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Outdoor street Art Gallery Opens in the Blue Mountains

"People speak of the 'graffiti problem', but you don't hear many people talk about the 'street art blessing', yet in our opinion that is exactly what it is!"

Jarrod Wheatley, founder of Street Art Murals Australia (SAMA)

On Saturday the 20th of June, Street Art Murals Australia, in partnership with the Blue Mountains Culture Centre will open what we believe to be Australia's largest outdoor street art gallery. Known simply as the Street Art Walk, the gallery consists of over 30 mural sites, many of which are three stories high. Mural sites will provide over 3,000 square meters of wall space to street artists. We invite the public to come and watch some of the world's best street artists paint impressive large-scale murals. Participating artists will fly in from all over the world and across the country to participate in the event.

The Street Art Walk is a space where artists can paint their own designs legally. The art works will be on the cutting edge of street art modalities. Individuals interested in the creative arts will be inspired and challenged by this exciting space. The Street Art Walk will be a tangible example of the benefits of supporting street art, urban beautification, artist validation, tourism, and social inclusion. The Street Art Walk was partially funded through a successful crowd funding campaign where over 150 individuals contributed collectively over \$19,000 to launch the space.

"The Street Art Walk displays world standard street art from all aerosol disciplines. International, national and local artists of varying experience will be painting large-scale artworks in the galley through a curated process. Stylistically the murals cover all street art artistic disciplines." Paul Brinkman, Director, Blue Mountains Culture Centre.

"We believe street art is legitimate and that we will all gain from artists having the legal space to pursue constructive forms of aerosol art. The Street Art Walk will serve as the ultimate example, showing the country that Street Art's time has come." explains Jarrod Wheatley founder and coordinator of Street Art Murals Australia.

The University of Western Sydney's Young & Well Research Team will be exploring how Street Art and technology effects people's well being. QR codes will be installed on all mural sites, directing people to interpretive information about each mural.

Street Art Murals Australia (SAMA) is a social venture that fosters social inclusion though street art murals, workshops and consultancy. We believe street art is a valid form of art that benefits the whole community. Put simply, we act as the link between talented street artist who want to be engaged in constructive forms of aerosol art and the greater community who see benefit in this process. In NSW we rely purely on punitive measures to control graffiti, so far we have been utterly unsuccessful. We have made it illegal for young people to hold a can of paint; we fine them and even send some to jail. We currently spend well over 100 million dollars every year on graffiti management in NSW. The situation shows no sings of improving with our current approach. This is a poor investment. We waste vast amounts of tax payers dollar on then endless cycle of cleaning graffiti, but perhaps even more damaging to our community is that we also fail to capitalize on the positive elements of street art that benefit our whole community. Urban beautification, tourism and increased social inclusion can be street art's legacy, if we allow it. www.streetartmurals.com.au

The **Street Art Walk** will be launched in the Beverly Place laneway, Katoomba, Blue Mountains, on Saturday 20 June in conjunction with the 22nd Blue Mountains Winter Magic Festival. Over 40,000 people are expected at the event. Street Art Murals Australia is project of Mountain Youth Services Team Incorporated (MYST).

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