



# Grace Cossington Smith art award 2024

National art award supporting  
contemporary Australian artists



Exhibition of finalists 27 January to 24 February 2024

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery and Abbotsleigh pay respect to the Darug people who are the traditional custodians of the land and whose deep connection to culture and customs have cared for this country.

We acknowledge elders past and present for their spiritual connection to place.

We recognise this land as a meeting place for Darug people and respectfully continue this tradition through the bringing together of our communities through art, culture and learning practices.

Cover artwork by Lisa Jones

Gallery photograph copyright Richard Glover

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**Selection panel and judges:**

Felicity Fenner and Dr Blair French with Mary Faith

## 42 finalists for the three 2024 awards

The Grace Cossington Smith art award \$15,000, acquisitive

The Grace Cossington Smith early career artist award \$2,500, non acquisitive

The Grace Cossington Smith local artist award \$2,500, non acquisitive



Grace Cossington Smith (1892-1984)  
*The Curve of the Bridge*, 1929-30  
 pencil and pastel on paper  
 collection of Abbotsleigh  
 courtesy the estate of Grace Cossington Smith



Grace Cossington Smith  
*Calf in the Landscape*  
 oil on paperboard  
 collection of Abbotsleigh  
 courtesy the estate of Grace Cossington Smith

## From the Headmistress

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2024 Grace Cossington Smith biennial art award.

I commend all the artists who submitted to this award and hope you will join me in celebrating the 42 finalists in this exhibition.

This award is a biennial, acquisitive prize, launched in 2014, to provide much-needed opportunity for local, national, early-career and established artists to showcase their work. The benefit for Abbotsleigh and the whole community is an inspiring exhibition for visitors and wonderful learning opportunities for students.

Grace Cossington Smith was an Abbotsleigh Old Girl and a local artist with a significant national reputation. Her paintings reveal the vibrant connections she made with her world and we celebrate her legacy by inviting entrants to make their own connections to their time, people and place.

Abbotsleigh has a long heritage of connection with the arts. Abbotsleigh was founded in 1885 by Miss Marian Clarke (1853-1933), a keen and accomplished watercolour painter. At Abbotsleigh she procured the best visiting art teachers available, and Albert Collins, Alfred Coffey and Eirene Mort inspired students such as Grace Cossington Smith. The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery reveals the continuing recognition of the importance and value of the arts with this wonderful award.

I extend my appreciation to our judges Felicity Fenner and Blair French, who faced the challenging task of assessing the submitted artworks and selecting the 42 finalists and the three winners.

**Felicity Fenner**, Chair, City of Sydney Public Art Advisory Panel and Associate Professor, Curating & Cultural Leadership, Faculty of Arts, Design & Architecture, UNSW Sydney. She is a writer, curator of contemporary art, and an advisor on public art projects to corporate organisations, local and state governments.

**Dr Blair French** is a curator, writer, and arts leader. He has a distinguished career across the arts sector, and his most recent role was Chief Executive Officer of Carriageworks, Sydney. He has held Senior positions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Artspace Visual Arts Centre, Performance Space, and the Australian Centre for Photography.

Megan Krimmer  
**Headmistress**

## From the Director

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery and Abbotsleigh are proud to present the finalists for the 2024 Grace Cossington Smith biennial art award. This award provides great opportunities – for artists to be in contention for the prizes valuing \$20,000, for visitors to view the excellent works of contemporary artists, and as inspirational learning for our students and the wider community.

The theme of this art award is ‘Making Connections’ and it is a theme that encapsulates the essence of art and the human experience. Art has an ability to connect us beyond the limitations of language and each artist featured in this exhibition possesses a distinctive way of seeing the world. The artists are the ultimate curator, selecting thought-provoking aspects of their experiences to share, inviting us to connect with their unique visions.

In October 2023 the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery celebrated ten years of championing the work of artists locally and nationally, and providing learning experiences that foster historical and cultural awareness. We recognise that the arts play a vital role in creating and connecting vibrant communities.

A note of thanks is warmly extended to all the artists across Australia who have submitted works for this award, and to the judges Felicity Fenner and Dr Blair French who generously provided expertise in the selection process.

We are most appreciative of the ongoing commitment of Abbotsleigh and FUJIFILM Business Innovation Australia in supporting the 2024 art award.

Mary Faith

*Director*

**Grace Cossington Smith Gallery**



## Grace Cossington Smith art award 2024 Finalists

Luke Abdallah & Oliver Fontany	NSW	Deanne Gilson	VIC
Caitlin Aloisio Shearer	VIC	Tim Gregory	NSW
Sally Anderson	NSW	Graziela Guardino	NSW
Clementine Barnes	NSW	Tannya Harricks	NSW
Alexander Beech	TAS	Danyi Hu	NSW
Amber Boardman	NSW	Emily Imeson	NSW
Anna Carey	QLD	Eunjoo Jang	NSW
David Collins	NSW	Virginia Keft	NSW
Richard Collins	VIC	Nicole Kelly	NSW
Nancy Constandelia	NSW	Nadia Kliendanze	VIC
Carolyn Craig	NSW	Deborah Marks	NSW
Angie de Latour	NSW	Nicola Mason	NSW
Kate Dorrough	NSW	Juanita McLauchlan	NSW
Jacqueline Drinkall	NSW	Lily Platts	NSW
Kylie Elkington	TAS	Marisa Purcell	NSW
Zachariah Fenn	NSW	Justine Roche	NSW
Angus Fisher	NSW	Sally Ryan	NSW
Louise Fowler-Smith	NSW	Wendy Sharpe	NSW
Ariella Friend	NSW	Skye Wagner	NSW
Emily Galicek	NSW	Stuart Watters	NSW
Shahroud Ghahani	NSW	Hua Ye	NSW

## Luke Abdallah & Oliver Fontany

Many artists are afforded the opportunity to create networks of peers and build context through schools and collectives, but unfortunately, many artists living with disabilities do not have these opportunities due to various restrictions, physical, monetary or otherwise, and lack of accessibility.

*Vortex*, a collaborative work by artists Abdallah & Fontany, allowed the artists to build context which previously seemed unnecessarily elusive.

Abdallah & Fontany have developed methods and techniques within their individual practices which effectively capture their interests, strengths, and accessibility requirements. Abdallah employs his signature cane painting technique, utilising his white cane as an alternate application tool. For Fontany, weaving his inherent interest in numbers and letters (VHS codes, specific dates, etc) into his works has been key.

*Vortex*, displays the deepening connection between these artists, and their conscious goal to produce a cohesive collaboration and learn from each other, while highlighting each artist's individual skill set.

**[www.studioabdallah.com/collaborations](http://www.studioabdallah.com/collaborations)**

*The Vortex, 2022*

acrylic on wooden board

124 x 93 cm





Caitlin Aloisio Shearer



Practising a grounding of hands and feet upon the earth, she is the rainbow; the full spectrum of colours and emotions that reside inside oneself. Connecting to the place where we all come from, and to which we all return, she exists both outside of the lines and within herself.

This painting was born during a period of my life where I was grappling with a neurodiversity diagnosis. Painting has always allowed me to process and affirm a conception of self, while existing in a world that otherwise caters to the neurotypical perspective.

Much like Grace Cossington Smith, I value the pursuit of defining one's own world in the limitless possibility of space that exists between paintbrush and canvas.

**[www.caitlinshe.com](http://www.caitlinshe.com)**

*Beginning, Middle and End of the Rainbow, 2021*

oil paint on canvas

122 x 91 cm

## Sally Anderson

This work weaves together and connects art historical references to intimate, personal and collective modern-day experience. It is a continuation of my interest in the various ways we attempt to authenticate experience in contemporary society – through physical, emotional and psychological souvenirs. This work arranges and connects three seemingly unrelated elements: a landscape shared by a friend on holiday in the UK, a figurative-like quilt inspired by a Paula Modersohn Becker painting from the early 1900s, and a reoccurring reference within my work; a bromeliad 'wash-down', symbolising a period in my life of personal significance.

Represented by Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane and Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne

**[www.sallyleeanderson.net](http://www.sallyleeanderson.net)**

*Nat Silk's Seatown Still Life, PB Nude Quilt, Bromeliad Washdown, 2023*  
acrylic on canvas  
138 x 153 cm



Clementine Barnes



Textile-based practice has an innate ability to bring human beings together. Throughout history, textiles and cloth have played a fundamental role in expressing identity storytelling, as a tool to process grief and trauma, as a vehicle for social and political change.

With my work *Cosmos*, I continue my exploration of pattern making and abstraction, referencing the structure of the grid as well as the traditional format of painting. I've used this medium for as long as I can remember, a language taught to me by the women in my family. I love that through making my work, I'm keeping the connection alive with the fierce, resilient women who have come before me. Needlework is a very slow process, there is no fast way forward. Subsequently, I perceive my abstract needleworks as a form of soft activism against the current pace of global consumption and production.

*Cosmos, 2022*

cotton and metallic needlepoint on linen

31 x 33 cm



## Alexander Beech

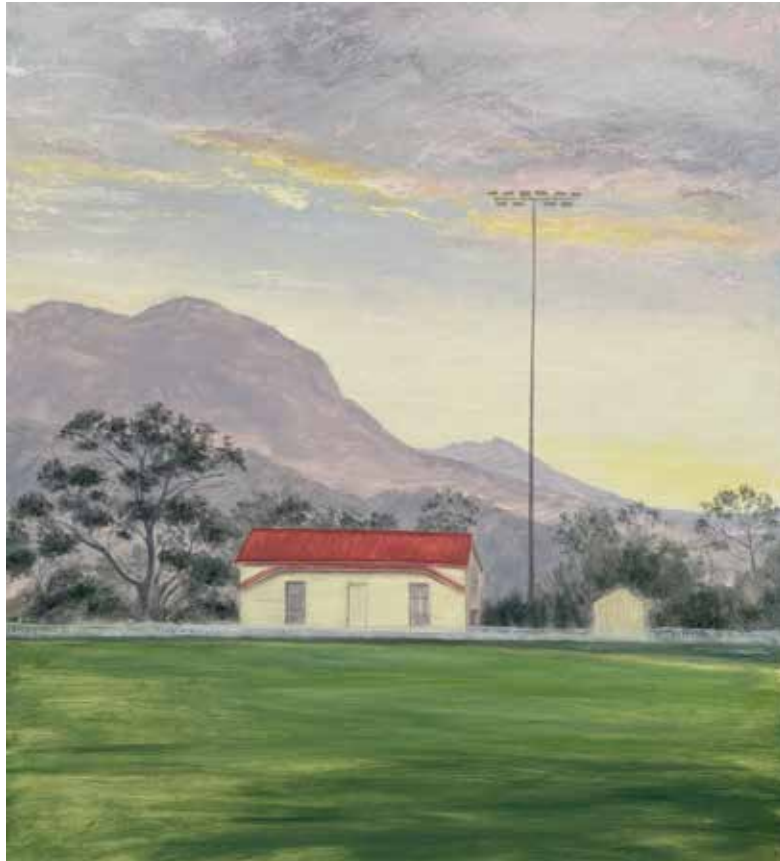
This painting explores aspects of the place forming The Queens Domain, a shared space on the edge of central nipaluna/Hobart, part of my extended backyard. My relationship and connection with this place have woven their way into my painting practice as I explore its many sites with my young family. This work peers across a cricket and AFL ground shadowed by kunyani, the mountain bonding Hobart's population together. The field forms part of the physical and cultural terrain subject to change over time. This work is part of an interrelated series of paintings, tying together pieces of a complex location made of divergent parts that scratch the surface of the 230 hectares of a communal space, bringing together native and introduced elements. This painting aims to contribute to the conversation about this landscape, perhaps fostering further connections.

**[www.alexanderbeech.com](http://www.alexanderbeech.com)**

*Domain II (In the shadow of giants), 2023*

oil on canvas

102 x 92 cm



## Amber Boardman



Amber Boardman is an American-born, Sydney-based artist who explores the influence of the internet on crowds and social norms. In this painting, a row of overlaid backpacks and sturdy legs are all that is visible from this group of friends standing in contemplation before embarking on a mountain hike. They are solidifying their bonds as a group as they make connections to each other, to nature and to the creature comforts that keep them safe from nature.

Over the last two decades, Boardman has been committed to fostering the creative talent of artists. Boardman holds a PhD in Fine Art and has been an invited speaker at universities, art galleries and museums since 2011. Boardman has founded shared studio/exhibition spaces in both Brooklyn NY and Sydney.

Represented by Chalk Horse, Sydney, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne, and Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta.

**[www.amberboardman.com](http://www.amberboardman.com)**

*Baggage Competition, 2023*

oil on canvas

122 x 152 cm

## Anna Carey

*Crystal Mystery* consists of a constructed miniature model of a psychic shopfront that has been photographed to create an illusionary space for the viewer. This work is part of the series *Madam Mystery* and was started in the pandemic in an attempt to create connection and an imaginary experience for the viewer. By inserting my own real life phone number into the neon signage, the viewer is invited to contact 'Madam Mystery' for guidance. This invites viewers to escape creating a sense of play and connection in times of physical separation. In unprecedented times with a shifting collective conscious and existential concern, these works remind us that the future is unknown and look at the ways that people try to make sense of chaos, reality and things unseen. The A frame sign that reads 'Angel connections in the void' also demonstrates how people seek spiritual connection in times of uncertainty.

**[www.annacarey.net](http://www.annacarey.net)**

*Crystal Mystery, 2022*

Giclee print

108 x 93 cm



David Collins





The blackbutt forest on Dangar Island is a magnificent community of large eucalypt trees. This forest is rare in the Hornsby Shire and provides important habitat that is key to the life and character of the island.

Having lived among the trees for 36 years, their forms, lines, colours and surfaces have greatly influenced my work. Many paintings have drawn directly on the play of light across inter-locking networks of trunks and branches that shelter, shade and nourish.

Represented by Defiance Gallery, Sydney

**[www.david-collins.com.au](http://www.david-collins.com.au)**

*The Blackbutts, 2023*

oil on canvas

140 x 178 cm

## Richard Collins

As a painter, I'm looking for formal connections; the relationship of a colour to its neighbouring colour, a solid to a void, a horizontal line to a diagonal. It's at the heart of composition, the effort to make a coherent world within the frame of the canvas.

In this painting, the starting point was an idea about colour and subject matter. The painting was part of a series of still lifes built around a dominant colour, all involving fabric. I also enjoyed the idea of making a painting of drapery in the form of a crumpled shopping bag. The other elements of the painting – the green swatch, the sliver of spotted pink fabric – serve to offset the centrally floating bag, and tie it to the painting's edges.

**[www.richardcollinsart.net](http://www.richardcollinsart.net)**

*Orange Still Life, 2021*

oil on canvas

66 x 51 cm



Nancy Constandelia



*Penumbra* is a document of my connection and experience of temporality and space. It is a procession of time featuring multiple present times mapped by singularly and thinly layering paint. The many translucent veils of paint I layer one after the other, to produce a pentimento. The interconnectedness of time, light and space traverse and oscillate between each veil, resulting in optical illusions of three-dimensional depth and vibration.

**[www.nancyconstandelia.com](http://www.nancyconstandelia.com)**

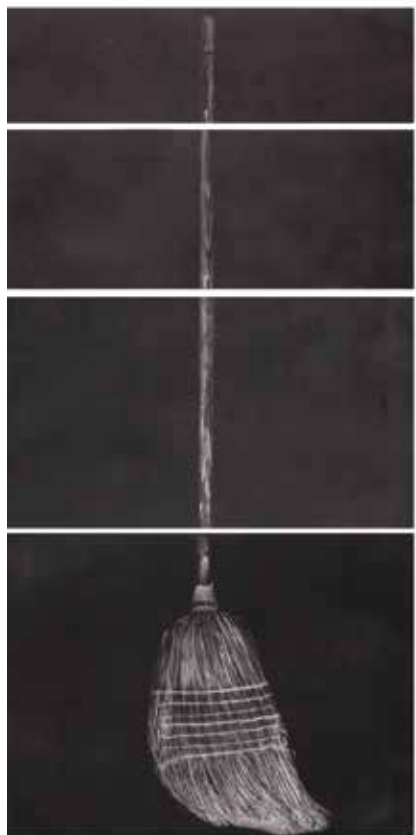
*Penumbra*, 2021  
acrylic on Italian linen  
76 x 56 cm

## Carolyn Craig

*She left her legacy in a broom* builds on a series that speaks to the memory of my mother – and brings me closer to understanding her place in the world as a woman who decided to commit suicide rather than become ill and age. I focus on her ritual labour of sweeping and her classed position as an indentured woman on working class wages. I work through the rituals of lament with her broom in an act of honour and abjection. Through material making I can mediate the space between her history and mine and place her next to me as a friend.

Represented by Schmick Contemporary, Sydney

*rituals of remembrance – sweeping act*, 2023  
etching, dust print and drawing  
176 x 200 cm





## Angel de Latour



*Jars with bottle and cup* is one of a series of small still life paintings made from direct observation. Choosing and arranging which objects to paint involves recognising the dynamic within a group of objects and how each affects the other. This perceptual exchange expands when it extends beyond the work to connect with the viewer.

**[www.angiedelatour.com](http://www.angiedelatour.com)**

*Jars with bottle and cup*, 2023  
oil on linen on board  
20.5 x 25.5 cm

## Kate Dorrrough

The river connects the land to the sea; its course running through the landscape connecting the land and its people. This work infers a language of the river, with its iconic essential life force represented as emblematic symbols. Calligraphic markings denote a text or a series of musical notes acknowledging our need to understand, connect and work with the river in order to preserve this fragile resource. The river is a place of reverence, connection and contemplation.

Represented by Arthouse Gallery, Sydney

**[www.katedorrrough.com](http://www.katedorrrough.com)**

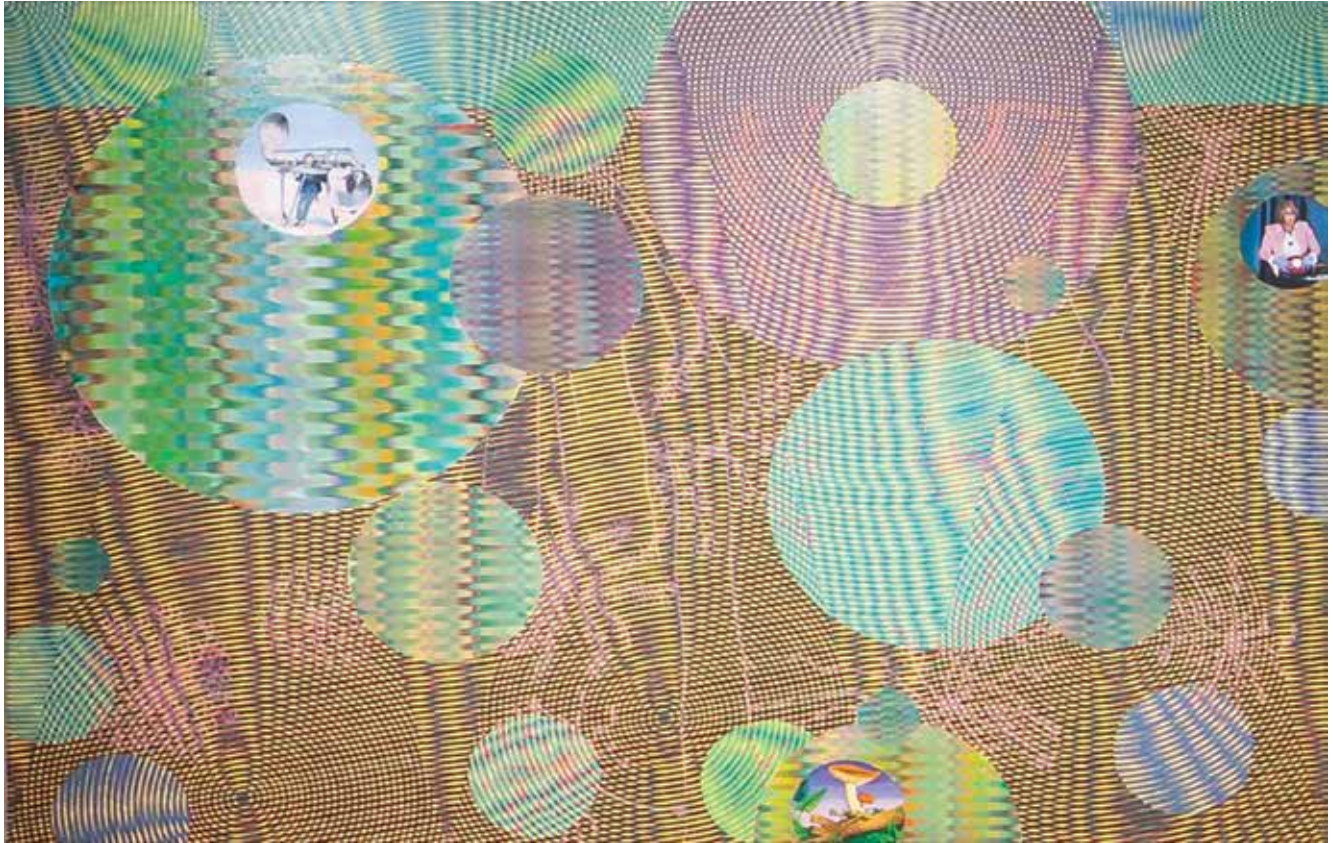
*Icons and River Script, 2022*

acrylic on linen

168 x 198 cm



# Jacqueline Drinkall



My telepathic art practice is all about making connections, and this painting explores the telepathy of cybernetic pattern recognition as well as images of ancient and new technologies for cultivating telepathy. Ocean surface moires have been read by ancient mariners to navigate unseen dangerous coastlines as if they had a kind of sixth sense. My moires intentionally connect three images of uncanny communication: an image of psychedelic mushrooms associated with telepathic ancestor communications; an image of a pre-radar aircraft detection device resembling giant metal ears; and a screenshot image from tech entrepreneur Mary Lou Jepsen's online lecture about her investigation of fNIRS LiDAR light and sound penetration of the body/brain via her digital telepathic Brain Computer Interfaces. For me, painting is a creative technology that intersects deep historic and current futuristic senses of connection. Painted synapses and neurones inspired by neuroscientist Santiago Ramón y Cajal haunt the moires in my painting.

**[www.jacqueline-drinkall.squarespace.com](http://www.jacqueline-drinkall.squarespace.com)**

*Cybernetic pattern recognition: LiDAR mapping of archaic listening technology; Mary Lou Jepsen's fNIR tumor performance; and fungi at the bottom of the coal cut, 2023*  
acrylic and oil paint on stretched canvas  
137.5 x 198.5 cm



## Kylie Elkington

This work intends to capture and convey the layered sensations upon encountering a beloved native plant over time.

The focus shifts from the overall to the specific, in recording the presence of nature in the abstract plane of the canvas. Or as the painter John Glover observed, “Painting is a science, and should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature. Why, then, may not landscape painting be considered as a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but the experiments?”

The result is a layering of sensations and knowledge about a place, the role of the species of natives and others in that place, and in turn, the ways in which all elements of that environment are interconnected, drawing attention to the detail and beauty of our native species and uninterrupted places. In this case, some classic beauty, and habitat, from the central highlands of Lutruwita/Tasmania.

Represented by Colville Gallery, Hobart

**[www.kylieelkington.com](http://www.kylieelkington.com)**

*Mountain Rocket (Bellendena montana,  
Central Highlands, lutruwita/Tasmania), 2021*  
oil on linen  
200 x 161 cm





Zachariah Fenn



My conceptual painting practice adopts imagery and objects from contemporary urban life. This retractable brochure pen from International Art Services (IAS) has been permanently retracted, painted on and encased to create an artefact out of an everyday object. The painting documents the very action that the brochure pen advertises and the artwork commemorates a brief season in my life – working as an Art Handler at the IAS depot in Mascot, from 2014-17. The two trucks parked side-by-side would exchange artworks, connecting the art hubs of Sydney and Melbourne (three times weekly). It was during this season that my fondness for painting vehicles as a subject was fostered. Working at IAS was also a great opportunity as an art student to become acquainted with the complex network of art industry professionals, artists and galleries in the Greater Sydney area – many of whom I still have strong connections with today.

**[zacfenn.wixsite.com/artist](http://zacfenn.wixsite.com/artist)**

*IAS Pen (DAF and BC60), 2021*  
oil and paint pen on retractable brochure pen  
26 x 36 cm

## Angus Fisher

Gunyah point, on the banks of the Hawkesbury River drawn shortly after a scheduled Rural Fire Service hazard reduction burn. A striking landscape marked by human intervention. The natural world is a mosaic of organisms all living independently yet connected in a complex fabric of relationships. To understand the world around us we isolate, compartmentalise and separate these elements while risking a wider understanding of the deep ecologies that exist within, between and throughout.

Represented by Australian Galleries Sydney

**[www.angusfisherarts.com](http://www.angusfisherarts.com)**

*Gunyah Point*, 2021  
charcoal on paper  
72 x 98 cm



Louise Fowler-Smith



As an environmental artist, educator and founder of the Tree Veneration Society, my aim is to connect with the general public in order to raise awareness about the natural environment. In this time of the Anthropocene, making connections between the natural environment and humanity has become more important than ever before due to plant and animal extinctions and climate change.

This painting is based on the plant, the *Caladenia Fulva*. It has been listed as critically endangered due to habitat loss and disturbance. Our ancestors understood beyond human languages, so I include text in the painting that comes from the ancient Celts, an alphabet called the 'Tree Alphabet' – an alphabet for plants.

Celebrating the enchantment of our natural world, I believe that post the 2020 fires, floods and pandemic, the natural environment needs to be front and centre to the lexicon of contemporary art.

**[www.louisefowersmith.com](http://www.louisefowersmith.com)**

*CRITICALLY ENDANGERED: Caladenia Fulva, 2022*  
oil and acrylic paint on board  
101 x 69 cm

## Ariella Friend

This work references Grace Cossington Smith's painting *Arums Growing* c1927 in which she creates a cropped, condensed composition of the Arum lily's leaves and flowers. Zooming in and out of this painting on her computer screen, Ariella Friend distorts the image and translates the resulting pixels and colour blocks into an expanded painting that focuses on the physical manifestations of paint, form, composition and material. Through Cossington Smith's bold, experimental use of colour and rhythmically abstracting forms, that were in turn inspired by Gauguin before her, we are made aware of the connections between artists past and present and the natural landscape around us, while at the same time being given the space for experimentation and reinvention in a digital world.

**[www.ariellafriend.com.au](http://www.ariellafriend.com.au)**

*Arum Lilies (After Cossington Smith)*  
2023, recycled timber, acrylic, adhesive, varnish  
60 x 28 cm





Emily Galicek



Domestic interiors and decoration are often overlooked art forms, but they are complex aesthetic, socio-political historical documents. My recent works seek to draw physical and conceptual connections between these historical documents and how they might be reinvigorated through contemporary painting. This conceptual focus has come about as a reflection on my family's journey as refugees from former Czechoslovakia to Australia in the 1960s and 1970s, which was hardly ever discussed when I was growing up. This reflection has involved researching historical domestic interiors from the various nations that my family lived in on their way to Australia, and using this material in my paintings.

This painting incorporates and connects historical imagery of 1930s and 1970s Australian wallpapers, sourced with permission from the Caroline Simpson Research Library. The painting connects these decorative elements into new and unexpected compositions, layering colour, pattern and form, and giving them new life in contemporary space.

**[www.emilygalicek.net](http://www.emilygalicek.net)**

*Green Grid Wallpaper with Daisies, 2022*

acrylic on canvas

76 x 62 cm

## Shahroud Ghahani

The artwork *The Goddess of no names* was made in reaction to experiences of brutality against women. It explores the complexity of female archetypes through intercultural narratives. The female hybrid figure appears restricted and unstable. However, in a surreal gesture, she is connected to the natural world and the inherent liberty that comes with it. The underwater sea elements are colourful and vibrant in contrast to the dark fabric that envelops her body. Her braided hair moves with the marine life, symbolising her inward freedom, a salvation from the harsh societal forces upon her.

**[www.shahroudghahani.com](http://www.shahroudghahani.com)**

*The Goddess of no names*, 2023

archival pigment on Hahnemühle paper, (hand cut paper collage and ink on hand made paper)

143 x 143 cm



Deanne Gilson



We are all connected to this land we call Country and each other. Where I walk my dogs there is a row of indigenous trees that include, pink and red gum blossom, wattle, manna gum, indigenous weaving plants, Lomandra and flax lily. I like watching the rainbow lorikeets chasing each other for the tree nectar. My painting starts with charcoal from my mum's fire. As an Aboriginal woman, that is my connection to her and the gum trees from our Creation Story. The first man and woman were said to be made out of bark from the tree and clay from the river. All rivers lead into the ocean and are connected. The bark from the trees is symbolic of skin. The burnt charcoal represents fire, smoking and healing ceremonies, fire sticks, farming and has the power to heal us. From my mum, to me, to you.

**[www.deannegilson.com](http://www.deannegilson.com)**

*Connection to Country, 2023*  
acrylic, charcoal and 22 carat gold leaf on canvas  
110 x 90 cm

## Tim Gregory

The work is a modification of an original 1918 landscape painting, *Bottle Brush Newlands* by JF Hackett that was purchased from eBay. It was made by sanding back the painting and collecting the sanded pigment from above and below the horizon. The pigment was hand-ground into two new oil paints and reapplied to its respective half of the image. The painting was then placed back in its original frame. The landscape painting has been turned into an abstract duotone through its own materiality. It questions notions of originality, landscape and settler-colonial gaze. The history of Australian landscape painting is unfixed through the modification made to the 'finished' artwork, suggesting these histories are active and can be reconfigured, disrupted and brought into dialogue with contemporary art. As an artist, I have made an iconoclastic, collaborative connection with a landscape painter from more than 100 years ago.

**[www.timgregoryprojects.com/home-projects](http://www.timgregoryprojects.com/home-projects)**

*Bottle Brush Newlands*, 1918/2023, 2023 purchased painting,  
sanded pigment reconstituted into oil paint  
65.5 x 91 cm





Graziela Guardino



Graziela's work starts with the deconstruction of linen, resignifying the support and materiality of both the painting and textile works. Rather than adding layers, the artist removes them.

It is in this unravelling of the wefts that the artist's work reveals itself. Guardino's woven paintings-sculptures are the result of experimentation and studies of materials, forming a unique visual language of minimalist abstraction. They are based on deconstruction to explore new possibilities of reading about reconnection, femininity and ancestry.

The works invite us to reflect on the role of femininity in our history and to reimagine the stories that have shaped our identities. Graziela retraces our way of thinking about this construction, from ancestral to contemporary.

Through her exploration of materiality, symbolism and the intuitive nature of art, she retraces our journey from ancient to modern times, offering a profound and contemplative glimpse into the timeless thread that connects us all.

**[www.grazielaguardino.com](http://www.grazielaguardino.com)**

*Deconstructed Painting III, 2022*  
acrylic on unravelled linen and wood  
90 x 80 cm

## Tannya Harricks

I am interested in the connection between the 'push and pull' of both painting and of nature. How to reconcile the warm and cool, surface and depth, destruction and regeneration, history and the present? Face to face with the scale and energy of a waterfall helps us contemplate what it means to be human in this world. This painting is of Ironbark Falls, near Mangrove on the Central Coast of NSW.

**[www.tanyaharricks.com](http://www.tanyaharricks.com)**

*Ironbark Falls, 2022*  
oil on linen  
106 x 124 cm





*Strings of Harmony* explores the interconnectedness of the timeless beauty of Chinese puppetry and opera. The harmonious combination of imagery from these traditional art forms represents an act of unity, blending the past with the present. The intricate process of assembling fragments mirrors my journey of connecting with and embracing my Chinese heritage, and the diverse and vibrant symphony of colours, costumes, and characters used symbolically bridges the East and West. Each element in the collage plays its part, contributing to a cohesive whole, much like the strings of a musical instrument working in harmony.

*Strings of Harmony*, 2021  
acrylic on canvas  
79 x 104 cm

## Emily Imeson

Through layered processes this work entangles disparate elements of landscape painting to explore connections between the environment, the art world and the feminine. The work was made while I was pregnant and feeling the shifting moods of creating; beginning 'en plein air' with acrylic on canvas, then moving inside where thick mark making took over, as I was convinced that I had lost the ability to paint. Soon after I tore the painting into pieces, a bittersweet process which encouraged a reflection of human interactions with the land. Reconnection and repairing were imminent, hence the sewing and embroidery, skills passed on from my late grandmother. The centre image is a cotton substrate batiked with references of biological cell patterns that was buried in the earth, washed then reworked. It speaks of the macro and micro worlds and aids in a sincere and direct connection with the world.

**[www.emilygraceart.wordpress.com](http://www.emilygraceart.wordpress.com)**

*Patchwork Landscape 1 (Moving Fast and Slow)*, 2022 recycled timber, thread, acrylic, earth-stained cotton, and canvas  
122 x 94 cm







My practice explores the concept of blended reality, which underpins our contemporary experience. This is related to a type of inter-subjectivity where we connect our experiences as we live our daily lives. It shows how we have influenced our perception of space and place through geospatial technologies such as Google Earth, in particular, the shapes of buildings and data visualisation. Every building could carry memories. The memories are well specialised; so firmly rooted, they remain unchanged. The memories involved real people, real events and a real history that have happened in space and time. In a reflection of the concept, the painting shows the memory visualisation of each building as a record of memories.

My aerial building images could be seen as 'schematic', but they strive to remain as an abstract and ambiguous representation to reflect the characteristics of blended reality. Then, I superimpose these with my hand-drawn 'scratch holograms' to create the 'virtual (memory)' that you see move.

**[www.cargocollective.com/eunjoojang](http://www.cargocollective.com/eunjoojang)**

*Accumulated time-space, 2022*

oil on aluminium

92 x 92 cm

## Virginia Keft

As a Muruwarri woman who is a guest on Dharawal Country, I hold a deep respect and love of this place. The painting represents the Australian landscape on Dharawal Country as viewed from my window. The warm twilight glow that envelopes the work and embraces the blue-green of Geera (Mt Keira) speaks to ideas of 'home' in multiple senses. As a child I learned sewing and textile skills by watching my mother at her sewing machine. As an adult I sat by the Barwon River with Elders and learned the ancient weaving practices of my people. Home is divided between two places – Dharawal Country where I live, and my grandmother's ancestral home on Ngemba and Muruwarri Country. In this work, home comes together – the ever present flying foxes that inhabit the gums below Mt Keira and the suburban backyard are connected to my cultural ways of making and weaving.

**[www.virginiakeft.com.au](http://www.virginiakeft.com.au)**

*matjam bagin tja (flying fox in the twilight), 2023*  
synthetic polymer and textiles on canvas  
93 x 123 cm





Nicole Kelly



*A Tender Binding* reflects on our sensitive and binding relationships with the landscape and tender love of the land.

Motivated by a sensitivity to the passing of time and primed with personal experience, the painting reveals an ongoing attempt to portray reality in a way that liaises not with literal representation but feeling, memory and thought.

A female figure with eyes closed occupies the foreground of the painting. The painting mulls over human impact as a catalyst of our environmental crisis whilst also situating humanity, and our love of the natural world as a bastion of hope.

Represented by Arthouse Gallery, Sydney; Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne

**[www.nicolereakelly.com](http://www.nicolereakelly.com)**

*A Tender Binding*, 2023

oil on polyester

131.5 x 117 cm

## Nadia Kliendanze

*Stone Talk* is a colour reduction linoprint using a dremel to carve out the layers. The image connects with my fascination with the enduring nature of stone, a material that stands as a testament to the passage of time, connecting us to a visual narrative that speaks to the inexorable connection between geology and memory.

The work serves as a reflection on the intangible stories that exist with the natural world. The stoic permanence of stone connects with the ephemeral nature of memory, prompting contemplation of narratives and connections within the earth's layers.

*Stone Talk* invites viewers to embark on a journey beyond the physical scene depicted. It is an exploration of the emotional resonance that landscapes hold within the chambers of our minds, where personal memories connect with the broader scope of the natural world.

Ultimately my print pays homage to the profound connection between landscape and memory.

**[www.nadiakliendanze.com.au](http://www.nadiakliendanze.com.au)**

*Stone Talk*, 2023  
colour reduction linoprint  
30 x 30 cm





Deborah Marks



Uncertainty is integral to our lives. In this painting the figures are fixated in a moment of uncertainty...connected to a moment of multiple possibilities. These figures ponder possibilities before certainty is reached...their distinct meaning and status is ungraspable. This state of being relates to the notion of achieving resilience in the face of uncertainty. In this painting the figures stand as an existential human presence within strange, dislocated environments with the acceptance of discomfort's inevitability in life. The fleshy figures in personal and meditative gestures are immersed in fleeting moments of concentration and anticipation as they venture into the unknown.

**[www.deborahmarks.com.au](http://www.deborahmarks.com.au)**

*The Silent Space of Uncertainty II*

oil on canvas

100 x 120 cm

## Nicola Mason

The scene is my studio in Napoleon Reef/Walang, Wiradjuri country and my painting is part of *The Yellow Studio* series where I reference Matisse's *The Red Studio*, in which he depicts his Parisian workspace. My painting makes further connections to my time in France. The paintings within my painting are of other paintings of mine from this series. With my interest in the theatre and physicality of playing in my painting process, I painted 20 small painting props of memories and visions referenced from my time living in France in 2017. I then moved these paintings around my studio ready to be referenced into my next painting on the easel. Further connections to my life and process include other objects within this work such as some still life regulars on the table and the loved nanna blankets that were made by my kid's great gran for our wedding.

**[www.nicmasonartist.com](http://www.nicmasonartist.com)**

*The Yellow Studio 1: inside, 2022*

oil on acrylic on canvas

100 x 100 cm



Juanita McLauchlan



The process of dying the woollen blankets is embedded with complex meanings, colonial invasion and cultural loss. I forage for the plants and leaves in culturally sustainable ways from Country, before steaming, stitching, and embellishing the blanket with the stories and knowledge that deeply connects me to culture and European colonisation. As a woman with First Nations and European ancestry, I'm proud of the strength my blood has shown over time. I wish to share these connections with my children and the viewer so that my culture can thrive and inform future stories of this ancient lands.

**[www.juanitamclauchlan.com](http://www.juanitamclauchlan.com)**

*Home is My Place, 2023*

woollen blanket, possum skin, cotton thread, screen print, copper coins  
200 x 165 cm

## Lily Platts

This artwork is of my childhood kitchen table. It was picked up from an antique store years ago and is surrounded by a mix of mismatched chairs. Throughout the years, this table has held a special place in our family home, serving as the hub where we naturally come together to connect.

In this piece, I've aimed to capture the everyday rhythm of our lives. It portrays the back-and-forth of our family members as we go about our daily routines, pausing to share a coffee or a moment together. With this work, I hope to evoke a sense of nostalgia and warmth that anyone can relate to, inviting viewers to recall their own cherished moments of togetherness around a kitchen table.

**[plattslily.wixsite.com/painting](http://plattslily.wixsite.com/painting)**

*The kitchen table, 2023*

acrylic on canvas

173 x 86 cm





Marisa Purcell



Marisa Purcell is a painter who intuitively reacts to each layer she puts down. Nothing can be planned ahead of time, because colour has a way of behaving differently depending on what colour it sits next to, or on top of. The illusory quality of her paintings invite the viewer to connect, to move around, as there never seems to be a 'right' angle to view these works. Transparent layers of paint react to the surrounding lighting, allowing the painting to take on different tones throughout the day. Her paintings are all about layering – like the accumulation of sediments over deep time – each layer holding their own integrity, but then simultaneously influencing the next. The viewer is invited into the process by having access to cross sections of these layers – the connections made between the painter and the viewer are activated unique to the individual.

**[www.marisapurcell.com](http://www.marisapurcell.com)**

*Within Sight*, 2023  
acrylic on linen  
183 x 168 cm

## Justine Roche

Justine Roche is a Sydney-based artist using diverse photographic practices to present contemporary understandings of place. The place depicted is an Australian wetland. Over the past 300 hundred years, 87 per cent of the world's wetlands have been destroyed in the name of agricultural and urban development. Metaphorically and historically, wetlands, and more specifically swamps, have negative associations of foreboding, superstition and the supernatural. The lockdowns of 2020-21 allowed Justine the time to explore this alluring, impenetrable and mysterious place that reminded her of fairy tales from her childhood.

Today, wetlands are recognised for their integral role in combating the climate crisis. Justine seeks to bring together a sensorial experience, mysticism and beauty in places previously deemed expendable. *Swamplands*, 2023, has been created through a series of photographic interventions and is intentionally presented on a tintype to evoke haunting, timeless qualities and imperfect traces left by the maker.

**[www.justineroche.com](http://www.justineroche.com)**

*Swamplands*, 2023  
photography (wetplate collodion tintype)  
27 x 22 cm



Sally Ryan



*Embrace – An Unbreakable Bond*, invites viewers to contemplate the intricacies of companionship, the connection between vulnerability and strength, and the shared sanctuary that two individuals can create within each other's presence. It depicts a moment of tenderness – a woman, nestled in peaceful slumber on her companion's knee, cradled by his protective embrace. The contrasting elements and colours of the painting suggest both innocence and passion, while the embrace itself is a touching visual representation of the balance between strength, vulnerability and trust. Social interaction and human connections are themes I enjoy exploring in my figurative artworks and my painting is an attempt to recognise the profound beauty that can be found in the quiet moments shared between two souls.

**[www.sallyryanartist.com](http://www.sallyryanartist.com)**

*Embrace – An Unbreakable Bond*, 2022  
oil on linen  
95 x 72 cm

## Wendy Sharpe

This painting is a contemporary version of the Three Fates from Greek mythology. One woman spins the thread of life, one measures it and one cuts it off. They represent how our lives are largely determined by factors beyond our control, such as luck, timing and circumstance. They also connect us back through time to the transgressive women of the past, representing female power and mystery.

Represented by King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

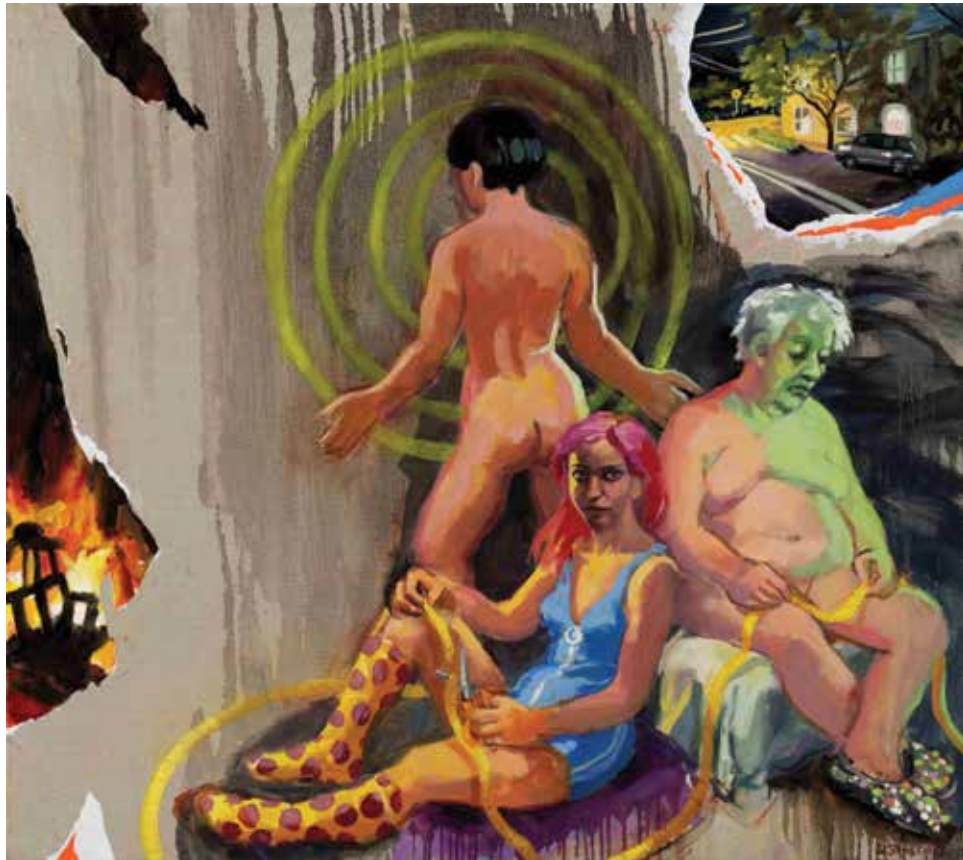
**[www.wendysharp.com](http://www.wendysharp.com)**

*3 Fates with suburban street, 2023*

oil on linen

137 x 122 cm





Skye Wagner



I am an artist living and working on the lands of the Gadigal and Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation (Sydney). My practice explores the artifice and complexity of image-making through lens-based media and installation. Recent bodies of work use photography to re/mediate sculptural assemblages that layer found and made printed images, objects and food: materials gleaned from the internet, second-hand sources, food markets and my personal archive. These image and object assemblages are built and photographed in the studio to confuse spatial, temporal and material understandings. The interest is in how strategies of assemblage, re-photography and translation challenge ways of seeing and making sense.

*Banana Dogs, Red Lipstick, Handshake, 2022* is a recent example of this method. The photograph depicts a kitschy excess of food, animals, consumer products and bodies. In this haptic mix, things appear on the move; multiplying, connecting and trespassing forms of distinction.

**[www.skyewagner.com](http://www.skyewagner.com)**

*Banana Dogs, Red Lipstick, Handshake, 2022*  
pigment print on Ilford fibre paper  
74 x 50 cm

## Stuart Watters

Recent paintings by Stuart Watters continue his interrogation of abstraction with work that gives form a shape that goes beyond the confines of formalism. The legacy of late modernism has been renewed with the introduction of a more intuitive attitude towards formalist painting. It allows form to take on the anxiety of the maker and reflect the unpredictable nature of contemporary life.

Any response to abstraction is generally determined by the impact of colour and texture, as well as the play between form and space. This subterfuge hides the fact that the formal aspects of painting can communicate on multiple levels. Abstraction is often regarded as a highly codified language, only accessible to insiders. But the human brain is able to recognise the complexity of an unknown structure/ system and therefore establish connections with the alternative reality presented upon the canvas.

*Pictorial Overture, 2023*

oil on canvas

117 x 101 cm



# Hua Ye



After COVID-19, people's mood is generally low. I want to express an uplifting opinion in the painting, so I chose to portray the scene at sunset. I want to awaken people's hope for life in the world through painting.

Represented by Brenda Colahan Fine Art, Sydney

*Sunset Light, 2022*

watercolour

56 x 76 cm



## 2014 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Margaret Loy Pula**

Margaret Loy Pula belongs to the Anmatyerre people of Utopia in Central Australia. She comes from a distinguished artistic family and she is the daughter of well-known Utopian artist Kathleen Petyarre.

Loy Pula paints the 'Anatye' or Bush Potato dreaming using a series of fine detailed dots that represent the growth pattern of the plant from an aerial view. The bush potato vine grows after the rains and the vines send out tendrils into the soil and this is where the potato (or bush yam) begins to grow. The women go out to collect the potato and they are cooked in the hot coals of the fire.

*She says: This painting is about my culture, my family. That's my father's dreaming. This is from my father's country, that country is called 'Unjangola'. That is north of Utopia, not too far, but really desert country.*

**2014 judge:** Rachel Kent, Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

**2014 selectors:** artist Janet Laurence and curator Nicholas Tsoutas



*Anatye Bush Potato*  
acrylic on linen  
150 x 150  
Courtesy Muk Muk Fine Art



## 2015 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Jake Blaschka**

Jake Blaschka's work explores connections between art and advertising and questions the pervasive role advertising plays within our contemporary society. *rebajas* 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.

His work preserves a link to the original source material; the finished size of the works is that of printed billposters, while the depth and material of the steel frames replicates those of the bus stop ad shells. However, he mediates the images of advertising by presenting only fragmented text or traces of characters on the surface of the aluminium.

Blaschka says: *By emphasizing this dysfunctional character, I intend to intervene with technology used in high-end advertising in the same way I exploit the didactic content within printed advertising imagery.*

**2015 judges:** Geoffrey Legge and Damien Minton from Watters Gallery in Sydney,

**2015 selectors:** Anneke Jaspers, Assistant Curator Contemporary Art, Art Gallery NSW and Dr Stephen Little, Head of Painting, National Art School.



*rebajas* من افس. خصم (Drawing as object 3), 2015  
untreated steel, duratrans print, acrylic,  
fluorescent lights, timber  
156 x 104 cm

*Obelus 3*, 2015  
aluminium composite panel,  
timber, fluorescent light, acrylic paint,  
steel angles and paper  
150 x 100 cm

## 2016 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Mark Titmarsh**

Mark Titmarsh investigates the mystery of light and colour and suggests it is found equally in nature as in our fluorescent, post-industrial environment. He says, 'Science tries to explain light and creates a muddle of waves and particles. Believers takes light to be the essence of the god head, a primordial state of grace that has no forbears, unbegotten, where the only thing that can create a god or light is god as light. For unbelievers the essence of light is the wonder of the world, the source of all interest in things, the mood of the moment, the play of appearance and depth across an infinity of possibility. In this painting, colour is the tension and connection between various modes of light, between the geometric and biomorphic, the painterly and industrial, the flatness of the image and the fatness of an object, and so on.' painterly and industrial, the flatness of the image and the fatness of an object, and so on.

**2016 judges and selectors:** Rhonda Davis, Senior curator of Macquarie University Art Gallery, Dr Andrew Frost, Researcher in science fiction, cinema and contemporary art, art critic for Guardian Australia and a lecturer in the Department of Media, Music, Communications and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University.

*Light from Light, Part 1-3*  
acrylic and automotive polish on aluminium  
110 x 90 cm each



## 2018 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Catherine O'Donnell**

Catherine O'Donnell is known for her detailed renderings of streetscapes and urban dwellings. She says of her work My drawings an exploration of the architecture, culture and history in the everyday-ness of the urban environment. I see the suburbs as full of connection and disconnection, sameness and difference; in short, my drawings examine suburban living as a site of complexity. O'Donnell graduated with a Master of Fine Arts from the National Art School in Sydney in 2014 and in the same year she was awarded a residency at the British School of Rome. She exhibits widely and is represented in both public and private collections in Australia and Internationally. She has won many awards and numerous commendations.



*Yates Court*  
pencil on paper,  
46 x 65 cm  
courtesy the artist and  
Dominik Mersch Gallery

### **Local art award WINNER**

Stephen Hall's awards include The North Sydney Art Prize Drawing Award 2013, The Kedumba Drawing Award 2011, The UNSW Alumni Art Prize 2007 and UNSW Paris Residency 2003. In 2004 he was awarded an MFA from the UNSW. His work is in many public and private collections.



### **Early Career artist award WINNER**

Jane Théau works in a variety of media, particularly textiles, with a focus on performance, music and art. She has a Master of Art from UNSW Art & Design, a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Applied Science from UTS.



### **2018 judges and selectors:**

**Alison Clark** Team Leader Arts & Culture at North Sydney Council, responsible for overseeing a range of creative initiatives including the Council's Artist Studio, Residency & Creative Spaces programs, Public Art program and the biennial North Sydney Art Prize.

**Dominik Mersch** owner and director of the Dominik Mersch Gallery in Rushcutters Bay representing artists at the forefront of contemporary art practice and focuses on exhibiting artists from Australia and Europe.

## 2021 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Nadia Hernández**

Nadia Hernández was born in Mérida, Venezuela. Her practice is informed specifically by the current political climate of her home country and her diasporic experience as a Venezuelan woman living abroad. Articulated through textiles, paper constructions, painting, music, installations, sculptures and murals, her identity allows her, or perhaps encourages her, to create work that negotiates complex political narratives through the personal, the institutional and their intersections.

Hernández holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Queensland University of Technology. She was a recipient of the Bundanon Trust Artist in Residence (2019), a Create NSW Visual Arts Emerging Fellow (2020) and commissioned to develop an immersive educational program and exhibition as Shepparton Art Museum's EduLAB (2020). Her work has featured in a number of group and solo exhibitions.



*Dulce de lechoza verde (procedimiento)/Green papaya sweet (procedure)*, 2021 cotton, linen, and corduroy on linen textile, 145 x 100 cm  
courtesy the artist and STATION

### **Local art award WINNER**

David Collins lives on Dangar Island in the Hawkesbury River. He frequently paints and draws en plein air and his view of the landscape, with his broad washes of oil paint and calligraphic line, ensure a personal and unique style.

Collins studied fine arts at Hornsby Technical College and the Canberra School of Art. He has been the recipient of artist residencies in Australia and overseas and exhibits regularly. He is represented by Defiance Gallery.



### **Early Career artist award WINNER**

Alice Wormald graduated in 2011 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. Wormald creates paintings that develop from a process of image collection and collage that she fragments and reinterprets. Her compositions are layered, combining a softness of brushmark and hard-edge linear patterns creating an illusion and play on visual perspective. Wormald is represented by Gallery 9, Sydney.



### **2021 judges and selectors:**

**Katrina Cashman** Gallery Manager and Senior Curator at the National Art School Sydney. Formerly Cashman was the Assistant Director/Senior Curator at the Mosman Regional Art Gallery and she has curated 45 major exhibitions across the gallery and museum sector in Australia and in Indonesia and has extensive networks within the Australian and International art industry.

**Dr Oliver Watts** Senior Curator of Artbank Sydney. Watts was a lecturer at SCA, University of Sydney, between 2011-2017 and is a contemporary artist represented by Chalk Horse Gallery and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne. He holds an MFA in painting, and a PhD in art history and jurisprudence, from the University of Sydney.

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**art award**