

The *2021 Geelong contemporary art prize* is an acquisitive award for contemporary painting.

The twenty-eight works presented this year were selected from an Australia-wide field of over 600 entries. In representing some of the country's finest established and emerging artists, this exhibition provides a particular survey of current approaches to subject matter, genres, and stylistic diversity. Painting continues to be one of the most engaging and enduring disciplines in the visual arts, and each of the finalists in this exhibition exemplifies artists' unique engagement with the material qualities of paint to configure their idiosyncratic visions and observations.

The absence of an overarching prize theme ensures diverse responses to the natural world; the built environment; the figure; references to art history and popular culture; and explorations of colour and form through abstraction.

The *2021 Geelong contemporary art prize* is generously supported by the Dimmick Charitable Trust. The prize continues a long tradition of acquisitive award exhibitions presented by the Gallery, through which the permanent collection has grown substantially. The first painting prize—the Geelong Centenary Art Competition—was held in 1938, and in the 80 years since, the Gallery has awarded acquisitive prizes variously for paintings, watercolours and prints, generously sponsored by various individuals, philanthropic and corporate supporters committed to contemporary art.

Paintings acquired from previous prizes are among the most significant works in the Gallery's collection, including works by Peter Booth (1972), Lesley Dumbrell (1979), Richard Larter (1980), John Nixon (1996), Janenne Eaton (1998), Ann Thomson (2002), Kate Beynon (2016) and Andrew Browne (2018).

Judging panel for the *2021 Geelong contemporary art prize*:

Jenepher Duncan, Art historian, curator and writer

Grazia Gunn, Art historian, curator and writer

Jason Smith, Director & CEO, Geelong Gallery

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