

Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize announces finalists for 2022

- 49 international and Australian artists announced as finalists for celebrated Prize presented at the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf –



Sydney, Australia: The **Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize**, presented by **Woollahra Council**, today announced **49** emerging and established artists as finalists for the **21st annual Prize**. The 2022 finalist works, by artists hailing from every Australian state and territory as well as international finalists from Auckland, New Zealand, will be presented in an exhibition at **Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf**, opening on **12 October**. The Prize is proud to work in collaboration with Principal Sponsor, **Mark Moran Vaucluse** and Gold Sponsors, **Tanya Excell** and **D'Leanne Lewis** of **Laing and Simmons Double Bay**.

Established in 2001, the **Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize** is **Australia's pre-eminent award for small sculpture** and is the **first national acquisitive prize for an original sculpture of up to 80cm in any dimension**. The Prize categories are the main Acquisitive award of **\$25,000**; a Special Commendation award of **\$2,000**; the Viewers' Choice award of **\$1,000**; and the Mayor's Award of **\$1,000**. The winning sculpture will be acquired for the Council's permanent public collection and announced to coincide with the opening of the exhibition.

The finalist sculptures were chosen through a blind selection process from **684** entries by a judging panel comprised of Sydney-based artist **Joan Ross**, Gallery Director and Curator **Jose Da Silva** and editor of contemporary visual art publication Artist Profile, **Kon Gouriotis**.

Finalists include **Ara Dolatian, Amala Groom, Franky Howell, Antoinette O'Brien, Leonie Rhodes, Lynda Draper, Mai Nguyen-Long, Michael Cusack, Pippin Drysdale** and **Vipoo Srivilasa**, with works exploring an eclectic mix of themes including loss of identity, decolonisation, the reimagining of ancient stories and artefacts and gender identity:

- **Ara Dolatian's** series of earthenware vessels, *Unearthed*, are inspired by the ancient collection in the Iraq Museum, including precious relics from Mesopotamian, Babylonian and Persian Civilisations, that he first encountered during his early childhood, before the museum was looted following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. His work is a tangible memory of those missing objects, architectural forms and vessels, where the artist's intentions are not to replicate the looted pieces but draw from them mnemonically.
- **Amala Groom's** submission, *aeternum imperium*, is a conceptual intervention into Chambord's use of Catholic iconography, which formerly represented the bestowing of Colonial power to reign supreme over First Peoples by 'divine right'. Repurposing a vintage Chambord bottle by replacing the original text 'Royal Deluxe Chambord Liquor' with 'Eternal Reign', Groom's sculpture questions the legal authority of the Colonial Project.
- **Antoinnette O'Brien** celebrates the extraordinary endurance of contemporary and everyday people and their ability to thrive, through her submission titled, *Louie*. Recovered from the rubble of the Lismore floods, *Louie* celebrates the journey of gender transition in a young person and is intended to recognise pleasure, expression and sensuality in a playful, uninhibited way.
- **Franky Howell's** submission, *Struttin My Stuff in a Disco Thang*, forms the latest in a series of work where we see a re-presentation and a re-thinking of originally made forms. With a heightened level of interplay between real and illusory structures and the flat painted surface, Howell subverts the expectations of the viewer: What was flat becomes form, what was form becomes flat.
- **Leonie Rhodes** presents her feline alter-ego in 'BBBS', a dichotomous misfit 'other' which emerged in adolescence as a protective mechanism and developed into a DJ-persona. The sculpture is a phygital-meta-portrait of this subversive sonic-self which celebrates the autonomy, equity and transfiguration possible in a progressive socio-virtual reality.
- **Lynda Draper's** ceramic works, *Crown*, explore the intersection between dreams and reality, examining the relationship between the mind and material world and the related phenomenon of the metaphysical in an attempt to bridge the gap between the material and metaphysical worlds.
- **Mai Nguyen-Long's** clay sculpture *Vigil Moc Mac*, along with her other sculptures, is an iteration of Vigil, an acronym for Vomit Girl: Goddess of Infected Tongues for all those who have lost their mother tongue. Through *Vigil Moc Mac*, Nguyen-Long focuses on playfulness and subverting hierarchies, celebrating marginality and the flow of humanity.
- **Michael Cusack** works with shapes in sculptures, found objects and paintings focusing on the ability of a found object to depart from its original meaning or form. His submission, *Echo's Bones* is a found object remade to its original size and shape, creating an ambiguity between the original object and its new form.
- **Pippin Drysdale's** ceramic *Knox Gorge Meridian Group* is inspired by Aboriginal connections to land and the importance of preserving the ancient cultural traditions of the people that have cared for them for so long. *Knox Gorge Meridian Group* interprets the topography and colours of the banded iron formations of Karijini that date back to the archaic epoch of our planet.

- **Vipoo Srivilasa's** porcelain figure, *When I Discover Who I Am, I'll Be Free* serves as a metaphor for the delicate connections that are at play when two cultures unite as one. Combining a mass produced porcelain sculpture of a traditionally dressed Chinese woman with handmade porcelain flowers crafted in Australia, Srivilasa presents a message of cultural tolerance and understanding in contemporary Australian society.

Woollahra Mayor, Councillor Susan Wynne said: *"We are so excited to be presenting such a diverse collection of works from this year's finalists. The annual Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize exhibition gives us the opportunity to showcase the amazing work and talent of emerging and established artists in one of Sydney's most beautiful galleries. We can't wait to welcome you."*

Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf Director, Sebastian Goldspink said: *"The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize continues to go from strength to strength. This year we received an overwhelming amount of entries that really showcased the breadth and depth of three dimensional practice in Australia and beyond. There is a vibrancy to this year's works and numerous references to classical sculpture coupled with dynamic explorations of new or unconventional materials. It was great to see every state and territory feature in the finalists alongside international representatives. It is also great to see humour evident in many of the works given the times that we have all just endured. We look forward to welcoming visitors to this much loved exhibition."*

Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize 2022 judge, Joan Ross, said: *"I'm always amazed at the amount of entries to an art prize, being a judge is never easy. I'm not even sure that you should choose because really there are so many that could win, but I really enjoyed going through the 684 entries. I never cease to be amazed seeing so much variety and creativity in the works."*

Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf opened its doors for the first time in **2021**, hosting the Small Sculpture Prize as its first exhibition. The **historic 122-year-old St Brigid's building**, owned by Woollahra Council, was restored and reinvented into a new Gallery space by **Tanner Kibble Denton Architects** to create four high calibre exhibition spaces, while keeping original details including crown moulding, arched windows and wooden flooring. Overlooking Sydney Harbour in Double Bay and spanning two levels, the Gallery is a community hub at the heart of a new cultural precinct, including the 1863 Council Chambers, the picturesque Blackburn Gardens, Murray Rose Pool and Redleaf Beach. Led by Gallery Director **Sebastian Goldspink**, **Woollahra Gallery** has attracted visitors from across the world with a year-round program of contemporary art, recently winning the **Leo Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Award** as part of the **NSW Local Government Week 2022 Awards**.

The 2022 Woollahra Sculpture Prize finalist artists are:

Agus Wijaya, Allan Giddy, Amala Groom, Amelia Lynch, Anastasia Parmson, Antoinette O'Brien, Ara Dolatian, Bianca Hester, Bruce Reynolds, Claudia Terstappen, Edward Waring, Franky Howell, Gaspare Moscone, Gina Ferguson, Guy Fredricks, Jake Preval, Jess Dare, Jessica Murtagh, Kat Shapiro Wood, Kelly Austin, Kenzee Patterson, Kirsteen Pieterse, Lee Harrop, Leonie Rhodes, Lewis Doherty, Louis Grant, Lynda Draper, Mai Nguyen-Long, Mariana Del Castillo, Mark Booth, Michael Cusack, Nabilah Nordin, Nasim Nasr, Nicholas Burrridge, Nuha Saad, Peter Burgess, Peter Tilley, Pippin Drysdale, Rebecca Selleck, Ruby Benhar Pattarkadavu, Samantha Hanicar, Sherna Teperson, Shireen Taweel, Simon Fieldhouse, Stephen Ralph, Stephen Benwell, Suzanne Archer, Vipoo Srivilasa and Yanyangkari Butler.

Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize 2022 judge, Jose Da Silva, said: *"The sheer volume of application is a testament to the significance of this prize and the calibre of artists working throughout Australia. It was a daunting task deciding on a shortlist and will be an even greater challenge choosing the winner."*

Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize 2022 judge, Kon Gouriotis, said: *"Selecting finalists for the WSSP was tougher than I thought. I would have been happy with an additional forty finalists, because the entries were a strong representation*

of the key processes of sculpture.”

Previous winners of the prestigious Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize include **Rhonda Sharpe** (*Desert Woman with Mustache, Coolamon and Pretty Clothes*), **Merran Esson** (*Autumn On The Monaro*), **Todd Robinson** (*Psychic Staircase*) and **Sanné Mestrom** (*Self Portrait, Sleeping Muse*), working across a diverse range of media, from bronze and ceramics to wool and cotton.

Further details on the 2022 Prize winners will be shared in the coming weeks. For more information, see: <https://sculptureprize.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/about>

-Ends -

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IMAGES : <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uvxyvr05ji5z23c/AABkld44qwcDj7Zpxt0XQmVua?dl=0>

IMAGE CAPTION (L to R): Amala Groom, *Aeternum imperium*; Ara Dolatian, *Unearthed*; Franky Howell, *Struttin My Stuff in a Disco Thang*.

ABOUT WOOLLAHRA SMALL SCULPTURE PRIZE

Established in 2001, the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize is Australia’s pre-eminent award for small sculpture presented by Woollahra Council. The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize attracts strong support from artists, collectors and critics and is the first national acquisitive prize for an original sculpture of up to 80cm in any dimension.

Each year the winning work is acquired by Council and forms part of the permanent public collection which is on permanent display for the community to enjoy for free. Visitors can discover some of the world’s most exciting contemporary sculptures and be introduced to the most innovative artists working in the medium.

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