

## ***Verdant Garden* wins the Mercury People's Choice Award in the Hadley's Art Prize**

Victorian artist, Jennifer Riddle, has been voted by exhibition visitors as winner of the Mercury People's Choice Award in the 2018 Hadley's Art Prize, with her depiction of a garden cloaked in mist, it was announced today.

The \$5,000 prize was a welcome surprise to Riddle, who visited the exhibition during its opening in July when local artist Neil Haddon took out the \$100,000 landscape prize with his 'War of the Worlds' inspired artwork.

Riddle, who was also the recipient of the People's Choice Award for the Glover Art Prize last year, said she has long been drawn to the Tasmanian landscape.

"In recent years, my inspiration has been shared between the pastoral surrounding of my home in Victoria and the evocative wilderness of the Tasmania's remote Southwest," she said.

"I have no doubt that this award will be reinvested back into Tasmania's economy as I plan further exploration across the beautiful state."

Riddle, who lives on the Mornington Peninsula, said her motivation to paint came from nature's ability to heighten the senses.

"When painting *Verdant Garden* the damp air was infused with the scent of the wooded forest... but I could no longer see its familiar form—where towering eucalypts usually shadowed the land, a wall of white hung silently in the air, swallowing the landscape I knew so well," she said.

The artist moved to the Mornington Peninsula after the death of her sister, hoping to fulfil her creative aspirations and find comfort.

"I needed to be amongst the trees and I needed to fulfil my longing to paint. Never had I ever felt such certainty. I feel that this was a direct result of Andrea's loving encouragement before she died," Riddle said.

"This experience gave me a new way of seeing the land, a deeper connection and gratitude that helped heal and fulfil my spiritual self."

Hadley's Art Prize Curator, Dr Amy Jackett, said she was pleased with the high number of visitors to the exhibition this year and, although different artworks resonated with each person, Riddle's piece won with an overwhelming number of votes.

"*Verdant Garden* was a standout for viewers of all ages and was interestingly, the artwork most admired by visiting school groups," Dr Jackett said.

# Hadley's Art Prize

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The exhibition at Hadley's Orient Hotel features the work of 31 finalists, whose works were selected from 640 entries received this year. The exhibition is open to visitors until 25 August with some artworks still available for purchase.

The Hadley's Art Prize is an annual acquisitive art award for contemporary landscape art. Entries for the 2019 prize will open early next year.

Ends

### **Photographs available:**

Image 1: Mercury People's Choice Award winner, Jennifer Riddle with artwork, Verdant Garden. Credit: Jessica King

Image 2: Artist Jennifer Riddle in her studio. Credit: Katherine Jamison

Image 3: Winning artwork, Verdant Garden 2018 Acrylic 138cm x 153cm Credit: Jennifer Riddle



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