



MEDIA RELEASE

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PASSION FOR PORTRAITURE LED TO BOOK CREATION

One of The Lester Prize's longest standing supporter and volunteer, Dr Shelley Craddock launched her first book last night at a corporate function at the Art Gallery of WA (AGWA), where The Lester Prize's 40 finalist works are currently on display in the Centenary Galleries until 9 December 2019.

Entitled *'Through the Artists Eyes: The Black Swan Years'*, this magnificent hardcover book showcases more than 65 artist works, representing some of the best portraiture artwork in Australia, the winning artists' works and the intriguing stories behind them. It documents the history of the Black Swan Prize for Portraiture (now known as The Lester Prize).

Shelley noted "there has been little written on contemporary art in Western Australia. Most art books feature the Eastern States, with little or no reference to the vibrant cultural scene in our own State. This project represents an important historical document of contemporary art in WA. The Lester is a major art prize in WA and should have an associated art book."

"The more I became involved with the prize, the more I became aware of its cultural significance to the broader community. For me, the creation of this book began as a way to document the contribution of Tina Wilson, Black Swan Prize's Founder. Working with Tina over several years, I began to appreciate that she had created a cultural event that would be a lasting legacy for generations to come. The cultural relevance of the prize went far beyond the short duration of the exhibition. It spread its wings throughout the year with art workshops in schools, at Princess Margaret Hospital for children with chronic illness and/or terminal cancer; for people with disabilities, the elderly suffering with Dementia, the unemployed, as well as for indigenous children in remote communities."

Shelley has a Bachelor of Arts and after completing medicine she studied Art History. Her short film, the *Songs of The Mission* was seen on NITV in 2011 and *Freedom on the River* at The Wave Rock Film Festival. She has published multiple book reviews for *Australian Doctor* magazine as well as educational health material, including the Cancer Council calendar, *Everywoman*.

After successfully taking the Main Awards and Exhibition to its new home at AGWA in 2016, Tina Wilson stepped down from her role as Executive Director to return to her own artistic practice in rural NSW. Tina attended the book launch last night and is thrilled with the book, a testament to her passionate and tireless work to establish the Black Swan Prize.

The Lester Prize

The Lester Prize was renamed in 2019 in honour of the award's leading patron, Richard Lester AM. It has a total prize pool available to emerging and professional artists worth over \$77,000, making it one of Australia's most prestigious art prizes. More than 500 artists from across Australia entered the competition this year.

Retailing for \$90, *'Through the Artists Eyes'* is intentionally high end, printed on Hanoi silk paper in offset print. Each page has been visually crafted to be a work of art in itself.

'Through the Artists Eyes' is available for purchase via www.lesterprize.com or from The Lester Prize Welcome Desk at the Centenary Galleries during The Lester Prize Exhibition Season at AGWA.

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CONTACTS

Naomi Quinlivan

Publicist | The Lester Prize

Email | naomi@candystripepr.com.au

Mobile | 0408 598 977

Yvette Canét-Gibson

Marketing, Communications & Media Manager | The Lester Prize

Email | marketing@lesterprize.com

Mobile | 0428 883 002