



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### INAUGURAL INSTALLERS' PRIZE CHOSEN FOR WA PORTRAIT PRIZE

New this year to the Lester Prize – WA's premier portrait prize is the Barton Family Foundation Installers' Prize. The winner of the \$5000 prize is NSW artist Sidney Tapia's for his portrait of Siasoi Feiloakitau titled *Through You*. Sidney often speaks to Siasoi at Sydney's famous Pitt Street Mall.

The work is oil on a wooden board, and despite its small scale – 20.3 x 20.3 cm, it is striking and caught the eye of the crew at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) when they were installing the exhibition.

This new award is similar to the popular Archibald Packing Room Prize. The Lester Prize exhibition is opening to the public on Saturday 16 October 2021 within the Centenary Galleries.

AGWA Installers Ako Roberts, Beau Spall, and Adrian Baldsing said that 'This artwork was chosen amongst portraits in which the "Gaze" coming from within the subjects played a large part, as there are many varied senses conveyed. Some are dower and others peaceful, compassionate and knowing. The eyes of Tapia's subject are looking back...a quick determined flash, to gain perhaps...a demand for recognition or a simple stare to communicate' catch up!' A fine artwork above all else.'

The Lester Prize is one of the nations most recognised and prestigious art prizes and is now in its fifteenth year. More than 750 artists from across Australia entered this prize, and the main winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on Friday 15 October 2021, before opening to the public for six weeks the next day.

The Lester Prize pool of prizes is now valued over \$100,000 including the main prize of \$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 Ashurst Emerging Artist prize (selected by our judges), and two Highly Commended Prizes, in addition to the Barton Family Foundation Installer's Prize.

There is also Youth Portraiture Prize for high school students across Australia. These thirty finalist works will be on display in Brookfield Place in October and November 2021, with winners to be announced on 27 October 2021.

"We are thrilled to announce our first prize of the 2021 exhibition season, and to involve the AGWA staff in the awarding of a prize. There is now much excitement building for the main awards night on Friday. COVID-19 travel restrictions have made it difficult for the finalists to be there in person, apart from the 12 WA artists out of the 40 finalists, however there will be celebrations and accolades for each of our winners regardless of their location," said Annie Silberstein, Executive Director from The Lester Prize.

Corinne Barton from The Barton Family Foundation said "we are excited to support The Lester Prize by annually sponsoring the painting that has most impressed those people tasked with setting up the exhibition. The winner of the 2021 Installers Prize, *Through You* has reinforced that old saying that the best things can arrive in the smallest of packages."

The Baldock Family People's Choice Prize will be announced on 2 December 2021.

**ENDS.....**

# The Lester Prize

## 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 \$100,000, 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 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 Yagan Square
- Youth Exhibition of finalist artworks at Brookfield Place Tower 2 (123-125 St Georges Tce, Perth) runs from 18 Oct – 26 Nov 2021
- Outdoor Community Exhibitions at Perth Cultural Centre and Brookfield Place runs until 29 Nov 2021

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