

## Art Gallery of South Australia launches country's richest prize for young contemporary artists

A new national \$100,000 acquisitive visual arts prize for artists under the age of 40 has been announced by the Premier of South Australia, The Hon Jay Weatherill MP. Presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia and supported in perpetuity by the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation, the **Ramsay Art Prize** aims to support and encourage contemporary Australian artists to make their best work, in what are arguably their best years.

Art Gallery of South Australia, Director Nick Mitzevich explains 'Generally speaking, artists make their mark early – they establish a signature that is then honed but often their early work is brave, fresh and career defining.'

'Tom Roberts painted *A break away!* when he was 35 years old proving that artists often hit their heights in their early years and that opportunities early on are formative and can change the nature of Australian art,' he said.

Premier Jay Weatherill MP said the commitment to Australian contemporary art demonstrated by the Art Gallery of South Australia and James & Diana Ramsay Foundation is exemplary.

'Since 1990 the Art Gallery of South Australia has been supporting contemporary art through the Adelaide Biennial. The Ramsay Art Prize continues and builds upon this commitment and is further affirmation of the importance of nurturing Australia's cultural landscape,' Mr Weatherill said.

'The James & Diana Ramsay Foundation's generous and ongoing investment in the Art Prize demonstrates their foresight and commitment to future generation of artists and art lovers,' he said.

The Ramsay Art Prize celebrates the important legacy of benefactors James and Diana Ramsay in supporting the art of our time. The Ramsay's began giving to the Gallery in 1972. Their support over four decades totals almost \$20 million.

Since 2009, their patronage has been directed through the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation, one of Australia's most generous philanthropic organisation and significant Art Gallery supporters. Through the Foundation they have contributed to the development of the collection and the exponential growth of family programs.

Diana Ramsay AO says 'This is a wonderful opportunity for young artists to create exciting new work. It will give the winning artist support at an important moment in their career.'

The Ramsay Art Prize is unique in that it invites submissions from Australian contemporary artists under 40 working in any medium. Finalists will be selected by an international judging panel. The judging panel will consist of an internationally regarded contemporary art specialist, an eminent Australian artist or curator and a representative from the Art Gallery of South Australia. In 2017 confirmed Ramsay Art Prize judges include Australian artist Nell and Leigh Robb, the Art Gallery's new curator of contemporary art.

Nell speaks to what this Prize will mean for artists when she says 'This prize represents a rare combination of opportunities – to be included in a curated exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia; to be acquired into the Gallery's collection and to receive a major financial reward that will fuel future work. For all the finalists the very opportunity to be selected for exhibition at the Art Gallery is immeasurable.'

All works selected as finalists will be exhibited in a major exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia from 26 May to 27 August 2017. The winner will be judged from the exhibition and announced at the official opening.

**Submissions open and full details, including entry terms and conditions, will be published online on 12 September 2016, visit [www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ramsay](http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ramsay).**

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