

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6PM FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER

Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize 2019 Winner announced

- Annual free exhibition featuring 43 international and local artists opens to the public -



Image: Merran Esson, *Autumn On The Monaro*

Sydney, Australia: The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, presented by Woollahra Council, today announced Sydney based artist **Merran Esson** and her work *Autumn On The Monaro* as the winner of the 19th annual acquisitive \$20,000 Prize. Sydney artist **Benjamin Jay Shand** was awarded the Special Commendation award valued at \$2,000 and artists **Kieta Jackson**, from Norwich, England, and **Jessica Leitmanis**, from Torquay, received a special mention. The 2019 Mayor's Award valued at \$1,000 has been awarded to Adelaide artist **Jane Price**.

The winners were chosen from a finalist group of 43 emerging and established artists by three guest judges: Dean of the Faculty of Art & Design and UNSW Chair of Arts and Culture, **Professor Ross Harley**; Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Opera House, **Louise Herron AM**, and Design and Architecture advocate, broadcaster, author and comedian, **Tim Ross**. All finalist works will be displayed as part of a free public exhibition from 12 October – 3 November 2019 at Woollahra Council in Sydney.

Professor Ross Harley commented on the 2019 winning sculpture: *"Merran Esson has made a beautiful work that evokes the forms and atmosphere of the Monaro autumn. The winning work displays a masterful use of material, palette and form but at the same time it has a warmth of emotion which draws the viewer into its field."*

Louise Herron said: *"Each piece of the winning work is superbly crafted with unique detail. The work as a whole is made even more beautiful by that diversity, much like nature itself."*

The Prize attracts a diverse range of professional and emerging sculptors from around the world with a total of \$24,000 in prize money awarded to winning artists.

Speaking of Benjamin Jay Shand's work *Array 3* the judges commended the precision of the execution, attention to detail and how the work plays with architectural form and light. *"The work is both precise and atmospheric in nature, giving rise to many different geometric forms as the viewer moves around it."*

The judges praised the special mention works, Jackson's *Braggadocio 1, 2018* and Lietmanis' *Spouts from which to drink, circa 200 C.E.* for their multidimensionality and execution of control, form and palette. **Tim Ross said of Jessica Lietmanis' work:** *"What set this work apart was the story it told around the collection of discarded items from one place that are salvaged and turned into something beautiful. The work highlights the beauty in the disposed and maintains a sense of humour while speaking to more serious issues around the ocean and waste."*

Winning artist Merran Esson said, *"I am delighted to be the recipient of this important prize that celebrates small sculpture while building a special collection and providing artists with an amazing opportunity to have their work seen by a wider audience. This is a great acknowledgement of the work I am doing now."*

Speaking about the Mayor's Award, Mayor of Woollahra Susan Wynne said: *"There were so many incredible works, but I was captivated by the elegance and simplicity of 'Clouds'. The three layers of porcelain appear to float with all the fragility of delicate clouds - it is just beautiful."*

The 2019 Prize attracted 634 entries – each for a freestanding sculpture of up to 80cm in any dimension – submitted by artists from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, highlighting the Prize's growing international reputation.

The free exhibition of finalists will be supported by a program of free events including artist talks and creative workshops with finalists and guided tours. For full details visit:

<https://sculptureprize.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/events>

The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize receives generous support from Principal Sponsor Mark Moran Vaucluse and Gold Sponsors John Symond AM and Merivale.

Ends

MEDIA CONTACTS: To request interviews, imagery and information in relation to the Prize, please contact Articulate: Megan Bentley, megan@articulatepr.com.au, 0452 214 611 or Kym Elphinstone, kym@articulatepr.com.au, 0421 106 139.

PRESS BANK: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ggvxi9hhhm8cjt8/AADzc7qObmMB2PflONynvOxQa?dl=0>

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

12 October - 3 November 2018

Free entry

Weekdays: 9am - 5pm

Weekends: 10am - 4pm

Woollahra Council, 536 New South Head Road, Double Bay, NSW

<https://sculptureprize.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/>



BACKGROUND ON THE WOOLLAHRA SMALL SCULPTURE PRIZE: The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize is an international prize for sculptures of smaller dimensions and has attracted strong support from artists, collectors, benefactors, critics, as well as the local community. The Prize was initiated in 2001 by Council to support, promote and celebrate artistic excellence.

The 2019 Woollahra Sculpture Prize finalist artists are: Ali McCann (VIC) Alison McDonald (QLD) Ara Dolatian (VIC), Benjamin Jay Shand (NSW) Brenda Page (VIC) Carol Cooke (ACT) Carol Lehrer Crawford (NSW) Donna Marcus (QLD) Erica Iazard (NSW) Jane McKenzie (NSW) Jane Price (SA) Jeffrey Wood (NSW) Jessica Leitmanis (VIC) Johannes van Nunen (NLD/NSW) Julie Monro-Allison (ACT) Julie Pennington (ACT) Kate Ellis (VIC) Kenny Pittock (VIC) Kieta Jackson (UK) Lisa Giles (NSW) Louis Pratt (NSW) Louiseann King (VIC) Luke Storrier (NSW) Mandy Quadrio (TAS/QLD) Mehwish Iqbal (NSW) Merran Esson (ACT) Natalie Rosin (NSW) Nathan Keogh (NSW) Neil Laredo (NSW) Nicole de Mestre (NSW) NOT (NSW) Oliver Ashworth-Martin (UK/VIC) Patricia Smart (NSW) Paula Dunlop (QLD) Peter Zappa (WA) Stuart Rex Mclachlan (NSW) Tai Snaith (VIC) Tina Fox (NSW) Toni Morrison (NSW) Tracey Deep (NSW) Ulan Murray (NSW) Veronica Andrus-Blaskievics (NSW) Wanda Gillespie (NZ).