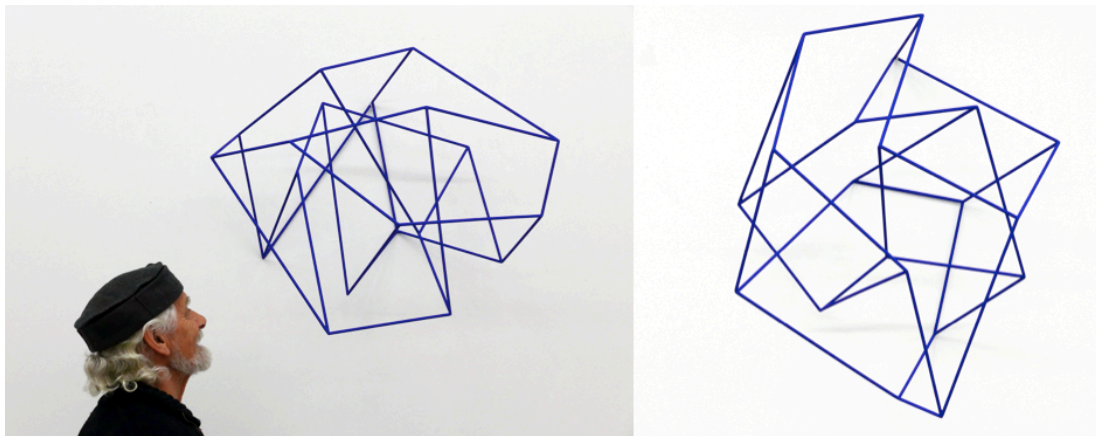


**Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize presented to senior Australian artist Robert Owen
- Robert Owen awarded \$15,000 acquisitive prize –**



L to R: Robert Owen with winning work, 'Symmetria #37'

Sydney, Australia: The 2015 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize – Australia's pre-eminent national prize for small sculpture – has been awarded to Melbourne-based artist Robert Owen, known for his rigorously minimal sculptural practice and richly coloured abstract paintings. Owen, who has exhibited work extensively, both nationally and internationally, over the past fifty years, has been awarded the \$15,000 acquisitive main prize for his bold, painted stainless steel work, 'Symmetria #37'.

Robert Owen's winning work 'Symmetria #37' is a continuing investigation into geometry, proportion and visual poetry. This work is a reflection on the themes of order and disorder, fragment and unity, levels of feelings, orders of sensation, shifting sequences and time and rhythm.

"Owen's winning work will make a very pleasing addition to our collection on public display at Woollahra Council. The geometric form is striking and the apparent movement is created by the use of lines which intersect space. It is a work that invites multiple views and it delights each time," said Mayor of Woollahra, Councillor Toni Zeltzer.

Mr Owen will be awarded the acquisitive prize money of \$15,000 at the opening of the exhibition this Friday 9 October at Woollahra Council Chambers. The sculpture will be acquired into Council's permanent public collection.

A record number of entries were submitted to the Prize this year, with Owens sculpture being one of 701 works submitted that was later chosen from a selection of 43 finalists. The judging panel for the 15th annual Prize was comprised of **Dr Michael Brand**, Director of The Art Gallery of NSW, **Penelope Seidler**, CEO of Harry Seidler & Associates and Curatorial Advisor **Barbara Flynn**.

Commenting on the process and choice of winner, the Judges said: *"This year's prize includes a good representation of both established and emerging artists, working across a diversity of mediums and approaches. Works in paper predominated along with the use of traditional materials used in new ways and an inventive use of colour."*

"Owen's sculpture reveals a complex and sophisticated use of line and shadow. A senior Australian artist, with significant works on a monumental scale across Sydney, his winning submission demonstrates excellence also on a smaller scale."

Established in 2001, the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize is Australia's first national award for an original, freestanding sculpture of up to 80 centimetres in any dimension. The Prize categories are the main acquisitive

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01am Friday 9 October 2015

award of \$15,000; a Special Commendation award of \$2,000; the Viewers' Choice award of \$1,000; and the Mayor's Award, valued at \$1,000.

This year the Beowulf Award will be introduced in recognition of artist Thor Beowulf, the 2012 winner of the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, who recently lost his battle with pancreatic cancer. The Beowulf family has introduced a \$1,000 prize, in remembrance of Thor, awarded to artists who consider ideas surrounding the environment and plants in their sculptures. This year the family have selected Kendal Murray as the recipient of the Beowulf Award, for her work '*Game, Claim, Exclaim!*,' a work that responds symbolically to our natural and botanical surroundings.

The prestigious Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize has been previously won by a number of well-known artists, including New Zealand artist Nathalie Guy who won the 2014 with *Form for modern living #2*, a five-kilogram bronze cast of what was originally a reworked plywood school-chair. Previous winners also include; Julia deVille (2013), Mikala Dwyer (2003), Louis Pratt (2006), Adam Cullen (2008), Alexander Seton (2009) and Archie Moore (2010).

The 2015 finalist artists are: Adrian Clement (NSW); Alli Symons (SA); Anita Larkin (NSW); Anita Reay (QLD); Annette Thas (WA); Anthea Williams (VIC); Aprile Alexander (NSW); Arenaria (NSW); Belinda Winkler (TAS); Carmel Wallace (VIC); Eli Braga (Brazil); Fiona Hueston (NSW); Fleur Brett (VIC); Glen Clarke (VIC); Guan Wei (NSW); Holly Dormor (NSW); Huseyin Sami (NSW); Hwanhee Kim (Finland); James and Eleanor Avery (QLD); John Nicholson (NSW); Julia deVille (VIC); Kathy Temin (VIC); Kendal Murray (NSW); Lisa Giles (NSW); Mark Booth (NSW); Matt Dabrowski (QLD); Melissa Cote (NSW); Michelle Cawthorn (NSW); Michelle Ussher (UK); Penelope Campbell (VIC); Robert Owen (VIC); Rocket Mattler (NSW); Roma Butler (NT); Rosalind Byass (VIC); Ruby Aitchison (VIC); Serena Bonson (NT); Sophie Carnell (TAS); Stephen Bird (NSW); Titania Henderson (VIC); Tracey Deep (NSW); Veronica Andrus-Blaskievics (ACT); Wendy Black (VIC); Yioryios Papayioryiou (NSW).

The winners of the Special Commendation, Mayor's Award, the Highly Commended, the Viewer's Choice awards and the Plinth Prize will be announced at the official launch event on the evening of Friday 9 October 2015, held at the Woollahra Council Chambers in Sydney.

The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize receives generous support from Principal Sponsor Mark Moran Vaucluse, Gold Sponsors John Symond AM, Sanchia Brahimi, Belle Property Group Double Bay and the InterContinental Sydney Double Bay.

Ends

MEDIA CONTACT: To request interviews, imagery and information in relation to the Prize, please contact Anna Shapiro, anna@articulatepr.com.au or Kym Elphinstone, kym@articulatepr.com.au, 0421 106 139.

EXHIBITION DETAILS: A free exhibition of all the finalist sculptures will be presented from 10 October until 25 October 2015 at the Woollahra Council Chambers. The winners will be announced on 9 October 2015.

ROBERT OWEN BIOGRAPHY: Robert Owen studied sculpture under Lyndon Dadswell at the National Art School, Sydney, graduating with honours in 1962. He lived in Greece (1963–66) and London until 1975, when he returned to Sydney. In 1988, he moved to Melbourne, where he held the position of Associate Professor and Head of Sculpture at RMIT University until 2001. Owen's practice includes sculpture, installation, painting, photography and major public commissions. He was awarded a John Moore's Liverpool Exhibition 7 UK prize (1969) and represented Australia at the 38th Biennale of Venice (1978). Owen has received major design awards for public commissions including Webb Bridge, Melbourne in collaboration with architects Denton Corker Marshall, and is represented in numerous public and private collections worldwide. In 2003, he received the Australian Council Visual Arts/Crafts Emeritus Award for a lifelong service to the visual arts. Robert Owen is represented by Arc One Gallery and is a member of Artery Co-operative Ltd, Melbourne.

BACKGROUND ON THE PRIZE: The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize is a national prize for sculptures of smaller

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01am Friday 9 October 2015

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, but also to encourage the local community to access the then, newly renovated Woollahra Council Chambers. Expert advice and recommendations for management of the Prize is sought from the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize Committee who meet approximately five times a year as well as attend key milestones in the delivery of the Prize. In its fifteen-year history, the Prize has successfully established an important position in the yearly national sculpture competition calendar. The Prize attracts local, national and international entries each year.