

Mandorla Art Award Theme Launch

30 March 2017

This is truly a memorable occasion. We are gathered to celebrate the word of God in two particular ways – through the work of the Bible Society and the work of artists supported by the Mandorla Art Award. Thank you Greg for presenting to us the spectacular new book “Our Mob, God’s Story”. Having already had the pleasure of sitting with this book and spending time absorbing the word of God through the eyes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, I am deeply impressed with the concept, the contributions and the authenticity of this work. It is of course wonderful to see Mandorla winners included in the group of artists!

The work of the Mandorla Art Award is expressed in two ways. We work to encourage artists to reflect upon a biblical theme and then express it in a way that enlivens our understanding of the passage through the use of either contemporary or traditional methods. We also work to show the Church that there are many artists of high quality who are able and willing to provide artwork for our places of worship, healing, education, and other ministries. To this end we also work to encourage the purchase of religious artworks. If artists cannot sell their work they cannot continue – gone are the days of being employed by the Church solely for art commissions. That is very rare.

Religious art is necessary to religious people. Since the dawn of our human species there have been expressions of the bringer of life, the creator spirit. Over millennia those expressions have changed and developed and as Christians we see the importance of imaging Jesus, the Son of God, as a crucial way in which to deepen our response and our understanding.

As an example – Kim Carpenter’s work is featured on the cover of the magazine Madonna published in Melbourne this year; Anh Do and Julie Davidson’s images were used in Melbourne Catholic published last month; Annette Allman’s winning work from 2010 was used in Australian Jesuits Companions last year; Paul Kaptein, as our 2014 winner, was asked for his interest in a commission for a Catholic College chapel in Sydney; David Lovell publishing has expressed interest in using Mandorla finalists for their Australian Religious Diary, Mandorla artists

are represented in the book published tonight. This work will continue as we offer artists a way of showcasing their capacity for religious art.

To this end we need workers in the field of these endeavours. We are delighted that since the 2016 Award we have 5 new committee members: Rev Craig Collas (our host this evening), Rachelle Dusing, Beth Harcourt, Patricia Oliver and Mary Casotti. They have already brought new energy, insights and skills to our group and we are grateful. We are also grateful for our long term members, Fr Chris Ross and Patricia Toohey and to Maureen Sellick (our secretary) and Michael Anderson (treasurer), and particularly our talented curator, Kristy Gough.

Without our sponsors we would not have an Award and to them we give our immense gratitude. St John of God Health Care have guaranteed us funding until 2020 which has made our planning procedures much smoother. The Uniting Church, the Anglican diocese of Perth and the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth provide our patrons as well as being sponsors. We have a very special connection with the Benedictine Community in New Norcia where our collection of winners is housed. They provide the People's Choice Award and have our works on exhibition at various times. In 2015 the entire winners' collection was on exhibition for 12 months and 33,000 people visited. That is excellent exposure for all of our artists. To our other sponsors we are also very grateful.

And so to the next Award. The first step is to reveal the biblical theme chosen by our committee and kept under wraps since last November. This information will come alive on our website tomorrow along with the podcasts from tonight and the text of our next speaker's address as well as other commentaries for artists to absorb. Please check out our website tomorrow!

It is my pleasure to introduce Rev Prof Bill Loader.

William Loader, informally known as Bill, was born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1944. Educated at Auckland University where he studied Classics and Trinity Methodist Theological College, he was ordained in 1969. After completing a Bachelor of Divinity from Otago University the same year, he travelled to Mainz, Germany, where in 1972 he completed a Doctor of Theology writing his thesis in German. In 1978 he

moved to Perth to take up the position of New Testament Lecturer with the Uniting Church Perth Theological Hall, subsequently playing a leadership role in the establishment of Theology at Murdoch University where he became Professor of New Testament and is now Emeritus. Bill has written over twenty books, including major works on sexuality in the ancient world based on research undertaken as an Australian Research Council Professorial Fellow 2005-2010, and has published many books and articles on the New Testament across a range of fields. Bill was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1996 where he has exercised leadership roles in both Religion and Classics and in 2003 was awarded a Australian Commonwealth Centenary Medal “for services to Australian society and the humanities in the study of religion”. He is currently Secretary for International initiatives of the Society for New Testament Studies, an honorary position, is engaged in international research initiatives on the Gospel according to John, and a frequent contributor to both international academic conferences and to the task of mediating scholarship to the wider church and community.

Thank you Bill for accepting our request for you to launch our theme for the 2018 Mandorla Art Award.

