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Finalists revealed after record number of entries

Seventeen women have been selected among 32 national finalists in what is believed to be the world's richest landscape art award, the *Hadley's Art Prize*, announced today.

The annual acquisitive prize, worth a lucrative \$100,000 will be awarded to the artwork that best portrays the Australian landscape.

In only its second year, entries have almost doubled, with organisers recording a staggering 640 submissions.

Finalists were selected by a panel of three national art specialists – Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Exhibitions and Collections at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Clothilde Bullen, Principal Curator of Art at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Jane Stewart and prolific hyper-real artist, Michael Zavros.

Prize Judge, Jane Stewart, said deliberations over the finalists' selection were arduous and not without debate between the three judges.

"There was great diversity between the artists, which we have tried our best to represent in the shortlist," Ms Stewart said.

Ms Stewart said of the 32 finalists, 11 artworks were by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island artists.

"It was terrific to see interest from a number of Aboriginal artists, many of whom bring such a vital perspective to Australian landscape," she said.

Ms Stewart said it's pleasing to see that women make up the majority of finalists in what was shaping up to be an exciting exhibition.

Prize Curator Dr Amy Jackett said the variety and high quality of finalists' artworks this year would appeal to a wide audience.

"The finalists have provided a vibrant and diverse range of responses to the Australian landscape, which visitors to Hobart will be able to experience up close next month," Dr Jackett said.

The winner and recipients of the highly commended awards will be announced at the opening of an exhibition of finalists' work, to be held in two custom-designed galleries in the John Webb room and Leadlight room at Hadley's Orient Hotel in Hobart on 20 July.

“There are some fantastic events on offer during the exhibition including presentations in partnership with UTAS about landscape and place, guided tours and packages with Hadley’s signature afternoon tea, as well as the extended Education Kit for school groups, which has been endorsed by the Arts Education Australia,” Dr Jackett said.

“There’s really something for everyone in the finalists’ exhibition.”

The *Hadley’s Art Prize* is one of Australia’s most significant and lucrative art awards, with the winning entry added to a permanent art collection at Hadley’s Orient Hotel, alongside last year’s winning artwork.

The *Hadley’s Art Prize* Exhibition is open to the public and runs from 21 July to 25 August.