

STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

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Children's COVID-19 art recognised by UNESCO World Register

EMBARGO UNTIL NOON, FRIDAY 14 APRIL

More than 2,000 children's artworks held at State Library of Queensland have been added to the prestigious UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

The artworks are from the [Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive 1986-2016; 2020](#), the most comprehensive and significant resource for the study of children's art in Australia.

The archive also includes over 160 drawings and paintings made during the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrating how children perceived the world during the international health crisis.

Young children from Wuhan (China) and four Brisbane (Australia) kindergartens and primary schools drew and painted pictures about their everyday lives, as well as imagining what the future would look like after the pandemic.

Dr Piscitelli, alongside Professor Zhichao Chen, initiated *Pandemic Picture Stories (June-July 2020)*, which was donated to State Library in August 2020.

Dr Piscitelli's archive began in 1986 and reflects the lives of children from Australia, China and Vietnam, telling visual stories about their social worlds, human rights and futures.

The archive also contains artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in the remotest parts of Queensland.

Quotes from Minister for the Arts Leeanne Enoch:

"The Children's Art Archive is an incredibly rich resource that will make an invaluable addition to the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

"The Archive provides children with a platform for their ideas and captures their views about landmark events in our world's history.

"This includes children's responses to the UN Article 31 which states that *every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*

"The Queensland Government joins UNESCO in acknowledging the significant role that art and creativity play in children's lives.



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Interviews are available upon request.

“Our annual \$5 million investment in State Library’s First 5 Forever program helps to introduce and build a foundation in creativity and literacy with state-wide support to Queensland families and primary caregivers for the first five years of children’s lives.”

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM:

“State Library inspires people through storytelling, and we know stories can be shared in so many different forms. This wonderful archive shares stories through art, giving little children an even bigger voice.

“We are thrilled Dr Barbara Piscitelli’s important work is being recognised – the archive is a testament to her determination and dedication to children’s art education.”

Quotes from Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM:

“Children’s views are rarely considered during times of crisis, yet children often have deep insights into current events and the world around them.

“The pandemic picture stories are much more than pretty pictures – they are documents that reveal children’s ideas of a global health emergency and how to live with confusion, challenge, disruption and change.

“The pandemic collection arouses thinking about social reality from a wider point of view, enabling children’s once sidelined voices and views to have a place in public conversation.”

Explore the collection [Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive, 1986-2016; 2020 | media kit](#)