

RMIT UNIVERSITY First Site Gallery

Proposal Guidelines

We acknowledge the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. We respectfully acknowledge their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

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Cover: Opening celebration for *Steel Karkade* by Maree Nikimaya, First Site Gallery, April 2026. Photo by Bernie Phelan.

Dominic White, *Resonator Flower Sward* 2026, in *Teebeluck Kormtenner Timmarere* (White Devil Spirit Basket), at RMIT First Site Gallery, Melbourne, 2026. Photo by Christian Capurro.

About us

First Site Gallery was founded in 1968, shortly after the creation of the RMIT Student Union. The Gallery relocated in 1996 to the historic Storey Hall building. From its inception, First Site Gallery was conceived as an extracurricular space where students could engage with and present creative practice.

Today, First Site Gallery is one of three RMIT Galleries and serves as RMIT's student gallery, presenting work by emerging and mid-career practitioners connected to RMIT, with a program that spans the breadth of creative disciplines across the College of Design and Social Context. The Gallery provides students with a space where they can experiment, take risks and learn about presenting their work publicly, often for the first time.

Exhibitions run throughout the year via an open call for student proposals, aiming to include and represent a diverse range of mediums, practices, approaches and experience levels.

Open call

Our open call for exhibition proposals occurs in Semester 2 and is promoted through our website and social media channels. Proposals are assessed by a panel of staff and students, and successful projects are programmed for the following year.

In addition, First Site Gallery's 'On-Site' program showcases Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates' projects from across the College of Design and Social Context. This program provides an opportunity for HDR candidates to use the Gallery as a platform to translate and share their research with our communities via a program of talks, performances, workshops and events.



Installation view of *Slip* by Noah Bridger, First Site Gallery, Melbourne, 2026. Photo by Christian Capurro.

Am I eligible?

To exhibit work in First Site Gallery's 2027 program you must be a currently enrolled RMIT student from a School in the College of Design and Social Context.

Please note that we accept proposals from all disciplines and year levels.

2026 graduates are eligible to apply. Former students who have graduated in previous years are not eligible to apply.

What kind of projects can I present?

We encourage applicants to propose engaging projects from all creative disciplines. This includes but isn't limited to art, design, media and communication, fashion and textiles, animation, architecture, craft, experimental pedagogy, sound and technology. Projects can include works previously developed in RMIT coursework programs, but the proposed presentation of works must not impact academic assessment.

Group exhibitions of coursework program cohorts will not be considered, but curated, collective or collaborative exhibitions will be.

Below: Pratyay Raha, *Intertidal Echoes* 2026, in *Future Sonic Ecologies: Re-making mangrove worlds through posthuman soundscape(s)*, First Site Gallery, Melbourne, 2026. Photo by Christian Capurro.



Ko Jou Chen, *Portable Altar* 2025 in *Portable Stillness*, First Site Gallery, Melbourne, 2026. Photo by Claire Armstrong.



Installation view of *Inheritance* by Mita Chowdhury, First Site Gallery, Melbourne, 2026. Photo by Christian Capurro.

The opportunity

Exhibition periods

First Site Gallery's program runs throughout the year, generally from February until late October.

In your proposal, please advise of periods across the year that you are not available or periods the exhibition cannot take place.

Exhibitor fee

It is free to exhibit at First Site Gallery. Further, exhibitors receive a fee for their participation in the program. This fee is determined by the number of exhibitors involved in the project.

Expert advice and support

Exhibiting at First Site Gallery gives you access to expert arts administration and creative production staff members at RMIT. We are here to assist you with the development and delivery of your exhibition.

Invigilation

All exhibitors are required to invigilate the gallery during the exhibition. Exhibitors who are presenting works in one room are required to sit Front of House one day per week for the duration of the show. Exhibitors who are presenting works in multiple rooms must sit Front of House one day per week for each room they are presenting works in.

Opening

Each First Site Gallery exhibition will be supported with an opening celebration, often scheduled on the first Wednesday of the exhibition period.

Exhibition documentation

A professional photographer will be organised to photograph your exhibition. You can use these images in your portfolio (you must include the photographer's credit). RMIT Galleries will use this documentation to promote the exhibition and First Site Gallery.

Survey

After your project is completed, we ask that you fill out our short survey about your experience exhibiting at First Site Gallery.

Installing and de-installing

What we provide

We will provide you with support and advice over the installation and de-installation of your exhibition. This includes:

Project production advice and support for the installation, de-installation and lighting of your exhibition. Please note that lighting requirements and assets requests will be accommodated to the best of our ability, but possibilities may be limited.

We have some equipment and materials that First Site Gallery exhibitors can use for their exhibitions. Please note these assets are shared across our galleries and include screens, media players, data projectors, speakers and some standard installation tools. If you require use of any of RMIT Galleries' equipment for your exhibition, please advise in your proposal.

Please note that costs related to specialist equipment, complex exhibition builds, paint treatments and the like are the responsibility of exhibitors. Please discuss these requirements with gallery staff, as we can assist and advise regarding these.

Exhibitors are required to:

- Provide accurate details of their proposed project.
- Collaborate with us on their project planning and inform us of any changes to the proposed project.
- Invigilate First Site Gallery for the duration of their exhibition.
- Install and de-install their works under the supervision of Galleries staff, unless otherwise agreed.
- Follow all OHS, safety and accessibility protocols, ensuring that RMIT Galleries remain a safe and welcoming environment for all.
- Return the gallery space to its original condition and configuration. This may include: re-painting the gallery, cleaning the gallery and removing all installed works, furniture and infrastructure.



Opening celebration for *Boiling Matters* by Elisa Zorraquin, First Site Gallery, May 2026. Photo by Claire Armstrong.

The space

First Site Gallery includes three project rooms and a black-box room for single-channel audio/visual works:

Room 1
12.2m x 5m

Room 2
14.2m x 2.8m

Room 3
6.5m x 2.5m

Black-box Room
2.7m x 2.1m with a wall-mounted 55-inch screen (NEC X551), stereo sound (two mounted Genelec 8030b speakers) and a bench seat.

Please note that there are two proposal forms, one for exhibitions in rooms 1, 2 or 3; and a separate form for works proposed for the black-box room. If your proposal has been developed for a specific room, please note this in your proposal.

Considerations

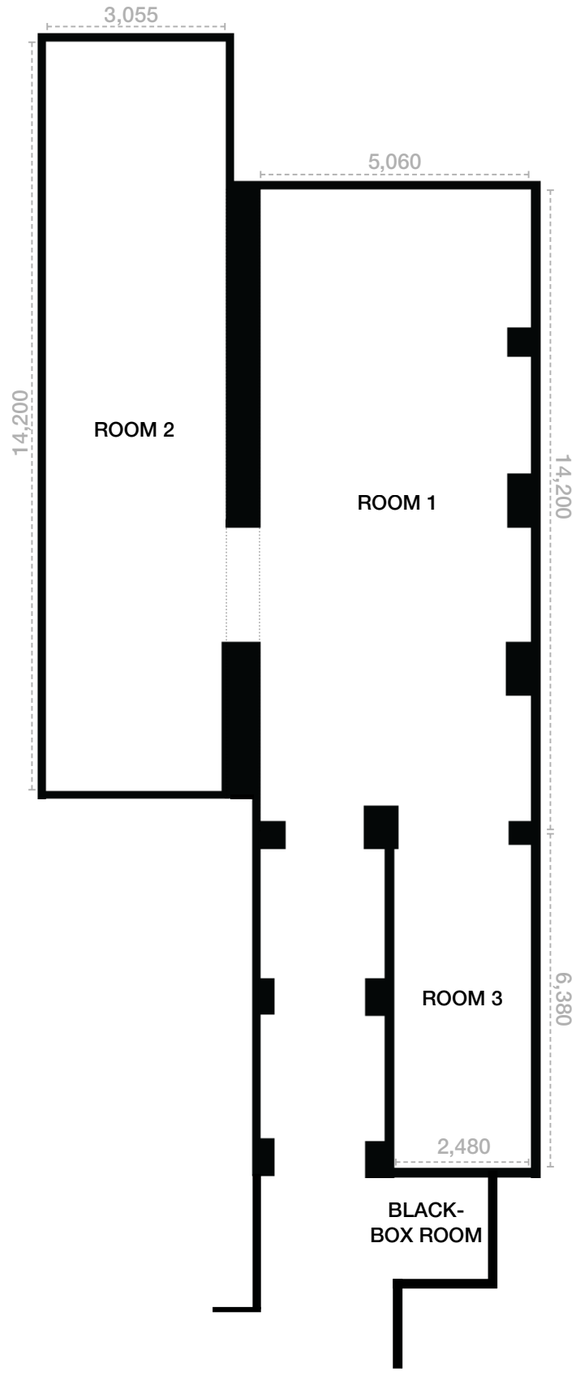
Gallery walls
Most of the walls in First Site Gallery are constructed from 18mm MDF, and fixings such as screws, nails and pins can be used.

Ceiling hangs
There are strict limitations in terms of hanging objects from the ceiling. Outline your ideas clearly in your proposal noting the dimensions and weight of the object you are proposing to suspend.

Below: Opening celebration, First Site Gallery, April 2026. Image by Bernie Phelan.



Floor plan



Selection criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

Quality
Projects should be engaging, of a high standard, critical and contribute to contemporary cultural and social discourse.

Relevance
Projects should consider their relevance and specific contribution to RMIT, the RMIT Galleries program, First Site Gallery and the local community.

Feasibility
Applicants should have the capacity to deliver high-quality projects within the specified time frames.

Proposal forms, guidelines and selection process

The proposal deadline for the 2027 First Site Gallery program is Sunday 1 November 2026, 11:59PM.

To submit a proposal, please complete the exhibition or black-box proposal form and email it to galleries@rmit.edu.au by the proposal deadline.

Proposals will be assessed in November and applicants will be advised regarding the outcome of the assessment in December. Please read the First Site Gallery proposal guidelines carefully. If you have questions about the process or want to discuss your project, please contact us at galleries@rmit.edu.au.

Incomplete proposals will not be assessed.



Axel Garay, *The Switch* 2026, in *Intercessions: On-Site with Axel Garay*, First Site Gallery, Melbourne, 2026. Photo by Christian Capurro.

FAQs

1. Can I submit multiple proposals for different bodies of work?

Yes, but only one proposal for a solo show. You can be involved in multiple proposals for group exhibitions.

2. How many rooms can I apply to use?

You can apply to use a maximum of two rooms in First Site Gallery.

3. Can I submit images of previous work as the project support material but make new and different work for the exhibition?

No, you must submit the artwork that you intend to exhibit in First Site Gallery.

4. Can I apply to have an exhibition if I have exhibited at First Site Gallery in the last few years?

If you had a solo exhibition this year (e.g. 2026), you cannot apply for a solo exhibition next year (e.g. 2027). However, you can propose to be included in a group exhibition. If you were in a group exhibition this year (e.g. 2026), you can apply for a solo or group exhibition for next year (e.g. 2027).

5. Can I apply to exhibit the same artwork I applied with last year if my previous application was unsuccessful?

Yes, you can apply again with the same work. However, you may want to consider submitting something different if you were unsuccessful previously.

6. If I am going to be studying at RMIT in 2027 (but I am not currently enrolled at RMIT), can I apply to exhibit at First Site Gallery in 2027?

No, you must be currently enrolled at RMIT University in one of the nine schools within the College of Design and Social Context to apply to exhibit at First Site Gallery next year.

7. Can I exhibit my RMIT coursework?

Projects can include works previously developed in RMIT coursework programs, but the proposed presentation of works must not impact academic assessment.

8. If I am not studying art, can I still apply to exhibit at First Site Gallery?

Yes, applications are open to students from across the College of Design and Social Context. If you are studying within the College, you can apply to exhibit at First Site Gallery.

College of Design and Social Context:
School of Architecture and Urban Design
School of Art
School of Design
School of Education
School of Global, Urban and Social Studies
School of Media and Communication
School of Property, Construction and Project Management
School of Fashion and Textiles
School of Communication & Design



Aisha Ljubovic, *Bloom Within*, 2025, in *Sensory Clay*, 2025. RMIT First Site Gallery, Melbourne, 2025. Photo by Christian Capurro.

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