



2021 JUDGES REPORT

Every time I work with young people or get to see the work produced by kids I am consistently impressed by the ingenuity, spirit and hard work that goes into it. Quite often I'll look at the work of a teenager and think to myself that I'll never be able to make a work of that standard. It was a real honour to be invited to judge the 2021 Mosman Youth Art Prize, and sorting through all the terrific entries my faith in the next generation of Sydney artists was only bolstered. The biggest challenge when undertaking an endeavour like this is the unfortunate job of removing works and choosing finalists. There wasn't a single work that was underserving of a place on the wall, and at times I felt ruthless, but in the end, you have to go with your gut. I hope any young artist that didn't get in wasn't dissuaded from art-making or future competitions, and I want to encourage each and every one of them to keep at it.

Picking the winners was a really enjoyable process, and while I have to acknowledge the fraught nature of art competitions and the impossibility of choosing the objective 'best', it was still a joy to pick my favourites on the day. Without artists statements it was sometimes difficult to gauge some of the more obtuse works, so I looked for what I understand as skill and hard work, and I read all the titles. I looked for a deft and practiced hand, creativity and the successful exploration of an idea. For me the nature or sentiment of the idea was secondary to the artist's capacity to communicate it. Whether it was political or a detailed description of bark, as audience and judge I was particularly drawn to the works where I was taken on a little journey and rewarded with some understanding of what the artwork was about.

I'd like to thank Jane Gillespie from Mosman Art Gallery and everybody else that was involved, and I would like to pass on a special congratulations to the winners.

Abdul Abdullah, artist

2021 Mosman Youth Art Prize Judge