



MEDIA RELEASE

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YOUTH WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR WA'S PORTRAIT PRIZE

Seventeen-year-old high school student, Emilia Traverso from All Saints College has taken out the 1st Prize in the Years 11 – 12 category of The Lester Prize Youth Awards with her self portrait of titled *It Will Pass*. Taking out the 2nd and 3rd prizes in the Years 11 – 12 category was Perth College student Annabelle Watling for her portrait of a fellow teenage girl titled *Remorse* and Lucinda Tassone from John XXIII College with her portrait of her father titled *Class Clown*.

The 1st prize winners in the other aged categories were:

- Jasmine Slatter from John XXIII College, WA (Years 9 – 10)
- Gabrielle Badger from Coffs Harbour High School, NSW (Years 7 – 8).

These winning students and schools were announced at an awards ceremony at Brookfield Place in Perth CBD last night where the Youth works are currently on public display until 12 November 2021. They are located in Tower 2, 123-125 St Georges Terrace Perth.

The judges Dr Bruce Slatter, Sally Quin and Thelma Tom commented on Emilia's Diptych of drypoint etching, with monoprint and spore prints on printmaking paper 50 x 80 cm, saying that the work was: *"An experimental and conceptually sophisticated, enigmatic birds eye view of a body being embraced by nature – at rest, surrendering. A meditation on light and dark that talks about dealing with anxiety and change."*

About her work, Emilia said that 'the symbolism of mushrooms became the central concept of my artwork, they are a vessel through which decay can occur and new life can begin. Fungi are a temporary form, through the technique of spore printing I incorporated them into my actual work as fleeting, delicate and impermanent and placed on my body where my anxiety physically manifests. The two prints are on different layers of the earth with the white ink being the mycelium of the fungi and the black ink being the surface. The medium of printmaking is a labour intensive process, the testing that goes into making the 'perfect print' is reflective of a repetitiveness that I am aware of in my life. My anxiety often causes me to feel held back or stuck. Belief in an ability for change and the temporality of everything comes as a comfort to me. As the saying goes: It'll pass'.

More than 150 young and aspiring artists from across Australia entered this popular portrait prize this year, submitting portraits of an Australian, or Australians, that they respect or admire, or a self-portrait. A total prize pool of over \$6,000 was awarded to students in years 7 – 12 in three age group categories thanks to the generosity of the Valuing Children Initiative, Oxlades Art Supplies Perth, Lions Club City of Perth and Arts Edge Photo & Frame. Winners and runners-up received cash, gift vouchers and art supplies to help them further their art practice.

The Lester Prize

Schools were also eligible to win half or full day workshops valued at \$1,500 with an award-winning professional artist. This year, these were awarded to Prendiville College and All Saints College respectively.

In the main competition of The Lester Prize, NSW artist Sidney Tapia for his portrait of Siasoi Feiloakitau titled *Through You* won the 2021 Richard Lester Prize for Portraiture, taking home the \$50,000 main prize. Sidney, along with other Main Awards winners were announced last week at a ceremony at the Art Gallery of WA (AGWA), where the 40 finalists' works will remain on public display until 29 November 2021 in the historic Centenary Galleries.

Winners of the 2021 The Lester Prize Youth Awards:

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CATEGORY		
Yrs 11-12 1st Prize	Emilia Traverso	School: All Saints College
Yrs 11-12 2nd Prize	Annabelle Watling	School: Perth College
Yrs 11-12 3rd Prize	Lucinda Tassone	School: John XXIII College
Yrs 9-10 1st Prize	Jasmine Slatter	School: John XXIII College
Yrs 9-10 2nd Prize	Tianzheng Dang	School: Brisbane State High School
Yrs 9-10 3rd Prize	Emma Houghton	School: Prendiville Catholic College
Yrs 7-8 1st Prize	Gabrielle Badger	School: Coffs Harbour High School
Yrs 7-8 2nd Prize	Erin Hardy	School: John Curtin College of the Arts
Yrs 7-8 3rd Prize	Eva Lau	School: John Curtin College of the Arts
SCHOOL CATEGORY		
1st Prize	All Saints College	
2nd Prize	Prendiville College	

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For more information, visit: www.lesterprize.com

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 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

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