

MEDIA RELEASE

Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith art award 2026

We are excited to announce the winners

Michael Lindeman

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith art award
\$25,000 acquisitive



Frankie L. Abroon

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith
early career artist award \$5,000 non
acquisitive



Clare Brodie

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith
local artist award \$5,000 non acquisitive



Adam Norton

The opportunity to collaborate with 3:33 Art Projects

MEDIA contact:
Mary Faith, Lisa Jones 02 9473 7878
gcsgallery@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au

High resolution images are available.

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith art award \$25,000 (acquisitive) **Michael Lindeman**



Regression Painting (Networking...), 2025,
finger-painted acrylic on mirror,
140 x 140 cm

Regression Painting (Networking...) is a finger-painted acrylic text work on a mirror that reflects my own participation in the art world's social economy. The mirrored surface absorbs viewers and surroundings, folding acts of networking – connecting, mingling, comparing notes – into a perceptual field that hovers between legibility and abstraction. Crisp reflective text is jarred with smeared, gestural colour. Informed by Freud's notion of regression, the use of finger painting operates as a wilfully immature gesture within a high-art context, deploying humour to unsettle taste, professionalism and the rituals that sustain artistic circulation.

Represented by Sullivan+Strumpf

Statement from Michael Lindeman: My work confronts my position as an artist, amusing myself when loitering in the realm of institutional critique. While drifting—in a Roland Barthes kind of way—I shine a light on the mechanics of the contemporary art world. I have a habit of making text paintings, drawings, sculptures and site-specific installations to dislodge repressed impulses. I received a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Honours (First Class) in 1998 and a Master of Fine Arts in 2004, both from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales. I was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy, University of Sydney, Sydney College of the Arts in 2025. I've exhibited in group and solo shows nationally and internationally. <https://www.michaellindemanart.com/>

Judges comments

Michael Lindeman has a joyful approach which we both really like, particularly in these difficult times. He grapples with the exhibition concept of connections in multifarious yet significant ways. In many other languages, there would probably be only one or two words to describe 'connections' and this is an interesting idea that made us consider the vastness of the English language, where supposedly no two words actually mean the same thing. So here there are a lot of different connections, and they are all subtly different. We appreciated how Lindeman incorporates humour in this work. Reading becomes an arduous task that you must work at really hard, and it takes longer to decipher, and that draws you into the image. Reading the text is disturbed because of the partially disguised mirror surrounded by the colourful fingerpainting - an intergenerational connection that is very much dismissed as an art form, but here looks fantastic! The mirror creates connections with oneself looking at the painting and with others, as you look at them without them knowing. We smiled while looking at this painting and felt it was interesting to think about notions of 'good taste' and judgement and what people consider a suitable artwork for hanging on a wall.

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith art award early career artist award \$5000 (non acquisitive)

Frankie L Abroon



Part of Home, 2026,
oil, tile, coloured grout on board,
120 x 60 cm

My work explores the path to connecting with my Iranian heritage through objects and images of personal and cultural importance. Each work is imbued with elements of my personal history, moments from my childhood home and memories of tradition. I also include learned histories; compositions of Iranian miniatures and elements of the Saqqa-Khaneh movement in Iran in the 1950s. My practice centres around making connections between my life growing up in Australia and my Iranian heritage. This piece has furniture from homes in 1970's Iranian households with objects, patterns and tiles from my childhood home in Australia. I use the conventions of Western figurative paintings with patterns in Persian carpets and mosaic tiling techniques. Drawing these connections through paint, form and composition encapsulates the Diasporic experience, bending histories and exploring identity. The complexity of my arrangements allows me to express the multiplicities and nuances of the Diasporic experience. I think of my works as being constructions, where both my cultural identities live, as I build stronger connections between homes and histories.

Statement from Frankie L'Abroon: Figures and space are my primary concerns. Human bodies communicate so much and placed together in a picture have such a narrative power. My figures often look stuck with thick oil stick gridding which is a response to personal feelings of being stuck in spaces that are meant to be safe. I render figures by mixing translucent and opaque paint as the figures move and dance in their imagined spaces. I am torn between two painting concerns, the narrative and the formal application. Sometimes I create groupings to display people who are undergoing conflict or calm in spaces that feel like they are falling apart, and other times, I just need to see a line of ultramarine oil stick or a thick bit of brown oil paint right next to a light translucent yellow.

<https://www.frankielaart.com/about>

Judges comments

On walking into the gallery, we were immediately drawn to this work by Frankie L'Abroon. It was the composition and the materiality of the painting that grew our interest the longer we spent with it. There is something quite complex and interesting about L'Abroon's layering of memory and her personal histories that make connections to her heritage and life in Australia. As an early career artist, she has used an enormous variety of materials, patterning, subject matter of historical remembrance and current living environment, that could have been a dog's breakfast, but it comes together successfully. The artist has brought these elements together beautifully in a quite unconventional way.

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith art award local artist award \$5000 (non acquisitive)

Clare Brodie



form . placement . time 9, 2025,
matt vinyl paint on cotton canvas,
76 x 71 cm

I make paintings that map unseen connections through form, placement and time. My practice approaches landscape as a field of relationships rather than a site for depiction. Working through reductive compositions, flat matte colour and a subtle underlying grid, I explore how architectural and topographic forms align, separate and coexist. Opaque and transparent shapes negotiate proximity without collapse, suggesting intimacy, belonging and the tensions within community. Spatial order becomes a language of connection, where distance, repetition and alignment carry emotional weight. Painting is a place of listening — an attentive process shaped by restraint. In this work, connection is held through spatial relationship rather than narrative. It exists in the intervals between forms, in disciplined omission, and in the balance between stillness and quiet movement — a field where relationships are continuously negotiated.

Represented by Gallerysmith Vic

Statement from Clare Brodie: Brodie's paintings explore relationships between form, placement and time through colour and structure. Drawing from landscape, Brodie constructs distilled compositions where form, colour and spatial placement interact within a calm and deliberate structure. Working with flat colour and precise edges, Brodie treats colour as a precious element, introducing saturated hues sparingly within a restrained palette. Working in conceptual series, Brodie develops distinct visual systems that evolve across each body of work.

<https://clarebrodie.com/>

Judges comments

In form. placement. time by Claire Brodie we saw an interesting reflection of the environment surrounding us. This upper North Shore neighbourhood can be imagined in terms of three major elements- nature, residential architecture, and commercial development. Brodie's work makes a subtle connection to this sense of place. She is working in an abstract way, connecting forms and colours from architecture and nature in a reductive composition that allows you to feel those relationships in a new way.

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith art award collaboration with 3:33 Art Projects

Adam Norton

3:33
art projects



Two Venetian Robots, 2026,
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, diptych,
84 x 59 cm (each)

In 2023 I was invited to participate in a group exhibition in Venice, Italy, with a number of overseas artists. Together with two of the other participating artists, we were able to make the opening of the exhibition and stay for the show. During that time we all got on famously, and we have continued to encourage each others' practices since. These images of robot faces (or intercom boxes) appear all over Venice, and I have been working on a series of them. They always make me smile and remind me of those new friends and our time together in Venice.

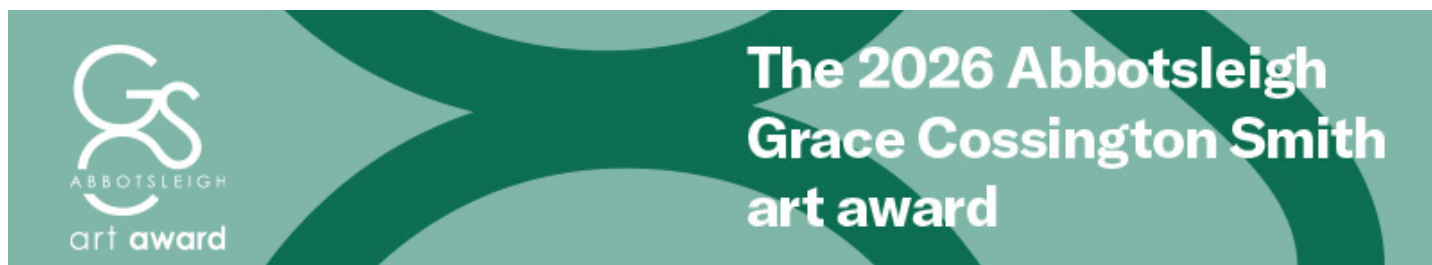
Adam Norton is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans painting, installation, video and public art, exploring the intersections of science, technology, speculation and the human condition. Born in the United Kingdom and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, and Nairobi, Kenya, Norton completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University, in 1984. Since 2002 he has lived and worked in Sydney.

Drawing on histories of space exploration, atomic testing, ufology and scientific discovery, Norton creates vibrant works that merge research, observation and imagination. His longstanding fascination with meteor craters, remote landscapes and visions of the future informs projects that examine humanity's enduring relationship with the unknown.

<https://adamnorton.net/>

3:33 Art Projects has created the innovative Young Curators art program to partner with secondary schools. It supports education in the arts and provides unique experiences for the students, the school and the broader community whilst supporting Australian artists.

<https://www.333artprojects.com/>



Established in 2014, the Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith Art Award is a biennial acquisitive award that brings together emerging and established artists from across Australia. Open to artists working in any two-dimensional medium, including drawing, painting, watercolour, collage, printmaking, photography and textiles, the award showcases the breadth and diversity of contemporary artistic practice. United by the award's enduring theme, *Making Connections*, the exhibiting artists explore relationships between people, places, cultures and ideas through a rich range of perspectives and media.

Ron Adams, NSW; Kim Anderson, VIC; Sally Anderson, NSW; Susan Andrews, NSW; Susan Baird, NSW; Richard Bardsley-Smith, NSW; Emma Beer, ACT; Lee Bethel, NSW; Ynja Bjornsson, NSW; Yvonne Boag, NSW; Clare Brodie, NSW; Lucia Canuto, NSW; Tam Cao, NSW; arHITects, NSW; Tsz Chan, NSW; Tristan Chant, NSW; Donovan Christie, SA; Xanga Connelley, NSW; Cutler Footway, QLD; Inga Dalrymple, NSW; Julia Davis, NSW; Tamara Dean, NSW; Amy Dynan, NSW; Edward Essing, NSW; Shannon Field, VIC; Dianne Gall, SA; Louise Gresswell, VIC; Craig Handley, NSW; Tina Havelock Stevens, NSW; Petrina Hicks, NSW; David C. King, NSW; Frankie L. Abroon, NSW; Nerissa Lea, TAS; Michael Lindeman, NSW; Tom Loveday, NSW; David Newson-Tran, NSW; Anh Nguyen, NSW; Adam Norton, NSW; NOT, NSW; Lori Pensini, WA; Tim Price, NSW; Debbie Pryor, SA; Marisa Purcell, NSW; Lucy Roleff, VIC; Jennifer Rosnell, NSW; Peter Sharp, NSW; Chantelle Stewart, NSW; Kate Tucker, VIC; Kate Vassallo, ACT; David Wells, QLD; Anna Weston, QLD; Cynthia White, NSW.

The Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith Art Award brings together 52 works by leading and emerging artists from across Australia.

The 2026 winners were determined by guest judges Anna Davis, curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, and Barry Keldoulis, Senior Art Consultant/Assistant Director at Artbank.