



Grace Cossington Smith art award 2014

National prize for two dimensional art

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Grace Cossington Smith art award announces 2014 winner

Wahroonga, Sydney:

The inaugural Grace Cossington Smith art award today announced that Rachel Kent, Head Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney, declared Margaret Loy Pula's painting *Anatye Bush Potato* the \$15,000 winner.

The annual acquisitive award is sponsored by Abbotsleigh, which is delighted that the acquisition will launch a new collection that will grow over the coming years and enable the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery to provide a unique cultural drawcard and learning environment for contemporary art on the North Shore.

This year artists were invited to submit original, two dimensional artworks that reflect the theme of Making Connections. The theme was inspired by the works of Abbotsleigh alumna Grace Cossington Smith, a pioneer of modernist painting in Australia, who created brilliantly coloured observations of the world around her.

Artist Janet Laurence and curator Nicholas Tsoutas selected 15 finalists from 370 entrants. Each finalist will receive \$1,000. The other finalists are Susan Andrews, Kevin Chin, Julia Davis, Ella Dreyfus, Jacqueline Drinkall, Cherine Fahd, Sara Freeman, Adrienne Gaha, Sarah Goffman, André Hemer, Petrina Hicks, Pollyxenia Joannou, Wendy Sharpe and Senye Shen.

Statement from the GCS art award judge, Rachel Kent Head Curator Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney.

Judging the 2014 Grace Cossington Smith art award has been an enjoyable and informative experience. Comprising wall based works by 15 finalists from around Australia, it encompasses painting, print making, photography and object making. From oil and acrylic to egg tempera, permanent marker and felt, it reveals some of the many materials and techniques that artists are using today: experimenting with surfaces, the play of light and shadow, physical scale, and representations of landscape and the human body.

*I would like to acknowledge the practices of all 15 finalists as well as the many artists who submitted their work for consideration for the exhibition. It gives me particular pleasure to commend the 2014 award recipient, Margaret Loy Pula, from Utopia in the Northern Territory, with her shimmering painting *Anatye Bush Potato*. In this work a radiating network of lines in soft browns and red depicts the underground root system of the bush potato or bush yam, and its pattern of growth following seasonal rains. Collected by the women in the community and baked in the coals of the fire, the bush potato reflects in the artist's words 'my culture, my family'. This painting documents her father's dreaming and his country north of Utopia, called Unjangola. In its delicate profusion of dots, mesmerising opticality and powerful narrative content, this work stood out for me. It will, I hope, be a fitting starting point for a strong collection of art works acquired by Abbotsleigh to educate young people about the art, culture and history of this country. **Rachel Kent 2014***

Margaret Loy Pula is the daughter of well known Utopian artist Kathleen Petyarre. She and her daughter Abie Loy Kemarre were both taught by Kathleen Petyarre. Margaret had her first exhibition in 2010 and she is represented by Muk Muk Fine Art.

The exhibition of the finalists' work will be on display until 25 October at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery. Entry is free and the gallery is open from Monday to Friday, 10 am–5 pm.

Available for interview:

Mary Faith, Director of the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, 9473 7878

Photography: Photo provided. *Anatye Bush Potato*, 2014 Acrylic on Linen, 150 x 150 cm

