



Wagga Wagga artist named finalist in Australia's ultimate landscape art award

Wagga Wagga-based First Nations artist Juanita McLauchlan has been selected as a finalist in the prestigious Wynne Prize, Australia's oldest award for landscape art.

Finalists were announced on Thursday morning at the Art Gallery of NSW in Sydney.

McLauchlan's journey to apply for the Wynne Prize was supported by her residency at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, in turn made possible by the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant.

Juanita McLauchlan says she is excited to hear that she has been selected as a finalist.

"I'm just thrilled, a bit more than thrilled really," McLauchlan said.

"As a young artist making art I used to think about entering the Wynne Prize and think 'Maybe one day,' and next week I'll be going to Sydney to see my work on display in the exhibition.

"It's mind-blowing to be named a finalist, I feel like I've won already."

McLauchlan's artwork, *mudhay burrugarrbuu- bula/ Possum Magpie* also is an intimate portrait of Wagga Wagga; a large bush contact print on woolen blanket with possum fur and hand stitching. Through complex alchemy of bush contact printing, the woolen blanket (representing both comfort and protection) absorbs the oils of the plants native to Wiradjuri Country.

McLauchlan uses bush contact printing to mark her work with her memories of family including her five children raised here in Wagga Wagga, and to depict the animals and plants native and unique to this place.

"We had a visit from over 20 magpies when our daughter was born," McLauchlan said

"They sung at the back door when we brought her home, a welcome we had never experienced. She is almost four and the magpies run up to us on the street to this day."

McLauchlan says the support of the Wiradjuri Elders and Community and the wider Wagga Wagga community have been key to pursuing her art career.

Dr Lee Anne Hall says this success for Juanita is a success for all regional artists, and the recognition of McLauchlan's art is a significant moment for the wider Wagga Wagga community.

"The Gallery is proud to champion the work of Juanita, helping to raise her profile and navigate this next step in her art practice and career," Ms Hall said.

The winner of the Wynne Prize 2024 will be announced in a special ceremony in Sydney on Friday 7 June.

The Wynne Prize 2024 exhibition featuring all finalists will be on display at the Art Gallery of NSW in Sydney from 8 June – 8 September 2024.

For more, visit: www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/prizes/wynne/ and www.waggaartgallery.com.au

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For media enquiries, please contact the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery on 6926 9660 or egan.mary@wagga.nsw.gov.au

Media images:



Juanita McLauchlan. Photo: Jack of Hearts Studio.



'mudhay burrugarrbuu- bula/ Possum Magpie also'
by Juanita McLauchlan as a work in progress at the
TAFE Wagga Wagga campus studio.

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by Juanita McLauchlan. Photo: Art Gallery of NSW

