

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Program empowers those most disadvantaged to shine

An education program designed to empower and inspire those most disadvantaged in the community will showcase its students' achievements tonight.

Students participating in the Faculty of Arts Clemente Program will exhibit their artwork at the Entrepot Gallery from 5.30pm.

"There is a real diversity of voice in the exhibition. The drawings reflect intimate responses to the challenges the Clemente students face in their lives," Faculty of Arts Clemente Drawing Lecturer Dr Sue Lovegrove said.

"For many students in the program this is their first experience of formal education.

"The program allows people to dream, to realise their potential and gain self-belief."

The Clemente Program is a community engagement and pathway program that aims to break the cycle of poverty, inequity and social injustice for Australians facing multiple disadvantages and social isolation.

The students, aged between early 20s to their 70s, include refugees and asylum-seekers from Kuwait, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, migrants from Asia and people from underprivileged backgrounds in Tasmania.

"The first cohort of Clemente students in the South has seen 22 students from marginalised areas of society join the program," Faculty Clemente Program Coordinator Lorise Clark said.

"Many of these students have had little or no formal education, and may have experienced other disadvantages in their lives that may have interrupted their education.

"The program has given them the opportunity to connect with others through education and reconnect with learning."

The exhibition features the work students have undertaken in the Introduction to Art – Drawing Basics unit.

Works include still-life, self-portraits, line drawings and visual metaphors.

“For many students the visual language offered through art has helped them to formally express their thoughts and feelings,” Dr Lovegrove said.

The drawing unit is one of four uniquely designed foundation level Arts units students take as part of the program. The students have also completed Introduction to Indigenous Studies, Introduction to Sociology and are about to start a Philosophy unit in Semester two.

The University of Tasmania’s Faculty of Arts launched the Clemente Program in July last year. The program was initiated by the Australian Catholic University (ACU) 13 years ago.

Lorise Clark said a number of the students have indicated they are intending to enrol in other University pathway programs.

“For a number of these students the Clemente Program has provided the confidence to make life-changing decisions,” Lorise said.

The exhibition is open to the public and will run until July 19 at The Entrepot Gallery, Centre for the Arts, Hunter Street, Hobart. The gallery is open 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday, and 12pm-4pm on Saturday.

Media opportunity: Lorise Clark (Clemente Program co-ordinator), Dr Sue Lovegrove, (Clemente Drawing Lecturer) and students from the program will be available to talk to the media at the Entrepot Gallery, midday today (Friday, 8 July).

Information released by:

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