



MEDIA RELEASE

7 July 2020

WA'S PREMIER PORTRAIT PRIZE RECEIVES BOOST WITH NEW MINDEROO FOUNDATION ARTIST PRIZE

Submissions are open for both adult and youth categories for WA's premier portrait prize—The Lester Prize. This award is now in its fourteenth year. It is one of the nation's most recognised and prestigious fine art prizes, renowned for putting artists and community front-and-centre.

Due to a new partnership with Minderoo Foundation, the prize pool available to professional, emerging and young artists is now worth almost \$85,000.

More than 500 artists from across Australia will be vying for The Richard Lester Prize for Portraiture (non-acquisitive; selected by a panel of judges) with the winner taking home \$50,000 cash. Prizes include the new \$10,000 Minderoo Foundation Artist Prize (non-acquisitive; selected by Minderoo); \$10,000 Tony Fini Foundation Artist Prize (non-acquisitive; selected by artists' peers); the \$7,500 People's Choice Prize kindly donated by the Baldock Family (selected by the general public); and two Highly Commended Prizes which will be awarded \$1,000 cash, a \$550 domestic art transport voucher, \$500 framing voucher and \$250 art supplies voucher each.

The Youth Portraiture Prize for high school students across Australia continues to expand with over 200 student entries expected this year.

"We are mindful the WA community is currently facing a huge health, social and economic upheaval. It is at times like this that we turn to the Arts to find meaning and beauty. When we come through this crisis—it will be more important than ever that we encourage and support our artists", said John Langoulant, The Lester Inc Chair.

"Creative industries matter to the economy and represent an investment in our quality of life. Arts and culture provide people from all walks of life an opportunity to expand social circles, develop skills and increase physical activity. They help us to explore and interpret stories, share discoveries and learn more about the world."

"We're thrilled to support the Lester Prize with the creation of the new Minderoo Foundation Artist Prize," said Nicola Forrest AO, co-founder of the Minderoo Foundation.

"COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the arts sector, and it's wonderful to see events starting up again as restrictions in WA continue to lift. The Lester Prize is already one of the most respected portraiture prizes in the country. We hope the new Minderoo Foundation Artist prize will attract more exceptional artworks for the West Australian community to enjoy."

The adult finalists' works will be open to the public at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) in the Centenary Galleries from 31 October – 29 November 2020, with the winner announced on 30 October 2020. Youth finalist works and Salon de Refusés works (which will be selected from entrants across the country and featured digitally on the big screen and on outdoor exhibition panels) will be on display during this time at Brookfield Place and other locations around Perth city.

The Prize has had over 4,800 artwork entries submitted and showcased more than 1,300 finalists from across Australia since its inception. Over the last 13 years, more than 3.2 million visitors have attended its exhibition season events and activities.

The Lester Prize

Submissions for the Main Awards close this week on 17 July 2020, and the Youth Awards two weeks later on 31 July 2020. Finalists for both competitions will be announced on 14 August 2020.

This year, the Lester Prize will allow artists to submit an unlimited number of portraits (instead of a maximum of two) and, due to physical distancing restrictions, works can be created from a photograph instead of from “life” - as long as the photograph has been approved by the subject.

Artists from across Australia are invited to submit portraits of an Australian, or Australians, that they respect or admire, or a self-portrait. Full Terms & Conditions are available at www.lesterprize.com.

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ABOUT THE LESTER PRIZE

The Lester Prize is managed by The Lester Inc, a not-for-profit organisation founded in 2007 to provide an avenue for artists to exhibit works of portraiture within Western Australia. With an annual prize pool worth over \$75,000, it is now one of the nation’s most recognised and prestigious art prizes.

Working with government, peak arts bodies and community groups, it plays a critical role in helping to diversify WA’s local economy, grow cultural tourism, and activate spaces through creative placemaking. The Lester Prize is proud to provide locals and visitors with the opportunity to engage with the best of the artform each year in a format that puts the artists and community front-and-centre.

The Lester Prize’s exhibitions and public events program is targeted at diverse groups in the community and includes artist floor talks, workshops, live art demonstrations and pop-up community activations across the city. The Prize advocates for Australian art and artists through a full month-long exhibition season which includes:

- Main Exhibition of original artworks at AGWA
- Youth Exhibition of original artworks at Brookfield Place
- Outdoor Salon des Refusés and Community, Hospital & Youth Exhibitions at Perth Cultural Centre and Brookfield Place
- Big Screen Displays at various locations throughout the Perth CBD.

Formerly known as the Black Swan Prize for Portraiture, it was rebranded in 2019 to The Lester Prize in recognition of Richard (Dick) Lester AM, the prize’s leading patron.

KEY DATES

Call for Entries open (Adult & Youth Prizes)	Sat 11 Apr 2020
Call for Entries closes (Adult)	Fri 17 Jul 2020 (5pm AWST)
Call for Entries closes (Youth)	Fri 31 Jul 2020 (5pm AWST)
2020 Finalists announced (Adult & Youth)	Fri 14 Aug 2020 (5pm AWST)
2020 Exhibition Season at Art Gallery WA, Brookfield Place, Perth Cultural Centre, Yagan Square & various locations around Perth CBD	Sat 31 Oct – Sun 29 Nov 2020
2020 Adult Winners (Main Awards) announced	Fri 30 Oct 2020
2020 Youth Winners (Youth Awards) announced	Wed 12 Nov 2020
2020 People’s Choice Prize (Adult) Winner & winning voter announced	Wed 2 Dec 2020 (5pm AWST)

CONTACTS

Yvette Canét-Gibson
Marketing, Communications & Media Manager | The Lester Prize
Email | marketing@lesterprize.com
Mobile | 0428 883 002

Naomi Quinlivan
Publicist | The Lester Prize
Email | naomi@candystripepr.com.au
Mobile | 0408 598 977