



Media Release

Media Contact
Ali Webb, House of Webb
T 0438 190 328
E ali@houseofwebb.com.au

2026 Geelong Contemporary Art Prize finalists announced

A Geelong Gallery exhibition
7 November 2026 to 28 February 2027



Darren Wardle
The afterlife of things 2024
synthetic polymer paint and oil on linen
Courtesy of the artist



Kirsty Budge
Red, White and Blur 2025
oil on canvas
Courtesy of the artist



Tully Moore
& Chips 2026
oil on potato hessian sack
Courtesy of the artist

Geelong Gallery is delighted to announce that 36 works by leading and emerging Australian artists have been shortlisted for the 2026 Geelong Contemporary Art Prize.

The \$30,000 acquisitive prize and biennial exhibition celebrates contemporary Australian painting, bringing together a strong selection of artists working across the country.

Selected from over 500 entries, the 36 shortlisted works reflect the breadth, skill and diversity of contemporary painting practice in Australia today. The 2026 selection brings together established and emerging artists whose works explore a wide range of subjects, ideas and approaches to painting.

The 2026 finalists are: **Matthew Asling, Colleen Ahem, Natasha Bieniek, Seth Birchall, Elisabeth Bodey, Mairin Briody, Kirsty Budge, Stephen Bush, Ellie Chalmers-Robinson, Samuel Rush Condon, Jonathan Crowther, Hop Dac, Anh Do, Chelsea Gustafsson, Katherine Hattam, Euan Heng, Madeline Kidd, Tony Lloyd, William Mackinnon, Tania Major, Moya McKenna, Jennifer Mills, Tully Moore, Jan Murray, Grant Nimmo, Rose Nolan, Jack Nicholls Paterson, Stieg Persson, Kenny Pittock, Adam Pyett, Victoria Reichelt, Steven Rendall, Anthony Romagnano, Sally Ross, Darren Wardle, and Alice Wormald.**

The selection panel for the 2026 Geelong Contemporary Art Prize comprised guest judge, **Lauren Ellis**, Curatorial Manager, Bendigo Art Gallery; **Lisa Sullivan**, Assistant Director, Curatorial, Geelong Gallery; and **Humphrey Clegg**, Director & CEO Geelong Gallery.

Humphrey Clegg, Director & CEO, Geelong Gallery congratulated all 36 finalists selected for the 2026 Geelong Contemporary Art Prize.

'We received 506 entries from across the country, encountering an exceptional breadth of talent. As a judging group, we focussed on what we felt was the strongest and most interesting paintings for right now.'

I am particularly pleased that the Prize continues to provide an opportunity to recognise and support Australian artists, while growing Geelong Gallery's Collection through the acquisition of the winning work. The finalists this year reflect the strength of contemporary painting across Australia. I look forward to seeing how audiences respond to the exhibition when it opens, we hope it creates conversation, stimulates new ideas and introduces new artists.'

The 2026 Geelong Contemporary Art Prize will be on display at Geelong Gallery from Saturday 7 November 2026 to Sunday 28 February 2027. The winning work will be selected from the exhibition and acquired into the Geelong Gallery Collection.

-ENDS-

Background

Over the past two decades, works by Travis MacDonald (2024), Naomi Hobson (2022), Diena Georgetti (2021), Andrew Browne (2018), Kate Beynon (2016), Rob McHaffie (2014), Paul Ryan (2012), Tim McMonagle (2010), Nadine Christensen (2008), Sam Leach (2006) and Juan Ford (2004) have been acquired through this nationally significant painting prize.

The official announcement will be made on Saturday 7 November at 4.00pm, where the recipient of the \$30,000 prize will be announced.

Exhibition partners

Dimmick Foundation



Geelong Gallery
55 Little Malop Street
Geelong VIC 3220 Australia

T +61 3 5229 3645
marketing@geelonggallery.org.au
geelonggallery.org.au