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Media Release

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Imaginations grow where walls glow in *Hole of Yellow Archipelago*

In association with



Sculptures made by Balmoral School Children in a workshop with artist Judy Darragh. Photo courtesy Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

An innovative and inventive collaboration between Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, artist Judy Darragh, Balmoral Primary School children and AUT's TurnSpace Collective will transform the Todd Foundation Creative Learning Centre into its latest interactive iteration, *Hole of Yellow Archipelago*.

Inspired by the art practice of Judy Darragh, *Hole of Yellow Archipelago* will be a visually thrilling installation designed in collaboration with kids, for kids.

It opens at the Gallery at 10am on Saturday 5 September 2015 with free entry.

The one-of-a-kind space is intended to seize the imagination of younger Gallery goers and transport them via hands-on activities to another world, in which they can discover, create and build.

Walls which can be drawn on and sculpted, a tunnel to explore and the opportunity to make sculptures awash with pool noodles come together to create the archipelago, an evolving landscape, to encourage discovery of contemporary art practice.

Auckland Art Gallery Community Learning Coordinator Meg Nicoll says it is the first time the Gallery has undertaken such a collaborative approach to reinvent the Creative Learning Centre.

'Working alongside children on the design concept has been ground-breaking for us. It has changed our perceptions on standard process and it will be hugely beneficial as it will create an authentic experience for families.'

Nicoll says the installation will engage all the senses.

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‘It is for diving into, exploring, changing and enjoying. Children can experiment with materials, imagine possibilities and work together to express their creativity and build a fantastical world.’

The Gallery’s Learning Programmes Team and Auckland based contemporary artist Judy Darragh worked closely with a Year Four class from Balmoral Primary School in a series of creative workshops to draw and make models.

These visualisations were then interpreted by the TurnSpace Collective from AUT’s Spatial Design, and ideas were developed to create an imaginative parallel world in the space.

The collaboration will continue when Gallery visitors enter the intallation and tranform the environment through their creative responses.

The immersive installation takes its lead from Darragh’s vividly hued and multi-layered work, and will share her work’s clever and alluring sense of fun that harnesses the language of everyday materials in popular culture.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport says the Gallery is dedicated to delivering exciting arts programming for all ages.

‘The Gallery is deeply committed to offering exceptional and high-quality experiences for visiting families,’ she says.

‘This installation breaks new ground in its genuine capacity for collaboration amongst artists, young people and the Gallery, to offer new possibilities for our family audiences.’

The Balmoral students greatly enjoyed working with Darragh and learning about her practice. They said, ‘she’s unstoppable at making art’, ‘her work stands out, it is noticeable’ and, ‘she makes a big installation from small things’.

Darragh says she has learnt a lot about the way children work through this process.

‘Kids see a work of art, imitate it and then add to it or change it to make it unique and completely their own,’ she says.

‘It has been an eye-opener for me as children are so unencumbered and will inform my future works. I have really enjoyed the collaborative process.’

Nicoll says the collaborative approach has been extremely valuable as it led the project in new directions that her team couldn’t have imagined.

‘Every workshop with the students helped to develop ideas further and our team strengthened the process through their contribution of ideas and

knowledge. The end result captures the energy and spirit of this collaboration,' she says.

The students' classroom teacher Andrew Te Aotonga says a genuine sense of collaboration will be evident in the new Creative Learning Centre.

'This memorable journey has allowed students' creativity, thoughts and ideas to become a reality for the world to see.'

The collaboration process has been captured on video and will be available to view in the space.

To celebrate the opening of *Hole of Yellow Archipelago*, Balmoral Primary School students, parents and staff will get exclusive access to experience the space before it opens to the public.

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For interviews, high-res photos and more information please contact:

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About the Todd Foundation Creative Learning Centre:

Located on the mezzanine level of the Gallery, the Todd Foundation Creative Learning Centre is open daily 10am to 5pm and is free to visit.

The Centre is for everyone in the Gallery with the aim to engage children, families and young people to experience how works of art come into being – how artists observe and explain the world that we know and imagine.

In the past, Auckland based artists have been commissioned to create year-long installations for the Creative Learning Centre. Commissioned artists have included Reuben Paterson (2011/12), Tiffany Singh (2012/13), and Sean Kerr (2013/14).

The current installation is a colourful hands-on interactive wonderland entitled *Wavelength*, created by Auckland Art Gallery in collaboration with AUT Colab and inspired by the recent international exhibition, *Light Show*.

Programmes supported by Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust

About TurnSpace Collective

TurnSpace is a collective based in AUT's Spatial Design. Members include Andrew Douglas, Sue Gallagher, Sue Hedges and Raimana Jones.