3 November 2015

Mandorla: 30 years and going strong

The 2016 Mandorla Art Award will build on the positive foundation of the past as it looks to the future, embracing the best contemporary artists inspired to create artworks that respond to the award’s religious theme.

In celebration of this momentous milestone, the Mandorla Retrospective Exhibition is currently on show at the New Norcia Gallery. It exhibits all of the previous 17 winners’ works that have been acquired through the award’s 30 year history, plus a selection of finalist's artworks that were acquired into the New Norcia collection following their exhibition in the award.

It is housed within the former convent on the grounds of the New Norcia monastery, Australia’s only monastic town 132km north of Perth, still operating under the guidance of the New Norcia Benedictine Community. At the centre of this historic enclave is the Gallery & Museum, which has permanent and rotating exhibitions on display.

The relevance of the Mandorla Art Award can be measured by the consistency and excellence of its winning works. This exhibition charts the artistic development of many high profile artists; John Coburn, John Paul, Annette Allman, Concetta Petrillo, Michael Kane Taylor, Brian McKay, Julie Dowling, Ron Gomboc, Nigel Hewitt, Ivan Bray, Alan Baker, Michael Iwanoff, Theo Koning and most recently Paul Kaptein. Though several of these artists have sadly passed away, for the majority of these artists their practice is flourishing; 2014 winner Paul Kaptein has continued to excel in his sculptural practice and shortly after his Mandorla prize, he won the Mid-West Art Prize as well as exhibiting in the Bank West Art Prize, the Melbourne Art Fair, several international group shows, a solo exhibition with Turner Galleries and a residency in New York.

The 1985 inaugural winning work “Re-creation” by Theo Koning is as fresh as it was 30 years ago with the distinctive figurative style that defined Theo's paintings in the 80's remains captivating. Theo continues to be one of Perth’s most respected artists and is represented in many important Australian national, state private and corporate collections.

The year after Julie Dowling won the Mandorla in 2000 she was announced as one of Australia's most collectible artists (the Art Collector magazine). Dowling’s painting 'Born for you' was inspired by the celebration of Jesus’ birth at Christmas, with family members modelling for the portrait.

While the retrospective documents the history of the Mandorla Art Award, it also demonstrates the strong foundations that have paved the way for Mandorla’s future, and since St John of God Health Care confirmed their long-term support as its major sponsor, the future is looking bright.

The Mandorla Art Award Retrospective Exhibition is currently on show in the New Norcia Gallery & Museum until March 2016.

About the 2016 Mandorla Art Award
• Entries Close 2 May 2016
• Exhibition 15 – 26 July 2016 at Linton and Kay Galleries Perth

The Mandorla Art Award is a national award open to artists working in all media. Offering an acquisitive first prize of $25,000 and two non-acquisitive highly commended awards of $5,000 each, plus a $2,000 popular choice award, the Award currently celebrates its 30th anniversary. For information on how to enter, inspiration, commentaries and reflections on the 2016 theme “The Resurrection” visit [www.mandorlaart.com/2016-award](http://www.mandorlaart.com/2016-award)
The 1985 inaugural winning work “Re-creation” by Theo Koning (above) showcases the distinctive figurative style that defined Theo’s paintings in the 80’s remains captivating. Theo continues to be one of Perth’s most respected artists and is represented in many important Australian national, state private and corporate collections.

2014 winner Paul Kaptein has continued to build on his practice, winning the prestigious Mid-West Art Prize, exhibiting in the Bank West Art Prize and the Melbourne Art Fair, and holding a solo exhibition with Turner Galleries and a residency in New York.
About the Mandorla Art Award

The Mandorla Art Award for contemporary religious art is Australia’s most significant thematic religious art prize, attracting some of the country’s finest artists since its 1985 inception. For more information, visit www.mandorlaart.com

About St John of God Health Care

St John of God Health Care is a leading not for profit Catholic health care group, employing 9,300 caregivers across 13 hospitals, pathology, home nursing and Social Outreach and Advocacy services in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific. For more information, visit www.sjog.org.au

About New Norcia

The New Norcia Benedictine Community, a group of Roman Catholic monks, have lived in, owned and operated the small town of New Norcia WA since 1847. Since 1986, the community has collected well over 100 modern artworks on religious themes. For more information, visit www.newnorcia.wa.edu.au

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