

COVER ART COMMISSION**HERO Image & 2025's Midsumma Festival Visual/Graphic Identity Design Brief**

Prepared May 2024**Please respond to this brief by 5pm Friday 28 June 2024**

Midsumma Festival invites artists, graphic creatives, illustrators, and designers to enter a design that could become the primary visual and graphic identity of Midsumma Festival 2025. Entrants are invited to create the Poster and Program Guide front cover that captures the spirit of Midsumma Festival 2025 and expresses what the festival means to them.

Enquiries

Please direct enquiries to [Midsumma Festival](#) via email at marketing@midsumma.org.au

Proposal Submissions

Submit via email to marketing@midsumma.org.au before 5pm Friday 28 June 2024

The subject line is to read 'HERO Image 2025 Cover Art Proposal' followed by your full name.

Budget

A commission fee of \$3,000 (including production costs and artist's fee) is available for the successful proposal submission. Midsumma Festival's final approval to use any image, commissioned or otherwise, as the HERO image for the Midsumma Festival each year remains at its discretion.

About Midsumma Festival

Midsumma Festival is Australia's premier queer arts and cultural festival held annually in Naarm/Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, for and by communities with shared experiences around diverse gender and sexuality (DGS or LGBTQIA+). We are a champion of queer arts and culture, conversations, and events. Although the primary festival is held from January to February each year, Midsumma works year-round to provide artists, social changers, and culture-makers with support and tools to create, present, and promote their work.



With an average of 200+ events each year, Midsumma Festival comprises events produced by and for the broad and diverse range of communities that also make up our audiences. Each year, artists, producers, and culture-makers register their events for inclusion in Midsumma Festival's program guide, website, promotions, and artists' support services. Events focus on arts experiences such as theatre, music, comedy, dance, visual arts, digital arts, films, and forums—alongside additional cultural experiences, sporting, family, and social events.

Midsumma also produces its own events in a curated program called 'Midsumma Presents' which includes performances, visual arts, and a talks program. The focus is on ensuring that diverse creative voices across our communities are central to the program.

In 2025, Midsumma Festival will run from Sunday 19 January to Sunday 9 February. The Festival also includes three significant signature events:

- **Midsumma Carnival** Sunday 19 January 2025
- **Midsumma Pride March** Sunday 2 February 2025
- **Victoria's Pride Street Party** Date TBA by Victorian Government

1. The Objective

Create a HERO image and an original visual/graphic identity that embodies Midsumma Festival 2025's theme, which will revolve around the idea of "COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES" (theme's title still TBC and confidential at this stage. See section 2. *The Focus*, p.4), delving into the paradox of contemporary connectedness in a digital and emotionally charged world.

For 2025, Midsumma Festival aims to transition the focus from individual identities to the power of queer community connections, intergenerational and intersectional unity, cultivating spaces for deep listening, respect, and solidarity within, for and through the arts and culture. This theme idea is an invitation to weave the rich tapestry of our community — inclusive of all ages, generations, identities, and experiences — and to establish spaces where these diverse voices can participate in meaningful, non-judgmental dialogue. Midsumma Festival 2025 will expand inclusivity, add more seats to the table, open the room for additional voices, and cultivate a festival environment where differences are recognised and celebrated while ensuring LGBTQIA+ are strong at their core in recent times of new struggles and challenges.

Midsumma Festival 2025's visual identity should capture this dynamic complexity, narrating the story of communities striving for inclusivity through empathy, resilience, and a collective commitment to support each other's unique paths while standing firmly together. This identity will serve as a beacon for those who feel marginalised even within their own communities, signalling that Midsumma Festival is a place where all are welcome and can find safety and solidarity.



Selected Design

The final design chosen will receive \$3,000 to create the artwork in the final deliverable dimensions (see section 6. *The Agreement*, p.8).

Proposed designs should consider the need to represent an entire arts festival program and be broad enough to capture the essence of Midsumma's focus across all art forms, inclusive of diverse communities, and age groups.

Selected artwork must be suitable for Midsumma to use across various mediums and formats as the campaign motif for the 2025 festival marketing and communications campaign. It could be used in the following ways, or for the following purposes:

- **Midsumma Festival 2025 Cover/Poster Art**
- **Midsumma Festival printed Program Guide front cover and general graphic line**
- **Printed and online collateral** (including launch collateral, staff t-shirts, billboards, banners, tickets, digital screens, and email communication)
- **Social media assets and curated content**
- **By partners and sponsors promoting Midsumma Festival**
- **Opportunity for merchandise artwork** (artist to receive a percentage of sales)



2. The Focus

Midsumma Festival intrinsically creates safe and inclusive places for communities, with diversity at its core. The campaign artwork for Midsumma Festival 2025 should be able to appeal to or be appreciated by all our diverse audiences and highlight these critical themes:

- **“Collective Identities”**

Midsumma Festival 2025’s theme will confront the prevailing focus on identity politics by promoting unity amidst digital overload and emotional disconnection challenges. It calls for participation in intergenerational art spaces that weave collective stories, fostering understanding and solidarity.

N.B. This working theme title is still TBC and strictly confidential at this stage.

- **Arts & Culture**

Over the past few years, Midsumma has repositioned itself as a globally relevant cultural influencer with artistic and thought leadership, learning, and diversity at its heart. We have experienced rapid growth in audience numbers, breadth and scope of artists, community engagement, and the depth of artistic partnerships and new work.

- **Diversity & LGBTQIA+ Representation**

Midsumma attracts broad attendance across age ranges and demographics, representing inclusion and diversity in all its forms. For this reason, we are ideally placed to make the many diverse queer communities in Victoria more visible.

- **First Nations Engagement**

For the 2025 Festival, Midsumma will continue strong and meaningful engagement with LGBTQIA+ Aboriginal communities. Over the past three years, First Nations artists and events have significantly increased in the ‘Open Access’ and ‘Midsumma Presents’ programs of the Festival.



3. Visual/Graphic/Artistic Guidelines

The campaign imagery for Midsumma Festival 2025 will be based on your artwork for the Cover/Poster. The Festival is held in summer, and when we pop into the minds of our artists, culture makers, and audiences, we conjure bright imagery. Midsumma needs a Poster/Guide cover that reflects our contemporary nature, vibrant imagery and tone without always needing to use confirmative rainbow colours.

The Festival includes multiple events, such as the signature Carnival, Pride March, Victoria's Pride key events, the 'Midsumma Presents' program, which features events produced explicitly for the festival, and the 'Open Access' program. Certain events, like Victoria's Pride, have unique graphic identities that coexist independently yet harmoniously with the festival's overall identity.

Therefore, the campaign imagery for Midsumma Festival 2025 must accommodate the variety of these events and their individual identities while ensuring a cohesive visual theme throughout the event.

Make sure also to keep the following in mind:

- **Style & Tone**

The design should be vibrant and impactful, mirroring the diversity and vitality of the LGBTQIA+ communities. It should also convey unity and connectivity through interconnected designs or imagery symbolising networks and support systems.

- **Colour Palette**

The Midsumma brand colour is red: RGB 249,52, 72, Pantone 1787C, CMYK 0,87, 61, but it's not essential to use this colour. Use a bold and inclusive spectrum representing the diversity within the LGBTQIA+ community, with colours denoting togetherness and harmony.

- **Imagery**

Employ imagery that celebrates contemporary and multidisciplinary art forms and showcases diverse identities and intersectionality within the LGBTQIA+ community. Consider juxtaposing symbols of digital connectivity with traditional forms of community gatherings.

N.B. We are open to minimalist, graphic yet impactful and compelling designs that reflect the spirit of the times while offering a striking contrast to today's vibrant, over-image/colour-saturated visual and digital landscapes. Embrace the philosophy that sometimes less is more—stand out by going against the tide with bold simplicity, contemporary graphics and sharp elegance!



Further thoughts echoing the 2025 “COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES” project theme

In a world awash with imagery, where the vibrancy of life often saturates perception itself, Midsumma Festival invites you to envision a visual identity that both honours and reinvents, exploring a fusion of contemporary and timeless aesthetics that transcends generations and connects community together. It’s a call to blend the sometimes-saturated LGBTGIA+ aesthetic with a visual rebalancing that makes each image linger, ensuring a retinal persistence of the festival’s identity throughout the duration of the event in an environment overloaded with visuals.

It is not just about creating something visually striking but also about ensuring it is accessible. It steers away from the visually noisy towards a more refined aesthetic. Every asset becomes a canvas and a frame, crafting an impression where art mirrors humanity in its most polyphonic expressions.

Artists and designers are encouraged to weave these elements into a cohesive visual language that speaks of unity and diversity, challenging perceptions and bringing people together through the power of visual storytelling. Emphasise modern design principles while showcasing the “construction” of a new collective identity, culture, and community. This should reflect or combine elements to form a cohesive whole.

Some first ideas – not mandatory for your proposal:

Low Tech/High Impact

A low-tech aesthetic with analogue and digital elements, symbolising the generational shifts within the LGBTQIA+ community. This “analogue/digital generational game” could creatively use old and new tech to convey timeless themes through a modern lens.

Polyphony/Memorability

Visualise the theme of many voices coming together, creating a rich tapestry of sound and colour representing the diverse chorus of the LGBTQIA+ art community.

Visual Rebalancing

While embracing a rich, vibrant palette, ensure the design maintains clarity and readability. The aesthetic should be lively and engaging without becoming overwhelming, maintaining a balance that ensures long-lasting visual impact.

A Canvas and a Frame

Treat the festival as both a platform and a canvas—a space for artistic expression framed within the broader cultural context. The design should invite viewers into a frame of history, identity, and new possibilities.



Previous Midsumma Festival Guide Covers and Posters

Since being launched in 1988 in Melbourne by the Gay Business Association, Midsumma has grown to become Australia's premier LGBTQIA+ arts and culture festival. Each year, a different artist is commissioned to design the front cover of the printed official Midsumma Festival guide. The HERO image is, therefore, the very first creative work featured in the festival, it's an art piece in itself that will go down queer history!

View the front covers of the printed Midsumma guides, year-by-year:





4. Submission Requirements

- **Concept Sketches/Renderings/Photos**

Initial ideas and assets that outline the proposed design and thought process. Examples of proposed work/artistic direction that speak to the brief and vision of Midsumma Festival 2025 (this can include work already created).

- **Written Proposals**

A brief explanation of the interest in producing the artwork for the 2025 festival campaign within the proposed budget and a concise explanation of the concept, elaborating how it addresses the festival theme and objectives.

- **Previous Work Samples**

Provide examples of past work demonstrating capability in handling identity, diversity, and community themes.

5. Selection Criteria

- **Relevance to Theme Idea**

The extent to which the design encapsulates the 2025 festival theme idea and engages with collective identities while embracing/celebrating individual identities.

- **Originality & Creativity**

Innovation in design and a novel interpretation of the theme.

- **Emotional Impact**

The design's capacity to evoke a sense of community, belonging, and understanding.



6. The Agreement

Crediting

Midsumma Festival will credit your image, design, photo, montage, collage, artwork, model or illustration where credits are appropriate. Midsumma will request your name, social media handles and website, plus art title for crediting.

Media & File Format Deliverables

Artwork may be created in any media, including but not limited to painting, printmaking, sculpture, textiles, photography and drawing. Final artwork will need to be presented to Midsumma as an image of the artwork or final art submitted as **.ai**, **.pdf** or **.psd** file formats only. Moving imagery or video can also be used but cannot be the primary image for the printed cover or poster. Midsumma Festival requests your artwork be adaptable to portrait and landscape dimensions with your consent. The final design should be delivered in the following dimensions (but not limited to):

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Festival Programme Guide Cover | 210 mm x 227 mm |
| • Festival AO Poster | 1189 mm x 841 mm |
| • Website & Social Media Imagery | 4:3, 3:4, 16:9 and 1:1 ratio |
| • Out-of-home advertising | Large file formats |

7. The Timeline

The Midsumma Festival 2025 program will launch in November 2025. The following milestones must be achieved to ensure the guide and assets can be printed/prepared before the launch.

Round 1

- Respond to this brief **by 5pm Fri 28 June 2024** as part of Round 1
- Midsumma to confirm your submission has moved on to Round 2 **by Fri 12 July 2024**
- Respond to the offer from Midsumma **by Wed 17 July 2024**

Round 2

- Progressed Poster Art designs, based on feedback, **due Fri 26 July 2024**
- Midsumma to confirm your image is successful **by Wed 31 July 2024**
- Midsumma to confirm that you are the finalist **by Fri 2 August 2024**
- Finalist to prepare final artwork, based on feedback **by 19 August 2024**

N.B. These dates are negotiable pending an initial discussion.



8. The Commission Budget

Round 1

- \$500 will be offered to successful Round 1 ideas moving to Round 2 (final round).
- Payment will assist with the progress of the artwork to be assessed for the final round.

Round 2

- A commission fee of \$3,000 is available to the successful finalist of Round 2.
 - This payment will cover the production of the artwork and required deliverables (including production costs and the artist's fee). The commission payment will consist of 25% upfront, 25% at the centre milestone, and 50% final payment upon completion.
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9. Responding to this brief

Enquiries

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The subject line is to read 'HERO Image 2025 Cover Art Proposal' followed by your full name.

For further information please contact

Timothée Nicot (he/him) | Marketing & Communications Manager
timothee@midsumma.org.au

Thank you & Good Luck!