



# Media release

**The Hon Heidi Victoria MP**  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Women's Affairs  
Minister for Consumer Affairs

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## Haring mural project brings new colour to Collingwood

Collingwood's iconic Keith Haring mural is starting to show its true colours as part of Arts Victoria's project to restore the artwork and bring back its vibrancy and vitality.

Visiting the mural site today, Minister for the Arts Heidi Victoria said the conservation project, led by renowned Italian conservator Antonio Rava, marked the start of a new chapter for the Heritage-listed, internationally recognised and much loved public artwork.

"The late, great Keith Haring gave a wonderful gift to the people of Victoria when he painted his mural at what was then the Collingwood Technical School in 1984," Ms Victoria said.

"He was a highly influential artist who brought street art to the attention of the art world and the broader public. He gained worldwide acclaim in the 1980s for his art and for using his talent to promote important social issues."

Ms Victoria said the Collingwood mural is one of only 31 known murals by Haring that are still in existence worldwide.

Arts Victoria's conservation project aims to protect, restore and preserve the mural, which was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 2004, to ensure that it can be enjoyed by future generations. Arts Victoria took over responsibility of the site in 2010 when it was earmarked for the development of Circus Oz's new headquarters, which is now underway.

"The results so far have been quite remarkable, bringing back the colours and original line work. Passers-by can now see the work as Keith Haring intended," Ms Victoria said.

Ms Victoria said Antonio Rava, who is a specialist contemporary art conservator, was appointed to lead the project following an international call for submissions.

Mr Rava, the Vice President of the Italian Institute of Conservation, is recognised as a leading figure in the conservation of contemporary and modern artwork and has also undertaken conservation on works by masters including the late 13<sup>th</sup> century painter Giotto.

With previous experience working on another Haring mural, the large-scale *Tuttomondo* mural in Pisa Italy, Antonio's appointment was praised by Julia Gruen, Executive Director of the USA-based Keith Haring Foundation, who described Mr Rava's past work as 'extraordinary'.

"Mr Rava is not only abundantly qualified and highly skilled but also sensitive to Haring's own approach to his public works. The Haring Foundation fully supports Mr Rava's appointment to head this project," Ms Gruen said.

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Mr Rava and his team, which includes his conservator son Filippo, travelled to Melbourne in the first half of 2013 to undertake investigative works on the mural and make a submission to Heritage Victoria on his approach to conservation.

Once Heritage approval was granted, works began to extensively clean the mural, selectively retouch the paintwork, restore the render that had been lost over the last three decades and apply a specialised treatment over the surface of the work to prevent future deterioration.

Mr Rava said it was an honour to be involved in the project which will bring new life to an important cultural asset for Victoria.

“This extraordinary work was made with the purpose of being seen. I am proud to lead the project which will help to fulfill that aim, bringing back the mural’s vibrancy and ensuring that it will be seen and enjoyed by locals and visitors well into the future,” Mr Rava said.

Further works will be undertaken in the coming months and are expected to be completed in late 2013. This will include the reinstallation of the original signature door which was recovered by Arts Victoria in February after being missing for almost 30 years. March 2014 will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mural’s creation.

For more information about the project go to [www.arts.vic.gov.au/haringmural](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/haringmural)

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