




Celebrating all abilities through arts showcase

On the International Day of People with Disability we highlight an exhibition giving students living with disability the chance to share their creativity.

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The creative thoughts and artistic works of public students living with a disability are being showcased in a virtual arts exhibition.

The inaugural showcase, 'Found Objects', which is now online involved 336 students living with a disability and 22 schools from Greater Sydney, the Central West, Illawarra and South Coast.

Opening the [online showcase](#), Crestwood High School's Tomas Cvetkovski gave a powerful [speech](#)  highlighting the ability of those students represented.

"What unites each of these works is the mindset of the people behind them," Tomas said. "We are all keen for you to hear our stories – we each have thoughts, feelings and creativity that need to be expressed.

"We want you to see how incredibly passionate we are, we want you to join us on our journey.

"The Connections Showcase shines a spotlight on our abilities despite the fact that every student represented here ... has a disability."


Sonja Sjolander, Arts Initiatives Advisor at The Arts Unit, said the showcase was an authentic celebration of achievement.

"The Connections Showcase has engaged families and school communities that understand the importance of supporting and motivating students with disability and providing a platform for their voice to be heard through the arts," she said.

"We are very proud to be sharing the students' work with the public."

Included in the showcase was works by students from Carenne School in Bathurst, who took inspiration from treasure-seeking pirates, creating a [dance](#) to reflect the various discarded bounty they found.

Callaghan College Jesmond Senior Campus students in Newcastle followed in the footsteps of Shakespeare, creating and performing a play.

The [Great Art Robbery](#)  is an original, multi-disciplinary play, devised, written and performed by the Year 11 and 12 students from the school's Life Skills and Support Unit.

It tells the story of a stolen sculpture and the artist's attempt to get it back. During the journey, we meet the residents of Mysterytown, who attempt to help solve the case. The play ultimately poses the question: What is art and how do we value it?


In Cammeray, students at [Anzac Park Public School](#) focused on special places, building a plane, trellis and a local park out of materials destined for the waste bin.

The Connections Program is a collaboration between the NSW Department of Education and NOVA Employment and provides students and teachers from Kindergarten to Year 12 with opportunities to engage in creative activities.


NOVA Employment's Chief Executive Officer Martin Wren said arts were incredibly important in education and in supporting a transition into work.

"We are excited to be involved with the Connections Program and its initiatives," said Mr Wren.

"This sponsorship is a small way in which we can contribute to the education of these young people, and better prepare them for their transition into the workforce," said Mr Wren.

The Arts Unit used today's International Day of People with Disability to launch the 2022 showcase theme, Ours to Share. To register visit the Connections Program [home page](#) .

For more information about the program and to view the 2021 showcase, including videos, visit the [website](#).

Students, teachers and parents may also be interested to learn more about NOVA's [Transition to Work](#) .