



Encounters

24 June 2026 - 29 January 2027

Maribyrnong Civic Precinct and Community Hub

Image:
Simon Clark
Gaskin Gardens 2020
paper and card collage graphite
ink 70 x 95cm



**Arts &
Culture**

Exhibition details

Step inside *Encounters*, a free exhibition at Footscray Town Hall inviting the viewer into a space of curiosity, discovery and imagination.

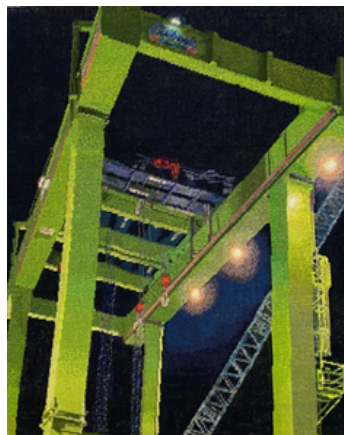
Historical works sit alongside recent acquisitions and different mediums converse with one another, uncovering surprising relationships and the chance to see the City's Collection in a new light.

24 June 2026 - 29 January 2027
Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm

Maribyrnong Civic Precinct and
Community Hub
Footscray Town Hall, Corner Hyde and
Napier Streets, Footscray

Free guided tours: 11am on the first
Wednesday of each month, starting
July 2026.

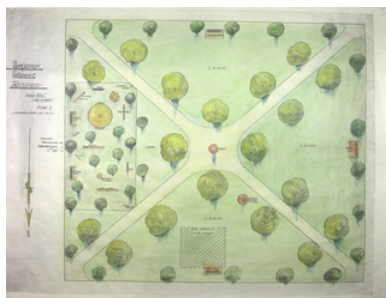
To book tours, or to enquire about
group and school bookings, call
(03) 9688 0200 or visit:
maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Encounters



Jessie Dean
The Big Build 2023
cotton thread on canvas
85 x 78cm



Annie Howie
Yellow Chorus 1984
oil on canvas
100 x 137cm



David Matthews
Simpson Street Reserve 1947
ink and watercolour on paper
40.6 x 50.8cm

A Civic Collection

Encounters is shaped by a distinct stimulus: a focus on our City's Art & Heritage Collection in its entirety, rather than selecting works to articulate a singular theme or narrative.

Before the establishment of modern museums, when exhibits were separated into distinct categories, European collections were presented in encyclopedia-like rooms called *Wunderkammers* (German for 'wonder-room' or 'cabinet of curiosities').

Historical relics, fine art and natural wonders were arranged in visual harmony. This method of display reflected the social, scientific and spiritual beliefs of the time, stimulating research and eliciting alternative ways of thinking.

Adopting this concept and applying it through a contemporary lens, *Encounters* brings a diverse array of works from the City's Collection into dialogue. From heritage regalia to contemporary ceramics, works across mediums, time periods and styles are connected and interweaved. By blurring boundaries, the exhibition invites viewers to explore local narratives, shifting values and relationships across time.



Chrisy Dennis
Maribyrnong River, Tributaries to the Sea 1988
watercolour on paper
80 x 97.5cm



Unknown maker
Printing Block City of Footscray
unknown date
zinc plate on wood
73.5 x 63cm

Vessel of Ideas



Stefan Szönyi
Cricket Trophy c.1985-95
earthenware
12 x 7cm

One of the smallest works in *Encounters* is Stefan Szönyi's whimsical *Cricket Trophy*. Measuring twelve centimetres tall, this intricate ceramic reflects the artist's interest in examining Australian themes and identity through sculpture.

In *Cricket Trophy*, Szönyi references a myriad of sporting iconography, from football to baseball, in his portrayal of the cricket club's most versatile player.

Born in Germany in 1945, Szönyi migrated to Australia in 1959 with his Hungarian parents. His miniature ceramics often feature a lone man with neat black hair in settings that are overtly Australian. The man depicted in these works is the artist himself.

Whilst investigating everyday experiences of living in Australia, he pays homage to his European heritage and the long-held tradition of modelling miniature figurines.

In her decorative ceramic *Teapot*, Fay Pagoloudas interrogates the connection between creativity and functionality.

Transforming a utensil into a vessel of ideas and kitsch artistic expression, Pagoloudas infuses a recognisable motif with animalistic qualities and ornamentation.

Reclaiming naïve and novelty subjects was an artistic approach that gained popularity with postmodern artists in the 1980s. This brightly coloured, extravagant and decorative style was adopted to dismantle the divide between pop culture and the fine arts. Today, kitsch is celebrated within the history of decorative arts as the antithesis of simplicity.



Faye Pagoloudas
Teapot c.1976 -1989
earthenware
13 x 7 x 7cm

Lost and Found

Following the Maribyrnong flood in 2022, Anna Kiparis photographed the devastating effects of this natural disaster on the community. In *Aftermath, Maribyrnong*, flood-damaged belongings are piled high on the nature strip, contrasted by large green trees illuminated by a single lamppost.



Anna Kiparis
Aftermath, Maribyrnong 2022
pigment ink on cotton rag
55 x 78cm

Documenting the force and aftermath of the flood, Kiparis wrote:

*The suburb became an urban exposed graveyard,
leaving a trail of tragedy, with many lifetimes of
accumulated possessions ruined.*

While initially taken as a historical record, Kiparis later revisited the area in 2025 to capture the residents' strength and resilience through a new series of photographs.

In 1985, Rick Matear produced his large oil painting *Items on a Table* and entered it into the Footscray Art Prize. Inspired by Brian Dunlops, an artist who was then painting strawberries on foil, Matear began producing his own still life artworks. Using soft and warm colours, Matear challenged assumptions by privileging discarded items delicately placed across the table.

It was a difficult time for Matear, who had recently returned home with his parents after living independently for many years. Channelling these feelings, Matear explores our connection to material items and how, in times of crisis, people can turn to their possessions to make themselves feel secure.



Rick Matear
Items on a Table 1985
oil on canvas
103 x 75cm

Connections through Time

In 2008 Larissa MacFarlane produced a set of etchings inspired by Melbourne's West and their experiences as a Disabled person. After a life-changing brain injury at 29, MacFarlane began seeing their local environment from a new perspective. *My First Swing, Second Time Round*, speaks to the artist's journey of rediscovery, where daily encounters were felt for the first time.



Larissa MacFarlane
My First Swing, Second Time Around 1988
etching
73 x 89.5cm



Deborah Klein
The Nature of Things 1994
linocut
48 x 59cm

Fourteen years earlier, Deborah Klein produced *The Nature of Things*, a playful depiction of a woman balancing amidst a swirling universe. This work is part of a larger suite of linocuts that Klein produced in the 1980s that referenced carnivals, circuses and sideshows. Inspired by her upbringing in St. Kilda near the legendary Luna Park, Klein incorporates the infamous Scenic Railway as a metaphor for life's wildly contrasting ups and downs.

A vastly different view can be seen in the nineteenth century photograph titled *View to Batman's Swamp*. The waterhole in this image was part of a large wetland area and saltwater blue lake that spanned between Footscray and North Melbourne.



Unknown maker
View to Batmans Swamp 1869
facsimile of photograph
43 x 52.5cm

Long before John Batman's arrival, this waterway was a gathering place for the local Kulin people and home to a thriving ecosystem, until it became a dumping ground for early settler industries and destroyed.

Portraying one of Australia's first European settlers, Charles Grimes, the artist Rick Amor used India ink and wash to create a contemporary portrait with strong gradients, shadows and tones.

In February 1803, Grimes was the first recorded European to visit Footscray. Whilst mapping Port Phillip Bay, his team followed a river and stopped at the junction between two streams. Today, this location is commemorated in a small park on the north side of Shepherd's Bridge. Excerpts from Grimes' journal describe their expedition:



Rick Amor
Charles Grimes unknown date
india ink and wash on paper
57 x 47cm

Soon afterwards came to a large river; went up it about a mile when we turned back and waited for the boat to take us on board. The ground is a swamp on one side and high on the other. Saw many swans, pelicans, and ducks. Were obliged to go up to our middle to get to the boat, and got on board between five and six o'clock.



Viv Méhes
Big River
(The A.M Vella Dredging the River 03) 1995
silver gelatin print
69 x 87cm

Nearly two centuries later, documentary photographer Viv Méhes embarked on a two-year project recording the lower river and its surrounds. In this silver gelatin print, the thick accumulated sediment and debris from the River is accentuated in this tightly cropped image.

Repeat Encounters

Simon Clark's *Gaskin Gardens* (pictured front page) is an intricate paper collage of Footscray's twelve-story housing commission, which was home to many elderly residents. Clark was interested in examining the social aspect of people living in the West during Melbourne's COVID-19 lockdowns.

After winning Council's local acquisition prize in the 2021 Footscray Art Prize at Footscray Community Arts, Clark noted that *Gaskin Gardens* "was no utopia, quite the opposite". Channelling this, the artist exaggerates the window of a single room, protruding from the building's Brutalist exterior, amplifying feelings of isolation and confinement.



Michael Rowe
Street Scene 1981
gouache on paper
36 x 41cm

Nearly forty years earlier, Sunshine-based artist Michael Rowe produced his small gouache *Street Scene*. In this work, a lone figure on a quiet suburban street echoes the feelings of isolation depicted in *Gaskin Gardens*. While similarities exist between Rowe and Clark's works, the contrasting styles, scale and inner narratives of each piece set the works apart.

Connecting seemingly unrelated artworks from the City's Collection offers an opportunity to study the ways experiences overlap and repeat across generations. Through reflection, dialogues emerge, revealing stories that link us through time.

Lili Belle Birchall, Collection Curator

Index of works

Below is a list of artworks exhibited, in descending order of their creation:

Jessie Dean
The Big Build 2023
cotton thread on canvas
85 x 78cm

Anna Kiparis
Aftermath, Maribyrnong
2022
pigment ink on cotton rag
55 x 78cm

Simon Clark
Gaskin Gardens 2020
paper and card collage
graphite ink
70 x 95cm

Archinauts Artist
Collective
*Maquette for Polyanna's
Egg* c. 2014
wood
28 x 29cm

Larissa MacFarlane
Wishing line 2008
etching
43 x 32cm

Larissa MacFarlane
Leading the protest 2008
etching
40 x 35cm

Larissa MacFarlane
Look At Me! I Can Do It!
2008
etching
40 x 35cm

Larissa MacFarlane
West of the Westgate
2008
etching
35 x 40cm

Larissa MacFarlane
*My First Swing Second
Time Around* 2008
etching
40 x 35cm

John Ryrie
Mandeville in Colanok
2006
etching
71 x 88.5cm

Jamie Cooper
*Team of the Century
Western Bulldogs* 2002
limited edition print
76.5 x 110.5cm

Unknown maker
*Photograph of wall mural
by artists Siv Grava and
Nicola Joh* 1999
colour photograph
50 x 65cm

Viv Méhes
*Big River (The A.M Vella
Dredging the River 03)*
1995
silver gelatin print
69 x 87cm

Deborah Klein
The Nature of Things
1994
linocut
48 x 59cm

Georgina Duchett
Queen of Swords 1994
oil on canvas
137 x 137cm

Unknown maker
Footscray Swim Centre
1993
colour photograph
74 x 83cm

Geena Di Stefano
Bees & Flies in landscape
1990
lithograph
79 x 69cm

Dean Smith
The Camel 1990
oil on canvas board
78 x 105cm

Unknown maker
Sign Spirit 1990
ink on paper
38 x 19cm

Ron Guy
Across the River 1989
oil on canvas
111.5 x 167cm

Peter Bourke
Summer 89 1989
oil on plywood panels
15 x 60.5cm

Lisa Skillern
Sea Forms 1988
porcelain
8 x 12cm

Stephen Chung
untitled 1988
cooper and brass on
aluminium
50.5 x 90.5cm

Chrisy Dennis
Maribrnong River,
Tributaries to the Sea
1988
watercolour on paper
80 x 97.5cm

David Upfill-Brown
Mangrove Bowl 1987
wood
38 x 40 x 5cm

Greg Hamilton
Ceramic Platter c.1986
stoneware
5 x 29.5cm

Stefan Szönyi
Bill Spike II 1986
earthenware and metal
13 x 6 x 6cm

Stefan Szönyi
Cricket Trophy date
unknown (worked from
late-1970s to mid-1990s)
earthenware and metal
12 x 7cm

Andrew Williamson
The Melting Pot c1986
oil on canvas
125 x 184cm

Laurence Cummin
Misty Landscape 1986
oil on canvas
124 x 185cm

Maggie McCormick
Reclining Lady Platter
1986
earthenware
10 x 43 x 5cm

Jean Edgar
Filigree Bowl 1986
porcelain
8 x 15cm

Genny Haasz
Westgate Bridge II 1985
ink on paper
76 x 94cm

Ricky Howell
Still Life with Falling
Angels 1985
oil on Masonite
92 x 66.5cm

Joanne Bennett
Footscray Rooftops 1985
oil on canvas
84.5 x 102cm

Neville Assad-Salha
Untitled 1985
ceramic and blackware
96 x 12.5cm

Rick Matear
Items on a Table 1985
oil on canvas
103 x 75cm

Jan Lewis
Square Dish c.1985
Porcelaneous stoneware
33 diameter x 6cm

Antony Twining
Form III 1985
earthenware
29 x 38cm

Robert Gatt
Glass Pitcher (red) c.1985
blown glass
22.5 x 20cm

Robert Gatt
Glass Pitcher (yellow)
c.1985
blown glass
22.5 x 20cm

Ray Taylor
Raku Sphere 1985
eathernware
44 x 36 x 36cm

Scott Cowcher
Tormented Sensualities
1984
blown glass, twine, wood
and wire
30 x 13cm

Noel Rollinson
Bandaged Falls 1984
oil on linen
104 x 94.5cm

Annie Howie
Yellow Chorus 1984
oil on canvas
100 x 137cm

Kay Jenson
Lidded Jar 1984
eathernware
22.5 x 20cm

John Marshall
Beachscape 1982
acrylic on canvas
55.5 x 64.5cm

Chantale Delrue
Second House 1982
oil on canvas
83.5 x 103cm

Pete Nelson
Florence 1982
oil on board
64.5 x 90cm

Richard Morrell
Flooded Gums 1977
glass
15 x 16cm

Fay Pagoloudas
Ceramic teapot c.1976-
1989
earthenware
13 x 7 x 7

Brim Medallions, Bertram
bades, Commemorative
coins, ranging from 1959-
1992
Various mediums and sizes

Possibly attributed to
Julio Santo
Octagonal glass bowl with
black rim unknown date
blown glass
34.5 x 5cm

Allan Crynes <i>Platter</i> 1982 kiln formed glass 39 x 39cm	Lyle Fowler <i>Footscray Town Hall (stairwell)</i> 1936 inkjet print 40.6 x 50.8cm	Rick Amor Charles Grimes unknown date india ink and wash on paper 57 x 47cm
Lilija Duks <i>Weaving</i> 1982 wool 68 x 134cm	Lyle Fowler <i>Footscray Town Hall (exterior)</i> 1936 inkjet print 40.6 x 50.8cm	K D Goldsmith <i>Blizzard Animal</i> unknown date earthenware 32 x 40cm
Michael Rowe <i>Street Scene</i> 1981 gouache on paper 36 x 41cm	Lyle Fowler <i>Footscray Town Hall (groundfloor)</i> 1936 inkjet print 40.6 x 50.8cm	Mark Douglas <i>Glass and metal table</i> date unknown cast iron and glass 103 x 115 x 40cm
Greg Daly <i>Form</i> 1981 earthenware 33 x 33 x 33cm	Unknown artist <i>Streets and buildings</i> c.1900s framed postcards 41 x 39cm	Unknown maker <i>Platter with Four Pomegranates</i> unknown date earthenware 35cm diameter
Alison Magilton <i>Irish Harvest</i> 1978 wool 121 x 74cm	James Clarke Waite <i>William Mitchell, Mayor Footscray 1889-90</i> 1900 oil on canvas 140.5 x 113 x 13.5cm	Unknown maker <i>Printing Block City of Footscray</i> unknown date zinc plate on wood 73.5 x 63cm
Paklite <i>Suitcase with City of Footscray Coat of Arms</i> c.1970s vinyl metal and fabric 60 x 69 x 19cm	James Clarke Waite <i>James Cumming, Mayor Footscray 1885-86, 1890-91</i> 1900 oil on canvas 140.5 x 113 x 13.5cm	Unknown maker <i>Mayoral hat with feathers</i> unknown dates gabardine, velvet and ostrich feathers 56 x 9.5cm
David Reeves Matthews MBE <i>Simpson Street Reserve</i> 1947 facsimile of ink and watercolour on paper 40.6 x 50.8cm	Unknown maker <i>View to Batman's Swamp</i> 1869 facsimile of silver gelatin photograph 40.6 x 50.8cm	Unknown maker <i>Civic Regalia - Mayoral lace Jabots/ Collars</i> unknown dates cotton and lace dimensions variable
David Reeves Matthews MBE <i>Henry Turner Memorial Plan</i> c.1947 facsimile of ink and watercolour on paper 40.6 x 50.8cm	Scott Cowcher <i>Entombed</i> unknown date blown glass 22 x 23cm	Unknown maker <i>Pipermakers Park sign</i> unknown date paint on metal 45 x 45cm
Lyle Fowler <i>Footscray Town Hall (entrance)</i> 1936 inkjet print 40.6 x 50.8cm		



Dean Smith
The Camel 1990
oil on canvas board
78 x 105cm

Contact us

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Maribyrnong City Council is proud to represent a municipality filled with important and significant Aboriginal history. Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Kulin Nation, and acknowledges the rich culture and considerable contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have made and continue to make to this City.