

# MEDIA RELEASE



1 Art Gallery Way  
Mosman NSW 2088 AUSTRALIA  
02 9978 4178 [mosmanartgallery.org.au](http://mosmanartgallery.org.au)

Tuesday 25 September 2018

## Natasha Walsh wins 2018 Mosman Art Prize

The 2018 Mosman Art Prize – Australia’s oldest and most recognised local government art award – has been awarded to Sydney-based emerging artist **Natasha Walsh**.

Walsh has won the **\$50,000** acquisitive main prize for *The cicada*, 2018, an oil on copper painting which now enters the celebrated Mosman Art Collection, a valuable and historic collection that surveys Australian painting since 1947. Known for her striking but intimate small-scale self-portraits, Walsh’s winning entry depicts the artist dressed in an old gown, removing a veil from her face.

Walsh says: *“The cicada, an insect long associated with immortality and re-birth, represents here a state of being. Her shell is an old mouldy dress and veil, which has become disappointing, constrictive and confining - a representation of self which we uncomfortably wear and present to the world. In this case the veil conceals not only our imperfect, changing, true self from the world, but also obscures our vision in turn. These roles become confining and yet comforting, however growing pains make them almost impossible not to shed. As such this piece is primarily a work about vulnerability and self-awareness as she removes the veil, shedding her clothing like a cicada does its shell. The painting in turn is also aware of its own alchemical construction, as the figure ‘holds up’ her own illusion of space and form from the flat and reflective copper support with the same hand that pins up a non-existent veil. A painting itself is a shell, which artists leave behind. It imitates the form and mind which once occupied it, however it is not immortal. It only prolongs as older state of being, and once being created will eventually wither and die.”*

### About Natasha Walsh

Born in 1994, Walsh is currently based in Neutral Bay, Sydney and graduated with a Masters in Fine Art at the National Art School in 2017. She was recently awarded the 2018 Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship and the 2018 Kilgour Prize, and has been a finalist in the Archibald Prize in 2016, 2017 and 2018. In 2015 Walsh was winner of the Mosman Art Prize’s Emerging Artists’ Award and was also third place in the Tertiary category of the Mosman Youth Art Prize. In 2017 she had her first solo exhibition at Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney and has exhibited in a number of group shows, including at S.H. Ervin Gallery in Sydney, Art Gallery of Western Australia and the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh. Walsh is currently represented by Dominik Mersch Gallery.

Walsh was presented with the first prize of \$50,000 by 2018 judge, artist and former Prize winner, **Cressida Campbell**, at the official launch event on the evening of Tuesday 25 September at Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney.

**Commenting on the winning work, Cressida Campbell says:** *“Natasha Walsh’s beautiful painting on copper spoke to me immediately. Her self-portrait seems to come from another world, finely drawn and painted, it excites me in a similar way to that of the German painters Hans Memling and Lucas Cranach the Elder. Curiously there is also a shadow of Lucien Freud in her work and he was also German. The acutely observed and delicately painted pale figure emerging from the copper in her ethereal clothing is both startlingly contemporary and yet wistfully mysterious at the same time. To paint a figure is always ambitious and Natasha Walsh’s “The cicada” manages to be beautiful yet unsentimental, as well as original.*

**Commenting on the choice of winner, John Cheeseman, Director, Mosman Art Gallery says:** “At only 24 years of age Natasha Walsh is on track to become one of the greats in Australian art. It has been extraordinary to witness her progress – first as an entrant and winner of the Mosman Youth Art Prize, to regular finalist in the Mosman and Archibald prizes, and now as winner of the 2018 Mosman Art Prize.”

Further awards presented on the night included the **Margaret Olley Commendation Award** (\$5,000) given to Zoe Young (Bowral), the **Allan Gamble Award** (for built environment) valued at \$3,000 won by Khaled Sabsabi (Sydney), and the **Guy Warren Emerging Artists’ Award** (\$2,000) presented to Becky Gibson (Canberra).

The 2018 Mosman Art Prize attracted over 660 entries from across Australia with 105 paintings selected for the finalist exhibition.

**Mosman Mayor, Councillor Carolyn says:** “Mosman Council congratulates all finalists in the 2018 Mosman Art Prize. Established in 1947 and presented annually, the Prize is recognised as the oldest and most prestigious municipal art award in Australia. Last year Council increased its support and the major prize now stands at \$50,000 attracting some of the best artists in Australia.”

A total of \$60,000 in prize money was awarded to artists across four categories:

**Major Prize (acquisitive) \$50,000** – Supported by Mosman Council

**Winner: Natasha Walsh (Sydney)**

for *The cicada*, 2018, oil on copper, 55.5 x 38cm

**Margaret Olley Commendation Award \$5,000** – Supported by Gillian and the late Brian Jones

**Winner: Zoe Young (Bowral)**

for *Winter Soundtrack // 99 Luftballoons*, 2018, acrylic on Belgium linen, 120 x 140cm

**Allan Gamble Award \$3,000** – Supported by Christine and the late Hugh Fraser

**Winner: Khaled Sabsabi (Sydney)**

for *Guerilla*, 2018, acrylic paint on photographic paper, 24 x 26.5 x 30cm

**Guy Warren Emerging Artists’ Award \$2,000** – Supported by Fourth Village Providore

**Winner: Becky Gibson (Canberra)**

for *Timber*, 2017, oil on board, 160 x 120cm

#### **2018 Mosman Art Prize Details**

- Mosman Art Prize – 71 years in 2018
- On show **Wednesday 26 September to Sunday 18 November 2018**
- Presented at Mosman Art Gallery, 1 Art Gallery Way, Mosman NSW 2088
- Exhibition is free to the public
- Gallery is open 7 days, 10am – 5pm (closed public holidays)
- Reception: 02 9978 4178
- [www.mosmanartgallery.org.au](http://www.mosmanartgallery.org.au)
- Public programs including an artist talks event, tours and a drawing workshop will accompany the exhibition
- Visitors to the exhibition can vote in the Viewers’ Choice Award which will be announced prior to closing



#### **Media contact**

Public Programs, Exhibitions & Media Officer, Jane Gillespie  
j.gillespie@mosman.nsw.gov.au 02 9978 4178 m 0419 784 030

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