

ARTSENTA

Creativity + Community = Wellbeing

Call for Expressions of Interest for a Symposium on Creativity & Wellbeing on 14 October 2026, Ōtepoti/Dunedin, Aotearoa/New Zealand

We invite expressions of interest to present at a symposium exploring the role of creativity in supporting and enhancing wellbeing.

To be held in Dunedin, New Zealand, at Tūhura Otago Museum, the symposium will bring together creative spaces, researchers, artists, educators, community leaders, and others who are passionate about, or interested in, how creative practices and spaces contribute to individual and collective wellbeing.

As Artsenta celebrates its 40th anniversary, we want to foster dialogue between the creative, community and health sectors and share some of the insights, experiences, and research from across Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Themes may include (but are not limited to):

- The relationship between creativity and mental health
- Creative practice and resilience
- Arts-based approaches to health and social care
- Community arts and social connection
- Indigenous perspectives on creativity and wellbeing
- Creativity in public health and policy
- Measuring and evidencing the impact of creativity on wellbeing

We welcome contributions in a range of formats, including:

- Short research presentations
- Practice-based case studies
- Panel discussions
- Participatory or performative elements (not workshops)

Who should submit?

We encourage submissions from academics, artists, creative practitioners, health professionals, educators, community organisations, and others working at the intersection of creativity and wellbeing. While we will consider online presentations, a preference will be given to in person presentations. Some support may be provided for travel or accommodation.

Expression of Interest Submission

Please submit:

- A short description of your proposed contribution (200–300 words)
- Your preferred format (presentation, workshop, panel, etc.)
- A brief biography (100 words)
- To: director@artsenta.org

Key Dates

- Expression of Interest deadline: 31 May 2026
- Notification of acceptance: 30 June 2026
- Attendance registrations deadline: 30 September 2026
- Symposium date: 14 October 2026

About the Symposium

For forty years, Artsenta has been quietly proving something powerful: **creativity changes lives**. Working alongside people experiencing mental health and addiction challenges, Artsenta has created a welcoming space where art is not about perfection or performance—it is about expression, connection, and belonging. Every day, people walk through the doors carrying difficult stories and leave having made something: a painting, a poem, a friendship, a moment of calm, a sense of possibility.

Over four decades, thousands of artworks have been created, countless conversations shared, and many lives strengthened through the simple but profound act of making. Artsenta has witnessed how creative practice can build confidence, reduce isolation, support recovery, and offer new ways for people to understand themselves and the world around them.

Now, as Artsenta celebrates its **40th Anniversary**, we want to bring together others who believe in the transformative power of creativity. Through the symposium we hope to create a space where creative spaces, and people working at the interaction of creativity and wellbeing, can share innovative and inspiring stories, evidence, ideas and practice. We also want to raise awareness of the valuable work happening at creative spaces throughout the motu every day.

The Symposium will take place in conjunction with an exhibition at Tuhura Otago Museum to celebrate Artsenta's 40th anniversary and during the national Mental Health Awareness Week. We warmly welcome contributions from across Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

For further information, please contact:
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