

GIRLS ARE NOT TOYS

About Girls Are Not Toys

Girls Are Not Toys is a local street art exhibition celebrating the lives of girls and women in Gympie, whilst raising awareness about safety for women, and the underlying social conditions that contribute to violence against women and girls in our communities.

The artworks are an opportunity for young women to share ideas, educate others and contribute to the rising global #METOO movement as well as present fresh ideas on victim stereotyping in violence against women campaigns.

Girls Are Not Toys is founded by local artist Tammy Brennan and facilitated with collaborating guest artists Wendy Murray and Kris Tito. Gympie Workshop Participants: Kovit, Mia Nichols, Zahlia Caddsmith, Khira Bradley and Crystal Griffin.

For more information www.girlsarenottoys.org

About Violence Against Women

Put simply, and using an internationally recognised definition, violence against women is any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life.

As this definition makes clear, violence against women is not only or always physical. It includes psychological, economic, emotional and sexual violence and abuse, and a wide range of controlling, coercive and intimidating behaviours.

In Australia, violence against women is called many different things, including domestic violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Definition from Ourwatch.org

The *Girls Are Not Toys* Project respectfully acknowledges the Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi people of the Gympie region. The project acknowledges all Elders past, present and emerging, the traditional custodians and protectors across the Aboriginal Countries in which we work. We are honoured to live and work across these lands and nations – Always was, always will be.



Gympie Flexible Learning Centre



The Regional Arts Development Fund is a partnership between the Queensland Government and Gympie Regional Council to support local arts and culture in regional Queensland.



Girls Are Not Toys Paste-Up Trail 2019

The Bird (I Bite Back), 2017

“Children should be seen and not heard” or “What happens behind closed doors, stays behind closed doors” are commonly used and accepted pieces of advice often given to women and children in the family home. Social conditioning comments like these often demand utter silence from the victims of violent behaviour.

This artwork rebels against the ‘old-fashioned’ idea that children should be seen and not heard. It presents a striking image of a young girl flipping the bird, as a counter narrative to this subversive dominance over women and children within the family.

Willing and Able to Work, 2019

Willing and Able to Work brings visibility to economic dimensions of gender inequality. The artwork presents a group of young women picketing about youth unemployment, and the idea that any work is a valuable contribution to a community. Valuing women’s unpaid work, reproductive roles and the care economy, for example.

The artwork raises awareness around the gender pay gap, the difference between women’s and men’s earnings, which has remained relatively steady in Australia for the last 20 years – with women earning between 15 to 19 per cent, lower than men.

By investing in women, we can achieve lasting community gains by addressing the root causes of social, political and economic problems. We can transform systems, structures and the social norms that create the present exclusion of women from the workplace.

Safety 101, 2019

Restrooms are often in out of the way places, where women find themselves having to walk down long halls, out the back of restaurants or on the other side of a park with no lighting. The

disadvantage to this remote amenity, is personal safety.

Women have a variety of needs and uses for restrooms which include a range of circumstances such as menstruation, pregnancy, breast feeding and menopause. In the care role, they are also more likely to be helping children and older people to use the toilet.

Girls Are Not Toys Workshop Participants highlighted the importance of never going to public restrooms alone. That going with a friend, in a group, or letting someone know where you are going, is key to keeping yourself safe.

Listen: When Women Seek Help, 2019

The image in this artwork of a young woman holding a megaphone highlights the importance of just how loud women must raise their voices, to be heard. It also presents awareness around silencing, and how many women face obstacles in their help-seeking.

Many people think violence is committed in public places by strangers, but women who are at risk of violence are more likely to experience it in their own homes and from men they know. We know that on average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner, and 85% of Australian women have been sexually harassed.

We need to listen to women, believe them, and learn from their experiences. Not listening to women makes it difficult to ensure a safe end to an abusive relationship. One way to help women is to take action and not remain silent: stand up, speak out and act to stop violence against women.

It’s Not Only Sticks and Stones, 2019

This artwork combines narrative techniques and Letraset (dry transferable lettering) in a workshop process with participants, about the power of everyday words used in the oppression of women and girls. Print artist Wendy Murray has used the Letraset wordplay to create and hand screen print a series of posters for the project, which have been used in multiplicity for this paste-up.

Words are powerful: they can lift us up and beat us down, soothe us or wound us. Designed to humiliate a person, verbal abuse is a key feature of emotionally abusive relationships. This has a serious impact on the self-esteem and confidence of the person experiencing the verbal abuse.

Australian women are twice as likely to have experienced emotional abuse by a partner since the age of 15. Almost 25% of school students in Australia, or an estimated 910,000 children, experience bullying at some stage during their time in school. Research shows that girls who were victims of bullying in their early primary school years were more likely to remain victims as they get older. The annual economic impact of bullying in Australia totals an estimated \$2.3 billion, incurred while children are in school and for 20 years after school completion. *Hand screen printed posters on 90GSM litho paper, editions of 110.*

All other artworks are Digital Prints on 80GSM, Open Editions.