

MEDIA KIT



THE OFFERING

SCULPTURAL SITE INTERVENTION
CHURCH AND HALL
ROBBIE ROWLANDS
WWW.THEOFFERING.COM.AU

OPEN 1 - 11 OCTOBER 2009, THURSDAY TO
SUNDAY 11AM - 4PM. 17 ROBINSON STREET
DANDENONG (CNR GEORGE STREET)
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THE OFFERING

17 ROBINSON STREET DANDENONG

1 - 11 OCTOBER 2009

THURSDAY - SUNDAY 11AM - 4PM

OFFICIAL OPENING - SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER 2PM

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Contemporary art installation in a century old church and community hall in Dandenong earmarked for demolition

The Offering is a contemporary art installation created by Robbie Rowlands in a single story weatherboard church and community hall. The Church was officially opened in August 1904. In this same month – 105 years later – Rowlands' arts intervention took place.

The artwork is produced using only the materials contained within its walls to create a visually powerful site specific installation.

It reveals the history of the site through exposed layers and sculptural forms that peel and bend the inner surfaces of the building.

The Offering is open for two weeks prior to the site being demolished, to enable construction of the George Street Bridge.

The Offering provides the community the opportunity to experience for the final time a church and community hall that has housed local meetings and prayer for some 105 years.

The Offering builds a bridge between removing structures from the landscape and building them back up again. It provides an opportunity for the community to witness change in their community, and to share their own personal memories of times in important and historic spaces.

This project is a marriage between the practice of an artist who seeks rare opportunities to work with pre-demolition sites, and organisations who recognise that within the context of urban renewal, there is an obligation to honour, reflect, discuss and record the things that are being lost in the process of change.

Rowlands work is made all the more poignant as the timber floors had already been removed in anticipation of the demolition, leaving only the supporting stumps and bare earth.

"The bare earth presented an ideal opportunity for this work and the community to consider the raw landscape. With the buildings removed we are invited to consider if the land alone can retain a kind of memory or is it just defined by the structures we build,"

"I am hoping my work allows the community a chance to reflect on their own connection to the land and to be part of its transition."
Robbie Rowlands, artist

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Questions and Answers

What is unique about this project?

With a contemporary take on a site of community importance, The Offering provides a walk through experience that encourages the community to be part of history, to explore, reminisce, contemplate and farewell the site prior to it being razed.

This project takes the accepted practice of engaging an artist to develop integrated artworks into a new building and exchanges the space with a building which has been decommissioned and is awaiting demolition.

A video documentation on the making of the project has been created and will be screened at the site in an adjoining community dance hall.

Contemporary artworks are a celebrated and embraced part of the cultural landscape of Dandenong and provide an appropriate reflection of the city's identity as a place rich in history and community activity.

Why is council doing this project?

Within the context of Revitalising Central Dandenong seven hectares of land has been acquired to enable the development of new offices, retail, housing and education facilities.

This project acknowledges that there are many stages to the revitalisation process and that the demolition and clearing of key sites is a stage that only occurs fleetingly.

Making the space and time to reflect on this stage and the transition of buildings that have been part of the fabric of Dandenong over the past century is part of that journey and the city's evolution.

Who are we and what are we becoming?

Dandenong is broadly recognised as a hub for business and industry and this has been confirmed by the State Government's \$290 million investment in Central Dandenong's redevelopment. Dandenong is poised to become a vibrant city centre that offers housing, employment opportunities and a diverse range of cultural and leisure pursuits.

What does it say about Council and VicUrban?

Council and VicUrban recognise the need to engage the community in the changes taking place in Dandenong. Central Dandenong has a long history and strong identity which is valued and through this project recognised.

Making the space to acknowledge change, highlight community buildings, record local history and mark an important step in central Dandenong's progress, is of vital importance in this city's regeneration.

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Artist Profile

Robbie Rowlands is a Melbourne based artist who graduated from Victorian College of the Arts in 1999. He also completed a year of study at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York where he undertook his first solo exhibition entitled FOUND.

Rowlands work explores notions of stability and vulnerability through the manipulation of objects and environments. His repetitious and precise cuts and the resulting distortions reflect the inescapable passing of time that affects everything around us.

Rowlands latest work follows on from his unique treatment of the Grenda's bus depot during its demolition last year. Rowlands work, The Upholsterer, used the exposed floors and walls of the Upholstery workshop to create a piece of artwork that went on to receive national and international acclaim.

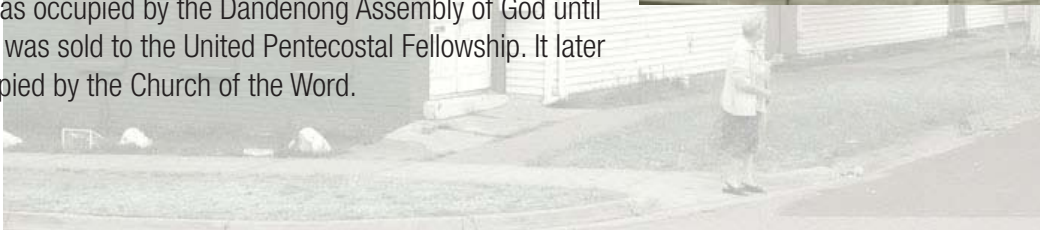
History of the Church and Hall

The Church of Christ was constructed in 1904 and officially opened on 28 August after an 11 week construction period undertaken by builder David Brown for the cost of 500 pounds.

In early 1918 through voluntary labour the Sunday School hall was added to the rear of the church at a cost of £140. Further working bees resulted in the lining of the hall and construction of the kitchen.

The congregation met there until September 1957 when it moved into a newly built brick chapel on the corner of Mason and Walker Streets.

The church was occupied by the Dandenong Assembly of God until 1977 when it was sold to the United Pentecostal Fellowship. It later became occupied by the Church of the Word.



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Media Release

DANDENONG ART - ON THE CUTTING EDGE

A small disused Community Hall and Church earmarked for demolition in central Dandenong is the inspiration for the latest artwork by Robbie Rowlands.

The 105 year-old single-storey weatherboard building on the corner of Robinson and George streets will be demolished as part of the George St Bridge project.

The Church was officially opened in August 1904. In this same month – 105 years later – Rowlands' arts intervention took place.

Rowlands had a small timeframe to use the materials contained within its walls to create a site specific installation, which will be open to the public between 1 – 11 October 2009.

Rowland's latest project follows on from his unique art treatment of the Grenda's Bus Depot during its demolition last year.

Rowlands work, The Upholsterer, used the exposed floors and walls of the Upholstery workshop to create a piece of artwork that went on to receive national and international acclaim.

This latest work titled "The Offering" is an ambitious project that reveals the history of the site through exposed layers and sculptural forms that peel and bend the inner surfaces of the building.

His work is made all the more poignant as the timber floors had already been removed in anticipation of the demolition, leaving only the supporting stumps and bare earth.

Rowlands said the bare earth presented an ideal opportunity for his work and the community to consider the raw landscape.

"With the roads and buildings removed we are invited to consider if the land alone can retain a kind of memory or is it just defined by the structures we build," Rowland said.

"I am hoping my work allows the community a chance to reflect on their own connection to the land and to be part of its transition."

The exhibition will also feature a video documentation by Eleni Arbus that covers part of the creation of the work. This will be screened in the adjacent hall during the exhibition.

The project will be officially opened on Saturday 3 October 2009.

This innovative arts project is supported by the City of Greater Dandenong, Arts Victoria and VicUrban.

FOR MEDIA INFORMATION AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES:

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ARTIST Robbie Rowlands

TECHNICAL SUPPORT Nic Cairns

PHOTOGRAPHY Wren, Danielle Wong

DOCUMENTARY Eleni Arbus (Film), Jessica Noske-Turner (Radio)

DESIGN Studio Racket

WRITER Simon Cooper

CATALOGUE A colour catalogue will be available at the site to assist in guiding people through the installation

FUNDING This project is supported by the City of Greater Dandenong, Arts Victoria and VicUrban

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