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Search

- Home
- ENTERTAINMENT
- MOVIES
- MUSIC
- TELEVISION
- BOOKS
- ARTS**
- COMPETITIONS



Lara Merrett and her new work, Paint Me In, at the MCA

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Search [Home](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [MOVIES](#) [MUSIC](#) [TELEVISION](#) [BOOKS](#) [ARTS](#) [COMPETITIONS](#)

“DON’T touch the art” is written in galleries worldwide. But you can climb right inside Lara Merrett’s colourful paintings at the Museum of Contemporary Art, and no one will say a thing.

With the title of Paint Me In, Merrett’s new artwork will be open from Wednesday for people to sit in, lie in, curl up in and even roll around 360 degrees in.

The unusual work is the seventh annual commission by the MCA for its Jackson Bella Room, a space inside its National Centre for Creative Learning that invites people with disability or access requirements to connect with contemporary art in a sensory way.

[Lara Merrett's love of colour on display in Woolloomooloo](#)

[Cynthia Jackson looks back on 25 years of Primavera at the MCA](#)

Wednesday is Bella Room Open Day, free, from 12.30pm until 4pm. Merrett will give a one-hour lecture from 1.30pm. It’s also free, but bookings are required.

Paint Me In has none of the ultra-serious vibe that a lot of contemporary art has these days.

“I want to give participants that feeling that everything will be all right,” Merrett says.

Merrett has created three large slings a bit like hammocks.

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 Artist Lara Merrett with her installation Paint Me In, at the MCA. Picture: Danny Aarons

Colourfully painted, each one is looped over parallel rollers on the ceiling. When a person sits or lies down in one of the slings, their weight causes the sling to rotate back and forth.

“The feeling is a refuge and a sanctuary,” Merrett says.

The slings can also be pulled along ceiling tracks, “a bit like a swing”, Merrett says.

The artist splashed a vivid palette of colours across the canvases, creating a cosy feeling when you’re nestled inside one.

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Search

- Home
- ENTERTAINMENT
- MOVIES
- MUSIC
- TELEVISION
- BOOKS
- ARTS
- COMPETITIONS



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Search [Home](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [MOVIES](#) [MUSIC](#) [TELEVISION](#) [BOOKS](#) [ARTS](#) [COMPETITIONS](#)

which participants can make soft sculptures. They can also drape themselves.

The Jackson Bella Room is funded by Cynthia Jackson and her family, in memory of Mrs Jackson's daughter Belinda.

The MCA says the Bella Commission “fosters a sense of community, builds social skills, grows confidence, reduces anxiety, encourages creativity and self-expression, gives visitors a sense of achievement and enables access to free, open-ended experiences with contemporary art”.

Paint Me In will be on view at the MCA for one year.

