



MEDIA RELEASE

23 August 2021

30 YOUTH FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR WA'S RICHEST PORTRAIT PRIZE

Thirty high school-aged children from around Australia have been chosen as finalists in The Lester Prize's Youth competition – WA's premier portraiture prize. Formally known as the Black Swan Prize for Portraiture, this award is now in its fourteenth year.

The Youth finalist works will be on display at Brookfield Place's Tower 2, 123-125 St Georges Terrace Perth from 18 Oct – 12 Nov 2021 as part of The Lester Prize Youth Awards Exhibition, with the winners announced on 27 October 2021.

More than 150 young and aspiring artists from across Australia entered this popular portrait prize this year. A total prize pool of \$6,000 is up for grabs with students in years 7 – 12 awarded in three age group categories thanks to the generosity of Oxlades Art Supplies Perth, the Valuing Children Initiative and Lions Club City of Perth. Winners and runners-up will receive cash, gift vouchers and art supplies to help them further their art practice. Schools are also eligible to win half or full day workshops valued at \$1,500 with an award-winning professional artist.

The independent experts who made up the 2021 Youth Pre-Selection Panel included Craig Soulsby, Karen Sabitay and Jamie McGleave.

Craig Soulsby who is a professional artist based in Perth, and three-time finalist of The Lester Prize main award said "the submitted work for this year's Lester Youth Prize showcased a profound breadth of experience and style. Though the portrait submissions from our nation's youth were varied, a common and heart-warming thread united them; sincerity, honesty, and hope. The selection process felt streamlined and intuitive, yet challenging at times because of the quality of this year's submissions."

These young and aspiring artists were invited to submit portraits of an Australian, or Australians, that they respect or admire, or a self-portrait. To view the finalists visit www.lesterprize.com

The main competition of The Lester Prize features forty artists vying for a total prize pool of over \$100,000, making one of the richest prizes in Australia after the Archibald and Doug Moran competitions. These forty finalists' works will be on public display at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) from 16 October – 29 November 2021. The Main Awards Winners are announced on 15 October 2021.

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ABOUT THE LESTER PRIZE

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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 \$100,000, it is now one of the nation's most recognised and prestigious art prizes.

The Lester Prize pool includes \$50,000 cash, \$15,000 Tony Fini Foundation Artist Prize (selected by artists' peers), the \$10,000 People's Choice Prize kindly donated by the Baldock Family (selected by the general public), the \$10,000 Minderoo Foundation Spirit Prize (selected by the Minderoo Foundation), the \$5,000 Ashhurst Emerging Artist prize (selected by our judges), \$5,000 Barton Family Foundation Installers' Prize (chosen by AGWA's installation team) and two Highly Commended Prizes which will be awarded \$2,000 cash, a \$550 domestic art transport voucher, \$500 framing voucher and \$250 art supplies voucher each.

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 finalists artworks at AGWA's historic Centenary Galleries 16 Oct– 29 Nov 2021
- Big Screen Displays at various locations around Perth including Northbridge Piazza and Myer Forrest Chase runs Oct – Nov 2021
- Virtual Gallery, online events and creative resources
- Youth Exhibition of finalist artworks at Brookfield Place Tower 2 (123-125 St Georges Tce, Perth) runs from 18 Oct – 12 Nov 2021
- Outdoor Community Exhibitions at Perth Cultural Centre and Brookfield Place runs until 29 Nov 2021

KEY DATES

2021 Exhibition Season at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA), Brookfield Place, Perth Cultural Centre, Yagan Square & various locations around Perth CBD	16 Oct– 29 Nov 2021
2021 Adult Winners (Main Awards) announced	15 Oct 2021
2021 Youth Winners (Youth Awards) announced	27 Oct 2021

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