

In 2023, South East Arts continued to secure significant financial support for arts in the region. Total income was \$967,837 comprising core annual income of \$257,800 from Create NSW and our partner councils, a further \$574,700 from grants for projects and \$135,206 from earned income and donations. Donations of \$28,538 were received, with almost half of this amount used to support individual artists through increased CASP funding and projects.

Project funding sources in 2023

- Create NSW
- Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Scheme
- Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
- Destination NSW
- NSW Aboriginal Affairs
- Regional Arts Fund
- Dept of Regional NSW

Services

South East Arts provides a range of ongoing services to artists, arts organisations and local councils, with a focus on promotion and capacity building including:

- 43 letters of support provided for funding applications by artists and arts organisations
- 12 monthly e-news publications and 77% click-through engagement
- 130 individual artists and organisations provided with advice and assistance
- 22% increased engagement through social media (Facebook and Instagram), with strong growth in metropolitan locations.

Communications

South East Arts actively promotes arts throughout the region and beyond. Online we have a range of websites and use social media to build audiences for cultural activities. Instagram continues to be an effective way to promote events, though Facebook no longer reaches as wide an audience without paying for advertising.

South East Arts

www.southeastarts.org.au

Website visits: 7.1K

Facebook Followers: 3,752 (an increase of 72)

Instagram Followers: 1,939 (an increase of 291)

Twitter Followers: 635 (an increase of 42)

E-News Subscribers: 1,685 recipients (an increase of 174)

HeadLand Writers Festival

www.headlandfestival.com.au

Website visits: 7.4K

Instagram Followers: 265

Giiyong Festival

www.giiyong.com.au

Website visits: 15K

Facebook Followers: 2.7k

Instagram Followers: 1,463

Workshops – total 173 participants

- Creative Partnerships Australia – Bega and Moruya, February
- Website Creation for Creatives – Narooma and Jindabyne, March
- Retaining Volunteers – Bega, March
- Arts Funding Webinar – Online, August
- Copyright for Artists – Bega and Moruya, September
- Copyright for Indigenous Artists – Moruya, September
- Slam Poetry with Sarah Temporal – Tathra, October
- Pathways to Publishing with Emma Batchelor – Tathra, October
- The Wonderful World of Handmade Books – Tathra, October
- Heart and Headland with Gregory Day – Tathra, October





Dhilwaan Yarrkural (Nightfall Dance), Giiyong Festival 2023. Image by David Rogers Photography