

Monday, 15 November 2021

New lease of life for Fitzroy Street

St Kilda's Fitzroy Street is emerging even bigger and better after lockdown, with a new property offering another five activations for the flourishing Renew Fitzroy Street (RFS) Program.

The second expansion of the Renew Program comes as a gallery and several new restaurants are opening in Fitzroy Street and the Victorian Pride Centre (VPC), already an important landmark for locals and visitors, recently reopened post-lockdown.

The new RFS property, 77 Fitzroy Street, is easily recognised as it recently became a "canvas" for a stunning mural of artist Mirka Mora, portraying her as both a young and older woman. Painted by muralist Tom Cerdan, the mural was commissioned by the Fitzroy Street Business Association (FSBA) and funded by a Port Phillip Council Love My Place grant.

Mirka lived across the road at Tolarno with her husband Georges in the 1960s. The murals she painted at Tolarno are heritage listed and will be enjoyed once again when the restaurant reopens as *Bergerac at Tolarno*, relocated from its original site in Melbourne's CBD.

Mirka Mora, a compilation of home movie footage of the Mora family in 1950s Melbourne, (courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive, Copyright Philippe Mora), is the first iteration of Aperture f/77, a moving image projection program running for the next six months in a dedicated purpose-built window space at 77 Fitzroy Street. A pilot collaboration between Renew Australia and Council, Aperture f/77 can be viewed day and night with information about the individual programs accessible via a QR code on the decal frame surrounding the viewing window.

Mayor Louise Crawford: "Renew Fitzroy Street continues to excite and delight. These newcomers are yet another reason to come and enjoy this great destination, whether to shop, enjoy a drink or bite to eat or get creative at a workshop. St Kilda is well-known as an artistic destination so we couldn't be happier about supporting these celebrations of Mirka Mora's cultural and artistic contributions to our City."

Renew Australia CEO Angela Simons: "77 Fitzroy Street, as the most recent iteration of Renew Fitzroy Street, may well become known as the program 'hub'. The multiple spaces occupied by a wide range of creative offer, presents a new case study for the program further illustrating the breadth of possibility that occurs when councils and business associations entrust the Renew Australia model for activation of precinct street renewal."

Fitzroy Street Business Association President David Blakely: "In a very hard economic environment, Fitzroy Street is enjoying renewed investment of levels that haven't been seen in years. Through the Pride Centre, Renew Fitzroy Street, reconnection to locals, expanded outside dining and private investment, we are seeing the street transformed. With the recent completion of the Prince renovation, the upcoming Gurner and QT hotels, Grey Street office building, European Hotel, recent sale of the Saint Hotel, numerous land sales and many new smaller offerings such as Lady Peacock and Chronicles; the future is looking bright for the street. Fitzroy Street is finding its place in the hearts of both locals and the people of Melbourne again."

Please see overleaf to learn about the newcomers to 77 Fitzroy Street

77 Fitzroy Street newcomers

Farm Goat: Handcrafted cold pressed goat milk soap (relocated from another Renew shop).

<https://farmgoat.com.au/>

Greg Egan - I'm looking forward to being part of a shared space with a bigger making area and smaller retail showcase to focus more on my own product range. Now I am starting to see the business grow. It's so great to be part of Renew Fitzroy Street to bring my creative business to life.

Macuject: a new technology start-up in the medical device artificial intelligence field. Their mission is to end preventable blindness from diseases such as macular degeneration.

Stephanie Mauger - As Macuject enters a new phase of growth we're incredibly excited to be able to come together to keep pushing the boundaries of innovation. We couldn't be more excited than to be doing this in our new Renew space. <https://macuject.com>

Kirstin Burgham, a well-known local ceramist who will run workshop classes suitable for all abilities and have a small range of work available for purchase. <https://www.kristinburgham.com/about>

Kristin Burgham – I can't wait to get Room for Clay workshops up and running. Renew Fitzroy Street is giving me the opportunity to start workshops for the community and to share in the joy of making with clay. All will be welcome at 77 Fitzroy Street.

Artist Sarah Tracton will activate the hallway as a gallery with her stunning ceramic lighting.

<http://www.sarahtracton.com/>

Sarah Tracton - Showcasing my handcrafted lighting in 77 Fitzroy Street is a brilliant opportunity to share my art and add to the ambience of this vibrant neighbourhood.

A parking area at the back of 77 Fitzroy Street is planned for **pop ups and festival activations.**

Background

Under the RFS program, landlords donate vacant shops to creatives with rolling 30-day rent-free licences negotiated by Renew Australia. This gives the new businesses time to test ideas within a commercial market without committing to a lengthy commercial lease agreement.

Port Phillip Council contributed \$75,000 to the project, with matching funding provided by the Fitzroy Street Business Association.

The new creatives join eight existing Renew Fitzroy Street businesses located in another five shops.