



Grace Cossington Smith art award 2015

National art award supporting
contemporary Australian artists

Media Release, 7 November 2015



Grace Cossington Smith art award announces 2015 winner

Wahroonga, Sydney:

Today the judges, Geoffrey Legge and Damien Minton from Watters Gallery in Sydney, announced that Jake Blaschka's artworks *Obelus 3* and *rebajas* were awarded the \$15,000 prize for the second Grace Cossington Smith art award.

Abbotsleigh is proud to sponsor this annual exhibition. The acquisitive art award contributes to the development of an art collection that will provide an outstanding cultural attraction and learning resource for Abbotsleigh, the gallery and the North Shore community.

Artists are invited to submit original, two dimensional artworks reflecting the theme of *Making Connections*. This theme is inspired by the works of Abbotsleigh alumna Grace Cossington Smith, a pioneer of modernist painting in Australia, who created brilliantly coloured observations of the world around her.

Anneke Jaspers, Assistant Curator Contemporary Art, Art Gallery NSW and Dr Stephen Little, Head of Painting, National Art School, were the 2015 selectors and they chose the 15 finalists from 300 entrants. Each finalist will receive \$1,000. The other finalists are Marinka Bozzec, Penelope Cain, Tamara Dean, Chris Dolman, Sara Freeman, Adrienne Gaha, Erika Gofton, Ryan Hoffmann, Pollyxenia Joannou, Tom Loveday, Janet Parker-Smith, Senye Shen, Mark Titmarsh and Sean Wadey

Congratulations to all 15 finalists as well as the many artists who submitted their work for consideration for the exhibition.

Statement from the GCS art award judges Geoffrey Legge and Damien Minton

We were very impressed by 'rebajas' as a most accomplished collage which was purposely made to seem unplanned and haphazard, because information which people are subjected to in their day-to-day life is mostly unsought and haphazard.

This unsought information has been torn up by Blaschka, made indecipherable, and arranged in this seemingly casual but visually fascinating arrangement, then photographed to become the large back-lit image which incorporates shadows, suggesting it is being lit from the front.

The torn edges of the material used inform us that we are viewing torn-up bits and pieces of the unsought information that besiege us, yet, at the same time, these torn edges are the very skillfully used aspect of the work.

'Obelus 3' can be thought of as an after image of the collage. The gentle light that surrounds it is like the idea of truth eclipsed and made obscure by falsehood.

Jake Blaschka is an honours student majoring in Drawing at Sydney's National Art School. His work explores connections between art and advertising and questions the role advertising plays within our contemporary society. His submission comprises two works: *ooOiuOu9uuu* is a cropped image of large scale collages placed in a steel frame resembling back-lit bus stop advertisements, while *Obelus 3* is a dense black surface with remnant traces of characters suggesting it could have once supported an advertisement.

The exhibition of the finalists' work will be on display until 5 December at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery. Entry is free and the gallery is open from Monday to Friday, 10 am–5 pm.

Available for interview:

Mary Faith, Director of the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, 9473 7878

Artworks: *rebajas* مصغ, مسغانم (Drawing as object 3), 2015, Untreated steel, duratrans print, acrylic, fluorescent lights, timber.

Obelus 3, 2015, Aluminium composite panel, timber, fluorescent light, acrylic paint, 150 cm x 100 cm

