

**Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize presented to Sydney artist
- Todd Robinson awarded \$15,000 acquisitive prize -**



Sydney, Australia: The 2016 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize – Australia’s pre-eminent national award for small sculpture – has been awarded to Sydney artist Todd Robinson. Mr. Robinson has been awarded the \$15,000 acquisitive main prize for his work, *Psychic Staircase*, an eight-kilogram plywood staircase atop which sits an orange balloon that droops as the force of gravity appears to bear down on it.

Psychic Staircase originates from an ongoing series of balloon inspired sculptures by Mr. Robinson that explore sculptural presence, materiality and conditions of audience reception.

Mr. Robinson says: *“In conceiving this particular work I am interested in the physical sensation of vulnerability that one experiences through the feeling of vertigo, as well as the psychology surrounding particular architectural features such as stairs and landings. The work is cast directly from a latex balloon and finished with automotive lacquer. The balloon is balanced precariously on top of a model staircase. Notably the stairs are not realistically proportioned but rather distorted, with very narrow treads, emphasising the sense of isolation.”*

Mr. Robinson will be awarded the acquisitive prize money of \$15,000 on Friday 14 October at the opening of the free exhibition of finalist’s art works that will be presented from 15 October until 30 October 2016 at Woollahra Council in Sydney. The winning sculpture will be a welcome addition to Council's permanent public sculpture collection.

614 entries were submitted to the Prize this year, with Mr. Robinson’s sculpture being one of a selection of 46 finalists. The judging panel for the 16th annual Prize was comprised of cultural icon Wendy Whiteley OAM, CEO and Group Fairs Director of Art Fairs Australia Barry Keldoulis and Senior Curator at Macquarie University Art Gallery Rhonda Davis.

Commenting on the judging process and choice of winner, Wendy Whitley OAM said: *“The judging process was good fun and we chose the winning work as a consensus. The marriage of hard and soft in Todd Robinson’s work creates a wonderful aesthetic that also contributes to the polished and professional look of the exhibition of finalist works as a whole.”*

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Barry Keldoulis commented: *“From a large field full of potential, three judges with quite distinct perspectives whittled down to half dozen serious contenders, all with different attributes for a contemporary art prize; displaying interesting cross-cultural conversations, a certain push-pull of materiality, or perhaps a battle within form. With just a little argy-bargy, we have a list of winners and highly commended with which we are all happy.”*

Commenting on the judging process, Rhonda Davis said: *“The range of work was incredibly diverse and of a high caliber, making the judging process very difficult. The winning work by Todd Robinson stood out as it challenges our visual perceptions of spaces and the relationship of objects with people within spaces.”*

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 attracts a diverse range of professional and emerging sculptors from around the world with a total of \$19,000 in prize money awarded to winning artists across six categories. The Prize categories are the main acquisitive award of \$15,000; a Special Commendation award of \$2,000; the Yeldham Family Commendation of \$1,000; the Viewers’ Choice award of \$1,000; the Mayors Prize of \$1,000 and two highly commended awards courtesy of sponsor InterContinental Sydney Double Bay.

The prestigious prize has been previously won by a number of well-known artists, including Robert Owen, who won the 2015 Prize, Julia DeVille (2013) Mikala Dwyer (2003), Louis Pratt (2006), Adam Cullen (2008), Alexander Seton (2009), Archie Moore (2010) and Thor Beowulf (2012).

The 2016 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize finalist artists exhibiting works in the exhibition are: Andrew Rogers (VIC); Alan Constable (VIC); Alan Rose (NSW); Andrew Southall (VIC); Carol Lehrer Crawford (NSW); Craig Waddell (NSW); Cyrus Tang (VIC); Daniel Templeman (QLD); David Capra (NSW); Del Kathryn Barton (NSW); Dinni Kunoth Kemarre (WA); Emma Coulter (VIC); Glenda Kent (SA); Hugh McLachlan (TAS); James Parrett (VIC); Jan Downes (NSW); Jason Waterhouse (VIC); Joan Ross (NSW); Julie Rrap (NSW); Jurek Wybraniec (WA); Kirsten Pieterse (Hong Kong); Kris Coad (VIC); Lauren Brincat (NSW); Louis Pratt (NSW); Louise Haselton (SA); Louise Kerr (NSW); Lucy Barker (NSW); Lynda Draper (NSW); Nerissa Lea (TAS); Owen Leong (NSW); Peter Zappa (WA); Phil Cousins (VIC); Philip Jarvis (NZ); Rocket Mattler (NSW); Rodney Pople (NSW); Rose Nolan (VIC); Seb Brown (VIC); Shane Forrest (NSW); Sherna Teperson (NSW); Stephen Benwell (VIC); Stephen Bird (NSW); Susanna Strati (NSW); Tetsuro Yamasaki (Japan); Todd Robinson (NSW); Walter Auer (NSW); Yioryios (NSW).

The winners of the Special Commendation, the Yeldham Family Commendation, Mayor’s Award, the Highly Commended and the Viewer’s Choice awards will be announced at the official launch event on the evening of Friday 14 October 2016 held at the Woollahra Council Chambers in Sydney.

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

Ends

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EXHIBITION DETAILS:

A free exhibition of finalist’s art works for the 16th annual Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize will be presented from 15 October until 30 October 2016 at Woollahra Council in Sydney. All sculptures are available for sale with the exception of the winning work that is acquired into Woollahra Council’s public collection. Further information is available at <http://sculptureprize.woollahra.nsw.gov.au>.

TODD ROBINSON BIOGRAPHY: Born in 1971, Todd Robinson lives and works Sydney. He has exhibited his

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work within a range of institutional, contemporary and artist run contexts, including AGNSW, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne and held solo exhibitions *Experiments in Suspense Sculpture*, Chasm Gallery USA, *Natural Philosophy, Oooh*, Sydney Contemporary Art Fair with Galerie Pompom (2013), *Sightlessness*, Artspace, Sydney curated by Sally Breen (2006), *Karakish*, Grantpirrie Gallery, curated by Tony Stephens (2009), *Reservoir*, Gitte Weise Gallery (2004) and MOP Projects, Sydney (2007, 2009).

He has received numerous grants and residencies including Australian Council of the Arts, New Work Grants (2016, 2014, 2004) NSW Ministry of the Arts, Gunnery Studio Residency (2007), Nava Grants (2008) and Frasers Queen Street Residency (2011). His work has been collected by the National Gallery of Victoria, Artbank and Ipswich Art Gallery, Queensland. He recently fulfilled sculptural commissions for Artbank, Ipswich Art Gallery and Aileen Sage Architects. He was a finalist in the NSW Travelling Arts Fellowship Prize, Artspace (2013), Redlands Konica Minolta Art Prize (2013), National Art School and The Deakin University Sculpture Prize (2012).

He combines his art practice with academic and research work as a doctoral candidate and Lecturer in Fashion, School of Design, University of Technology, Sydney.

ABOUT THE PRIZE: The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize is a national prize for sculptures of smaller dimensions and has attracted strong support from artists, collectors, benefactors, critics, and the local community. The Prize was initiated in 2001 by Council to promote and celebrate artistic excellence, and encourage local community access to the Council Chambers as a site for celebrating and sharing cultural development. The Prize attracts local, national and international entries each year.