



creative generation
excellence awards in visual art

central exhibition

celebrating the 2023 excellence winners

27 April to 25 August 2024, Gallery of Modern Art



creative generation
excellence awards in visual art

2024 artist catalogue

including program alumni spotlights



CELEBRATING
30 YEARS
OF EXHIBITING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that the following pages contain images of people who have passed away.



Minister's message

What a wonderful celebration of 30 years of the Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art exhibition this year with such an incredible group of young artists. Exhibitions such as this showcase the amazing talent of our students in our great education system in Queensland.

Whether it be a pencil, paint brush, clay, yarn, digital or other material, each young artist has chosen a medium that reflects their creative style to help deliver powerful messages.

Through their art, students explored their diverse cultures and identities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestries, as well as themes such as environmental issues, artificial intelligence, emotional wellbeing, reflections on society, nature, music, nostalgia and more.

The passion and dedication from our Queensland teachers is present in every student's submission. They have nurtured the talents and skills of these students to help them reach their full potential.

Visual art education helps students to understand and appreciate its role in traditions and cultures from ancient through to modern times and contributes to a well-rounded education.

To relish in this achievement with friends, family and people across Queensland in public galleries is a unique and special opportunity for these students. They have not only created something meaningful, but something to be proud of into the future.

I trust that all entrants and winners of this year's program feel a sense of accomplishment through the concepts, designs and artworks they have created.

Special mention to our program partner QAGOMA and each of the regional galleries for showcasing students' works for their peers, families and the community to appreciate.

I am honoured to witness this excellence in visual art from Queensland students and wish them all the best for a bright future ahead.

The Honourable Di Farmer MP

Minister for Education and
Minister for Youth Justice



Director-General's message

I congratulate the 2023 winners of the Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art who are among the best young artists in Queensland.

This is a truly magnificent achievement for everyone involved.

The Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art recognise and promote excellence in senior visual art education throughout Queensland state and non-state schools.

The program raises awareness of the degree of sophistication in concepts, diversity of technical competence, and the high standard of visual art education in Queensland secondary schools.

This year's exhibition is particularly significant as we celebrate its 30th year. In this time Queensland students have created thousands of inspiring artworks. The range of submissions are as diverse as the young artists and the places in which they live.

This year there were 37 winners and 105 commendations, from a total of 459 submissions across 177 Queensland schools.

These included collage, installations, painting, sculpture, mixed media, photography, video, wearable art and more.

The winners have been awarded the unique opportunity to display their works in high end galleries to showcase their achievement and spark further success in their artistic endeavours and their futures.

The calibre of submissions is a testament to Queensland schools and the talented art teachers who have supported every student to succeed.

I thank the students, school staff, regional coordinators, state selection panel and departmental staff for your contribution to this program.

I look forward to celebrating the future successes of this year's winners and the many creative cohorts to come.

Michael De'Ath

Director-General
Department of Education

Program overview

The Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art recognise and promote excellence in senior visual art education throughout Queensland’s state and non-state schools.

Over the past 30 years of exhibiting, the program has raised community awareness of the degree of sophistication in concepts, diversity of technical competence, and the high standard of visual art education in Queensland secondary schools.

In that time over 13,000 works have been submitted into the awards and displayed in regional galleries and venues across the state, and of those approximately 1200 received an Excellence Award and were showcased in the Central Exhibition which commenced at the Queensland Art Gallery in 1994.

The Department of Education is proud of its long-standing relationship with Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art who provide a world-class facility in which to view the

student exhibition, offering a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many aspiring artists.

In recognition of the breadth of the visual arts, the awards include mediums of video, film and electronic imaging as well as ceramics, costume and stage design, drawing, environmental design, fibre arts, graphic design, installation, painting, performance art, photography, printmaking, product design and sculpture. Works from the 2023 cohort have also investigated the application of AI in visual arts.

The awards continue to offer the only collective exhibition program representing senior student work from each region of the state.

In 2024, the Central Exhibition at QAGOMA celebrates 37 works by the 2023 excellence award winners (selected from over 500 submissions state wide) and is open until 25 August 2024.



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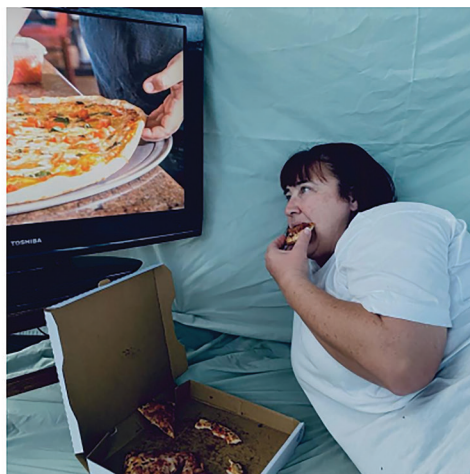
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Alice Edgerton

Australia b.2006
The Cathedral School of St Anne and St James

Tasteless Irony 2023

Digital photographs on photographic paper

In today's society, many people are extremely busy and most have no time or desire to cook. *Tasteless Irony* explores the contemporary context in which many people long for a fresh, homemade meal but are not motivated to cook. The work shows the guilt, self-loathing and regret that people feel.

The audience is invited to consider the woman's feelings as a battle between internal and external motivations: as much as she might want to get up and cook for herself, the effort of finding a

recipe, ingredients and cleaning up is too much; internally she feels lazy, but also feels the external social pressure to be healthy and proactive.

At the end of the overwhelming emotions, the woman freezes and ends up stuck in an unhealthy loop, mocked by the pizza on the screen.



Alyssa McDonald-Smith

Australia b.2006
Fairholme College

The inevitability of everyday 2023

Digitally manipulated photographs on aluminum

The inevitability of everyday delves into the issue of falling into a depressive cycle; simply existing and not living. The use of distorted photographs challenges the viewer to try and understand the setting of each image.

However, the inability to recognise what is represented reflects how we can never truly comprehend the struggles of others, as well as the difficulty in forming memories when engaging in repetitious, dissociative cycles.

The muted blue palette conveys both calmness and sadness, implicitly revealing how people can find comfort in the mundane.

The eerie presence of the single figure in each image reflects the idea of isolation and encourages the audience to consider the lack of connections in what might be a sustained, monotonous pattern of depression.



Amelia De-Vitry

Australia b.2006
Genesis Christian College

Will You Remember Me Tomorrow? 2023

Embroidery on tulle

Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australia. Despite this, it is constantly swept under the rug and those with dementia become forgotten, isolated and alone.

Will You Remember Me Tomorrow? reflects my Nonna's experience with dementia as she desperately tries to hold onto her memories, identity and culture but cannot as her mind deteriorates and the threads unravel.

The back of the work reveals the haunting reality of watching her become unrecognisable. It serves as a reminder to make the most out of the time we have with our loved ones.



Bali Kohring

Australia b.2006
All Saints Anglican School

Solace 2023

Mixed media installation (oil on canvas, plaster, cotton sheet, lavender)

Solace explores the idea of comfort through the formal and personal contexts. Beds are our habitat for so much of our lives; a place of relaxation that allows us to feel at 'home' and true to ourselves, and of peaceful vulnerability. The representation of generic white linen in *Solace* appeals to the sense of familiarity and the aromatic lavender brings forth feelings of relaxation.

The accompanying crisp, ironed and folded sheets juxtapose the crumpled, indented bed composition, serving to emphasise the human presence that has so evidently sought solace in the bed. The sculpted pillows carry impressions created by sleeping heads. These, however, belie the truth: the hard, cold plaster has been deliberately manipulated into false hollows, leading the viewer to question their initial impressions.

The small scale conveys intimacy, prompting closer inspection, and reflects the fragility of one's emotions despite outward appearances.



■ Ben Carlin

New Zealand/Australia b.2005

King's Christian College

Sport Serenades 2023

Found objects (wooden tennis racquets, hockey sticks, cricket bats and baseball bat), guitar hardware and strings, amplifier parts, synthetic polymer paint, wire

Sport Serenades investigates the mystical relationship between music and feelings. People can connect and communicate with one another through music in a way that transcends words or language. People and music have a strong and profound bond, and this work explores the connection between music and human emotions.

Inspired by Willie Cole who uses discarded objects to create assemblages and the work of Diego Stocco who makes unorthodox instruments, I created a series of pseudo, ready-made guitars. My instruments are constructed from objects that come from sport which already resemble the form of a guitar. It echoes those times when people cannot help themselves but pick up a tennis racquet and pretend to be the guitarist of a rock band.



■ Benjamin Rosenberg

Australia b.2005

Toowoomba Grammar School

Mitchell 2023

Single-channel video, 3:20 minutes, 16:9, colour, sound

In this work, I wanted to allow the audience to see the world through someone else's eyes. Mitchell Wilkes is a Year 9 student at my school and has deteriorating eyesight.

This film offers a glimpse through his lens for a few minutes. What you see is drawn from interviews with Mitchell where he described his sight.

I chose to put a large focus on the way Mitchell sees nature and people's faces, and the way he uses his drone as another set of eyes. Mitchell approved all the visuals, ensuring the film is an accurate depiction of his distinctive eyesight.



Caitlin Davies

Australia b.2005
Queensland Academy for Creative Industries

Matrilineal 2023

Embroidered found objects (metal mesh strainers, citrus juicer, tea infuser) and embroidered tea bags

Matrilineal uses kitchen appliances intertwined with delicate floral embroidery as a testament to the strength of our female ancestors. I gathered kitchen tools from second-hand stores, objects that have a history and that I imagined belonged to mothers, wives, partners and grandmothers; women who held the weight of their families.

The embroidered detail shows flowers from both my mother's and grandmother's gardens. Embroidery symbolises female strength and empowerment, as it is a craft that was traditionally used by women as an outlet for self-expression.

This work pays homage to our female ancestors for finding beauty in the confinements of their gendered society and establishing a foundation for the progress of future generations.



Chloe Rodd

Australia b.2005
Varsity College

19-23 2023

Digital drawing on vinyl on acrylic

2020. A year that brought the world to a standstill, leaving an indelible mark on society. Amidst the profound impact of the pandemic, it is essential to recognise the unique struggles faced by the younger generation.

In my artwork, I delve into the psychological consequences of the pandemic on young people. It shows a teenager desperately chasing a departing train, his anxiety intensifying as he finds himself hindered by a younger child struggling to keep pace.

The artwork explores the conflict the young protagonist faces — trapped between the expectations and pressures to mature during the latter teen years, and the absence of social development opportunities caused by the pandemic.

The struggle of the teenager is palpable, as he races to catch up and embrace the opportunities that come with early adulthood, while still clinging to the remnants of his broken childhood.



■ Ciaran Glasheen

Australia b.2006

The Cathedral School of St Anne and St James

Monological Melody 2023

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas

In the realm of the audible, we discover and experience not only melodies and rhythms, but also an intimate sensation transformed by our own emotions and memories.

This artwork is an exploration of this intricate bond between self and sound. It is not simply a portrayal of individuals donning headphones; rather, it delves into the notion of music becoming an inseparable part of our being.

Headphones, often seen as mere tools, are depicted here as an extension of the body, suggesting that we are, by nature, wired for sound, yearning to connect with the harmonies that resonate with each of us.



■ Connor Williams

Australia b.2006

Centenary Heights State High School

Society (in concrete) 2023

Concrete in timber shadow box

Society (in concrete) was formed in response to rapid, widespread societal progression and is composed of cast concrete forms. Concrete was chosen as it replicates the stylistically understated, grey compositions of cities.

A society of human figures formed in concrete fill the frame, interlinking within each other like jigsaw puzzle pieces. Some cast figures fit seamlessly into the spaces, while others find themselves on the outside; compressed, filling in the cracks. Created, destroyed, rebuilt.

The urban environment remains a reflect of society as it was, is, and will be.



■ Dante Brim | Yirrganydji

Australia b.2006
Trinity Bay State High School

Shield Protection 2023

Archival photographs printed on ACM board, timber and raffia with ochre

This installation honours the knowledge and legacy of my ancestors that live through me. The images were taken in 1938 as part of the Yarrabah Mission records and show my ancestors Wallace, Margaret and George Singleton.

Their faded, water-marked faces still hold our gaze and demand attention after all these years. Floating in front of this record of their existence are three woven shields. Each shield was made by carefully

weaving together sticks to ensure that the patterns of their shadows would overlay the images and create powerful and dynamic marks.

I added ochre to the faces of each shield to connect back to traditional shields. The shadow is the connecting space between now and 1938; an 85-year difference. I want audiences to know that this connection will always be felt and cannot be erased.



■ David Donovan

Australia b.2005
Brisbane State High School

Homunculus 2023

Graphite on paper

Drawing inspiration from the photorealistic practices of Gerhard Richter's seminal 48 Portraits, and Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, *Homunculus* is presented as a collated visage of a number of faces into one amalgam.

This has been done through the harmonious combination between the principles of portraiture, photography, and drawing.

Overall, the work exploits how the human brain uses pareidolia to construct familiar anthropomorphic images from inanimate stimuli, creating the illusion on recognition or familiarity, thus questioning the holistic interconnectivity between individuals and how we are each perceived by those in our surroundings.



Elise Dorfler

Australia b.2005
Kepnock State High School

Basket Full 2023

Found objects (woven baskets and placemats) and wire

Within the contemporary world we inhabit, artists are continually experimenting, drawing on a variety of techniques and combining different art forms to create innovative and fresh approaches to artmaking. Artists explore and push the boundaries of traditional art practices, producing new artistic styles and methods.

My practice explores the depth of human waste, and the impacts such activities have on the environment. By employing alternative techniques, I transform mundane, everyday objects into something entirely distinct from their original form.

Through a process of deliberate deconstruction and re-assembly, I lay bare the human impact on material items. In the end, my work is a testament to the limitless possibilities of art and its ability to reshape our perceptions and exceed its current boundaries.



Emerson Kucks

Yuggera people
Australia b.2006
Lourdes Hill College

Ghosts 'n Greed 2023

Single-channel video, 1:46 minutes, 16:9, colour, sound

Ghosts 'n Greed provides an opportunity to understand how history continuously impacts the contemporary world. It recovers lost knowledge and reintroduces it into a world that often fights against acknowledging an ugly truth – that Australia was invaded. The work strives to bring knowledge of colonisation into a modern light through the manipulation of contemporary media and by viewing history from an alternative perspective.

Did you know many First Nations people accepted white colonisers onto their lands, believing them to be ghosts passing through to the afterlife? By painting over images taken on my mob's traditional land, I aim to recover this knowledge. Glitching effects, with images from real life, emphasises how the video is not just a game. It is a recurring reality. It serves to show how Indigenous peoples' voices were erased. Stories of colonisation, as told from an Indigenous perspective, shed a new light onto the history we know.



Gabe Dinneen | Ngugi

Australia b.2006
Marist College Ashgrove

Resistance 2023

Synthetic polymer paint and collage on timber door

Indigenous people have been resisting since the moment the ships arrived, standing strong against massacres, land-theft, disease and racism. This work is about the persecution of the First Nations cultures across all of Australia and resistance throughout time. It uses the personal and cultural contexts to communicate a contemporary issue.

The portrait on each side of the door depicts the same AI generated image of an Elder warrior spirit, representative of all First Nations, overseeing resistance using different tools, from spears and shields to words and political protest. The images of resistance during early colonization are black and white, while those of modern resistance are in colour reflects the passage of time.

The act of opening and walking through a door shows how First Nations resistance began and continues into the modern day. Resistance is not new but has existed since colonisation.



Halle Bryant

Australia b.2005
Aldridge State High School

A question of meaning on the deathbed of life 2023

Digital drawing on photographic paper

Existentialism is the belief that life has no true meaning and that it is up to the individual to decide what living means to them. *A question of meaning on the deathbed of life* is a commentary on the instinctual human nature to try and find meaning in an existence that is seemingly pointless.

The work uses symbolism to explore and expand upon the complexity of life and the human experience, and how that relates to the question of the meaning of life.

Incorporating elements of surrealism, symbolism and expressionism in a contemporary format, the scene is busy and confusing, showcasing abstract figures surrounding the deathbed of a loved one in a complex, cluttered room of varying symbols of life and death.



Hope Morgan

Australia b.2005
Highlands Christian College

The Cost 2023

Synthetic polymer paint on cardboard garment tags

The Cost portrays a pixelated, young, female garment worker. Her distorted figure is painted on various clothing price tags as a prompt for the viewer to consider the consequences of their choices as consumers.

The abusive and dangerous conditions that garment workers in developing countries experience is brought into focus – ironically – through the unfocused, monochromatic figure.

Although stripped of her individuality, she is still clearly recognisable as a young girl, urging audiences to question their choices and feel compassion, shame and possibly guilt.



Imogen Hatherill

Australia b.2006
Ormiston College

Natural Disorder 2023

Glazed stoneware, raffia, air-dry clay, wire

Humans have a compulsion to impose order over nature. What do our manicured lawns and neat garden beds say about humanity and our deep-seated fears?

We strive for distinct boundaries, holding ourselves both above and apart from nature. Coastal mangroves are our blurry, transitional zones, routinely sacrificed to clean, white beaches and balcony views. *Natural Disorder* shows a woman tightly braiding her hair, representing the ephemerality of this delusion of control.

The braids twist and transform into spreading mangrove roots, restoring the natural (dis)order. Nature mocks our neat borders and barriers, bursting from every crack and cranny in glorious untidiness.



Imogen Loukas

Australia b.2006
Cairns State High School

My curated life 2023

Single-channel video, 9:16, colour, sound, displayed on iPhone 8

Is it better to be perceived by others as having a great life, or actually living one?



James Catayong

Australia b.2005
Nambour State College

Silent Forest 2023

Plaster, plywood, enamel spray paint

Nature is a vibrant and sublime force which has been taken for granted by humans, almost to the brink of extinction. *Silent Forest* is a fictional representation of the 'end' of nature.

I wanted to create the illusion of a dystopian world where trees no longer exist. The installation comprises several 'replicas' of trees, small and painted grey. The sculptures are samples or parts of a model, awaiting assembly by someone who has never experienced a real tree before.

In the real world, I want the audience to reflect on their part in the exploitation of the environment and consider how they can make a difference.



CELEBRATING

30 YEARS

OF EXHIBITING

alumni spotlight

In 2024 we celebrate 30 years of exhibiting student work in Queensland. Here we share the experiences of some of our creative alumni.



Jordan Azcune

Cleveland District State High School alumnus | Excellence Award Winner – 2012

What impact did being a participant in this program have on you as an artist?

The Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art had a huge impact on me finding people who were immensely creative with similar interests. They were my first creative community and became the building blocks of a healthy, professional support system.

The program also introduced me to the idea of going to art college to further my passion and career in the arts. Importantly, it represented a sense of validation for me and a justification to a fairly conservative family that couldn't before envisage a future life for me within the creative arts.

What are you doing now?

I am a practicing abstract visual artist. I am interested in exploring material possibilities and processes that consider temperature, architecture and spirituality. My current focus is on beeswax and exploring it as a liquid and solid with heat, pairing it with metal, ceramic and colour.

Last year I had six exhibitions in six months and I have recently become a studio teacher in sculpture at the Queensland College of Art and Design.

Recently, I have had the opportunity through the Brisbane Lord Mayor's Creative Fellowships, worth \$20,000, to conduct a two-month residency across India. I am also in the planning phase of a residency with Ceramica Suro in Guadalajara, Mexico, with whom I am very excited to collaborate.

What advice would you share with students considering participating in the Excellence Awards in the future?

Don't hesitate! The Excellence Awards is not just an experience for those who want to become a professional artist (likely you are already an artist). This is an activity to expand creative ideas and enrich your world to form it in a way that is exciting for you.



Poppie Thorpe

St Andrew's Anglican College alumnus | Excellence Award Winner – 2020

What impact did being a participant in this program have on you as an artist?

Being a part of this program provided me with the confidence I needed in my artmaking and design skills. Being in the creative industry comes with a certain level of imposter syndrome which is something I still experience to this day. When I doubt my skills, I tend to think about my past achievements and reminisce on the Creative Generation Excellence Awards experience. I'm still filled with pride thinking about my peers visiting the exhibition and sharing photos of my work on social media.

What are you doing now?

After graduating from St Andrew's, I moved to New Zealand and began my studies in Wellington soon after. I've just entered my honours year of a Bachelor of Design, majoring in visual communication design at Massey University. These have been the most influential years of my life and I'm about to be a part of The Designers Institute of New Zealand's student council program. As a member of this program, I'll be inviting designers to speak at the university, and organising portfolio nights that allow design students to learn to make a striking portfolio through the help of established

designers in Wellington. My honours project will explore the use of technology by young children – investigating the positive and negative effects of technology and how to encourage the use of analogue learning tools, like we used to have before technology became so prominent.

What advice would you share with students considering participating in the Excellence Awards in the future?

For the students who are considering taking part in the Excellence Awards, I say absolutely go for it. After a chaotic year in 2020, working so hard toward my final art project, receiving an Excellence Award was incredibly gratifying – it was the best way to end my high school experience. Don't be afraid to try something outside the box, experiment with technology and different mediums and ensure you enjoy creating your final project.



Jaeve Proberts

Genesis Christian College (Bray Park) alumnus | Excellence Award Winner – 2021

I started my art studies with Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art at Griffith University and was offered an amazing opportunity to study abroad in America pursuing both my artistic career as well as my athletic career. I will be gaining a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts, as well as certificates in Graphic Design and Business of Art.

I am continuing to pursue my art practice by completing my degree, creating commissioned pieces, and selling art at a local store. This program made me realise there are no limits with art; it's up to the imagination. Seeing my artwork displayed in the most prestigious art gallery in Queensland opened my eyes and allowed me to see my true potential.



Jodi Robinson

Centenary Heights State High School alumnus | Entrant in the Excellence Awards – 1996 & 1997, Executive Director's Award 1997

This program was the first time I saw myself as an artist, as my school had my artwork professionally framed for the awards. Attending the awards ceremony and seeing my artwork with a certificate was a defining moment, and having my work amongst other recognisable artists in a gallery that I had visited many times before cemented my plans to continue with art into university. After 22 years of teaching, I am teaching art in my old school. I've owned my own arts education and creative toy shop 'Artsorted Worx', worked as a community artist and won further art awards including Toowoomba's

Winter Fashion Designer. I continue to find opportunities to use my design skills, but my biggest passion is connecting with youth through the platform of art.

That first involvement outside of my classroom into the public space through the Awards program gave me confidence and I would encourage art students to enter the Excellence Awards. It provides opportunities and experiences that are above and beyond the classroom and allow you to experience being an independent artist within a wider community.



Jenni Miners

North Bundaberg State High School alumnus | Excellence Award Winner – 2004

Coming from a small regional town, the program opened my eyes to new art forms and ideas as well as the chance to meet other art students, which I would not have had the opportunity to had I not been included in the awards. It inspired me to look into new art forms which led to becoming a Graphic Designer and gave me a confidence boost I needed for university and networking.

I have been a graphic designer and marketing/events officer for 20 years and work in the community sector helping to create arts-led wellbeing workshops and initiatives for regional Queensland communities. If I could share a piece of advice with students, it would be just give it a go. Art is an incredible path that leads to many opportunities and the awards provide great learning experiences that help you grow as an artist.



Angela Bevis

The Gap State High School alumnus | Excellence Award Winner – 2022

As I reflect on my time being a part of the Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art program and becoming an Excellence Award winner, I realise this was the moment my confidence in my own work really became concrete.

While my time at school was always surrounded by encouraging creatives and amazingly supportive teachers, friends, and family, that didn't stop self-doubt from creeping in. Submitting and taking a chance on myself was the action that solidified, in my mind, my future as a creative.

It didn't matter if I won an award or not, because seeing my work up in a gallery alongside so many other young artists made me a winner. Now, as I enter my second year of studying a dual degree in Visual Arts and Secondary Education at Queensland University of Technology, I know in my heart I am a creative through and through. I cannot recommend this experience enough to young creatives out there, no matter how doubtful you are. Make art and be a part of the Excellence Awards.



Marnie Edmiston

Isis District State High School alumnus | Excellence Award Winner – 2007 & 2008

What impact did being a participant in this program have on you as an artist?

Growing up in a regional town, there were very few opportunities to see art and to meet people working in the arts sector. Participating in the Creative Generation Excellence Awards in Visual Art had a huge impact on my life. Travelling to Brisbane and meeting people my own age who were also interested and involved in art opened my eyes to living a creative life. Being included in this program was one of the main catalysts that led me to pursue art after high school.

What are you doing now?

I went on to study art at a Bachelors and Masters level. Alongside practicing as an artist, I am now also a high school art teacher. Helping young people to explore their creativity and engage with the art world has been incredibly rewarding.

What advice would you share with students considering participating in the Excellence Awards in the future?

I would encourage anyone with the opportunity to participate to do so! You'll meet interesting people, expand your knowledge of different art practices and get to see your work presented at GOMA. The Excellence Awards could be the opening chapter of your art career if you want it to be!



Shanay Manitzky

Aquinas Catholic College (Ashmore) alumnus | Entrant in the Excellence Awards – 2003

What impact did being a participant in this program have on you as an artist?

Participating in this program gave me the confidence that my talent for art was real. Having my teacher recognise my work in a celebration of excellence fuelled my passion for art and reinforced my belief in its transformative power. The exhibition gave me an insight into how art is celebrated not only within classroom walls, but in real life.

What are you doing now?

I went on to study a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Whitecliffe College of Fine Arts and Design in Auckland, New Zealand. I found that I also wanted to share my passion as a creative so I also completed a Graduate Diploma in Teaching. I am now a full-time visual arts teacher at Aldridge State High School in Maryborough. I am also a practicing artist with representation by Aspire Gallery in Brisbane.

What advice would you share with students considering participating in the Excellence Awards in the future?

Participating in the Excellence Awards is an opportunity to push your artistic boundaries and explore new techniques and styles. Challenge yourself to create work that demonstrates your growth and innovation. Most of all, enjoy the creative process and let your unique artistic voice be heard.

In her role as a teacher, Shanay has continued her connection to the Excellence Awards, introducing her senior art students to the program each year and giving them something to aspire to. Shanay's student Halle Bryant was an Excellence Award winner in 2023 and has her artwork displayed in GOMA as part of this year's central exhibition.



Jasmine Dowling

Indigenous Australian
Australia b.2005
Hervey Bay State High School

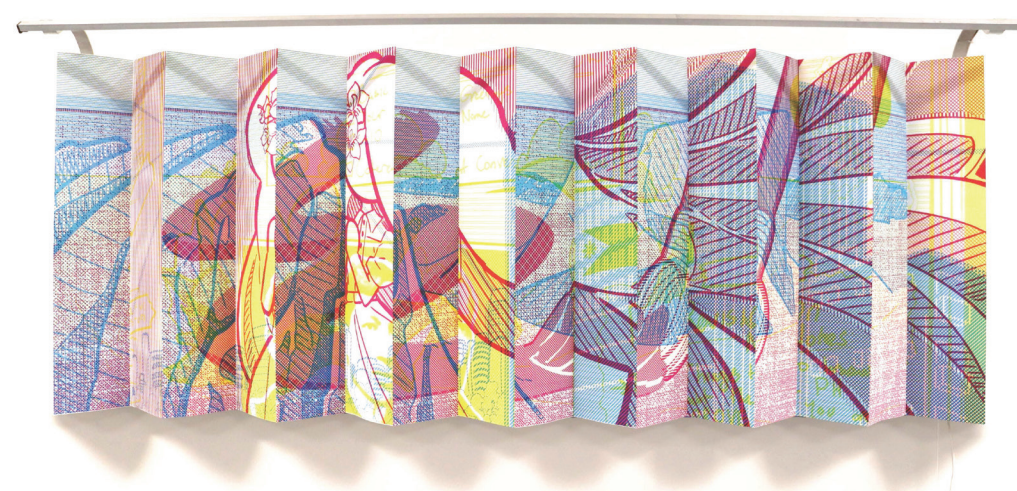
Passing on of Culture 2023

Glazed slip-cast figures, cotton, wadding, wool, sand

Passing on of Culture explores heritage, particularly the imparting of knowledge and wisdom from Elders to a younger generation. This installation comments on kin connection, not skin colouring.

As a white-presenting person who is Indigenous Australian, I accept and embrace my identity even though I do not have dark skin. The fair-skinned baby represents me, absorbing the wisdom of the elders who face inward.

The passing of knowledge are lines winding through the sand, representing the paths of water, making their way towards her. It does not matter what someone looks like on the outside, but instead who they are connected to spiritually and ancestrally on the inside.



Jules Sta Cruz

Philippines/Australia b.2005
St Benedict's College

A Vivid Retrospective 2023

Paper agamograph on plywood, LED lighting on aluminum

Finding your identity is a dimensional and complicated journey. For me, facets of my identity build upon the influences of my Filipino-Australian background and the culmination of childhood memories and beliefs.

A Vivid Retrospective depicts this intersection. Its versicoloured surface appears kaleidoscopic with the hues blending together, but specific colours reveal one of three layers. The image under green light represents my journey and identity as an artist, from the singular stroke of the paintbrush to a non-representative self-portrait.

Blue light, used to symbolise stability, reveals my cultural heritage and its significance to me, while red light, reflecting this country's arid climate, alludes to the Australian values I have adopted. The illusory nature of the agamograph changes the image displayed depending on your position.

This transformation, blurring from one image to the next, portrays these converging influences and the progression of time occurring in my personal journey.



Kate Bradford

Australia b.2005
Somerville House

Lay of the Land 2023

Wire, cotton string, wool

72% of Australians currently live in a major city or urban environment, meaning that just over a quarter of Australians live in rural environments, ranging from inner regional to very remote areas. In *Lay of the Land*, the use of woven, structural wire connects to personal and cultural contexts as it is a significant material in rural environments.

The series of five sculptures represents the components or layers of a map, deconstructed to demonstrate the complexities

that one can experience when living on the land. Each sculpture shows one of the components: pipeline (orange), main roads (black), waterways (blue), grazing (green) and cultivation (pink). Using wire as the base structure, the sculptures trace the borders and fence lines of my home property, Arcturus Downs, but moulded in such a way so that each appears different.

These differences make visible how environments can change due to their surrounding conditions.



Lachlan Heap

Australia b.2005
Albany Creek State High School

Poison 2023

Ink and graphite on cotton rag paper

Poison explores the delicate balance between life and death in ecosystems. The X-ray of a toad reveals its role in causing extinction through its potent poison.

The skeletal structure symbolises the inevitable consequence of this toxicity, representing the silent demise of surrounding species. Against a background that resembles toad eggs, I evoke the cyclical nature of reproduction, highlighting the paradoxical coexistence of creation and destruction.

Poison prompts contemplation on the interconnectedness of life, emphasizing the profound impact even seemingly benign creatures can have on the delicate web of biodiversity.



Maggie Lattimore

Australia b.2006

Fairholme College

Perpetual Solitude 2023

Digitally manipulated drawing on cartridge paper on board

Perpetual Solitude explores the impact of the industrial revolution caused by development, the densification of people and the massive increase in building construction. This work attempts to show that urban development does not make a community or, in fact, a home.

It depicts personal feelings of the intense, physical closeness of development, and yet, the solitude of these environments. A singular lit window in the midst of the dark monochromatic

tones represents the lack of meaningful connections and evokes the isolation of being in a human-inhabited environment.

The distortion of perspective conjures feelings of imposing industrialisation and giddy motion of heights. This suggestion of movement seeks to confuse the viewer and suggest notions of chaos and intimidation that are synonymous with impersonal and lonely urban environments.



Owen Seaborn

Australia b.2005

Brisbane Grammar School

Nomadic 2023

Installation of single-channel video, 7:30 minutes, colour, silent and cotton dress with glass beads

Nomadic is an ode to my childhood living in Mongolia, a place I called home for nearly half my life. The work is a series of personal recordings of the Mongolian landscape from when my family and I would travel around the countryside.

These recordings are projected onto a Mongolian deel, a traditional gown, adorned with silver beads along the sleeves, cuffs and clasps. The final product is a contemporary design combining elements of traditional Mongolian life with my own.

As the images of horses running, steams flowing and the sun setting project on the dress, audiences reflect on their own memories and how they are connected to their lives now.



Phuong Le

Australia b.2005
Cairns State High School

AI realities 2023

Single-channel video, 4:00 minutes, colour, sound

AI realities is a non-narrative, experimental short film exploring the new and ever-evolving power of artificial intelligence (AI) and technology. I used ChatGPT to create ideas and then transformed those ideas into reality using Unreal Engine S (UES).

The work explores wonder, imagination, creativity and realism, and shows how AI can be used positively rather than

negatively as depicted recently in the media. This film aims to defy societal norms and create something that will change the perspective of audiences.

Every scene and detail was digitally hand-crafted to provide the highest possible realism and showcase what amazing new technologies can do when used creatively.



Prayer Muchirahondo

Shona people
Zimbabwe/South Africa/Australia b.2006
Lighthouse Christian School

Migrant Needs 2023

Installation of single-channel video, 0:06 minutes, colour, sound and digital photographs on board

Influenced by Serge Alain Nitegeka's *Migrant I* 2020 installation, *Migrant Needs* explores themes of immigration, the fragility of displacement, and the treasured items a migrant carries during transit.

While these essentials represent the detachment from lifelong memories in the hope of building a new life, this work reflects a conflicting moment where I had to decide between needs and wants.

The large, brown space is a symbol of transitioning from an African soil to the unknown. The Shona dictionary and Bible serve as the few reminders of my identity: my mother tongue and reliance on a higher power for guidance.

As the ambient, yet busy sound of an airport plays, I am instantaneously flooded with memories of how I felt in that moment: uncertainty, yes, but also exhilaration.



Queendy Tran

Vietnam/Australia b.2005

Corinda State High School

Disappearing 2023

Hand-stitched organza and lace dress with satin ribbon and beads

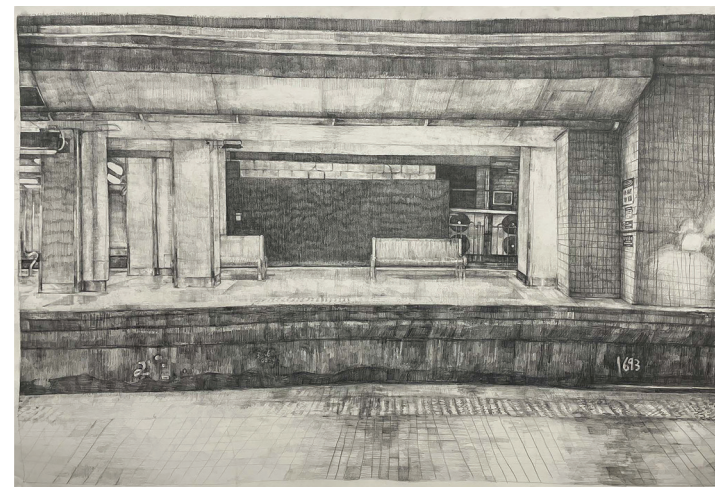
Disappearing brings awareness to a significant environmental concern caused by humans: fast fashion. Through the slow process of making a traditionally-inspired dress, I have intentionally challenged the concept of fast fashion.

Before the Industrial Revolution (c.1760 – c.1840), clothes were often tailored to the individual and designed to last a lifetime, with care taken to repair them when necessary.

Each skirt panel of sheer organza features hand-embroidered imagery illustrating the once laborious process of making a single item of clothing. The acts of sourcing the raw material, spindling, looming and sewing the garment are carefully beaded into the organza.

The contrast of these opaque embroidered illustrations with the sheer dress implies that these sustainable production methods are disappearing.

Shadows cast from the dress endeavour to remind the audience that contemporary society's consumption of fast fashion has cast a shadow over the environment and we need to repair it.



Riley Phillips

Australia b.2005

St Paul's School

Backyard Ribcage 2023

Graphite on Stonehenge paper

Backyard Ribcage is completely devoid of human presence, and yet is solely human. The work focuses on the places we inhabit, rather than our physicality within them. Tonal distortion of texture, shape and light are created by mechanical pencil, creating a shadowy sense of desolation, both haunting and captivating.

The work offers moments frozen in time, allowing observation and contemplation of the often-overlooked spaces that we move through amongst the complexities of everyday life.

Backyard Ribcage is influenced by the urban landscapes of Jeffrey Smart (1921-2013), my own experience growing up in Brisbane and my dreams which are often in black and white.



Russell Cooper

Australia b.2006
Pittsworth State High School

Life Saver 2023

Found polyester vest, wire, rocks, paper, synthetic polymer paint

Loss can have a profound effect on one's emotional wellbeing, inciting a cascade of changes to one's life trajectory that can be felt in a multitude of ways.

While loss is a part of the human experience, the loss that refugees face goes beyond the realm of personal grief, with the loss of life, freedom, innocence and home being a harsh reality many refugees must endure.

I aim to highlight the profound impact of loss and create a space for empathy and understanding towards the struggles of refugees. The life jacket is filled with rocks, covered in sand, sea water and sea salt, and holds stories of survival, loss, hope and tragedy.

I encourage viewers to reflect on their own privilege and consider what they can do to support those who are less fortunate.



Sam Lethbridge

Australia b.2006
St Andrews Lutheran College

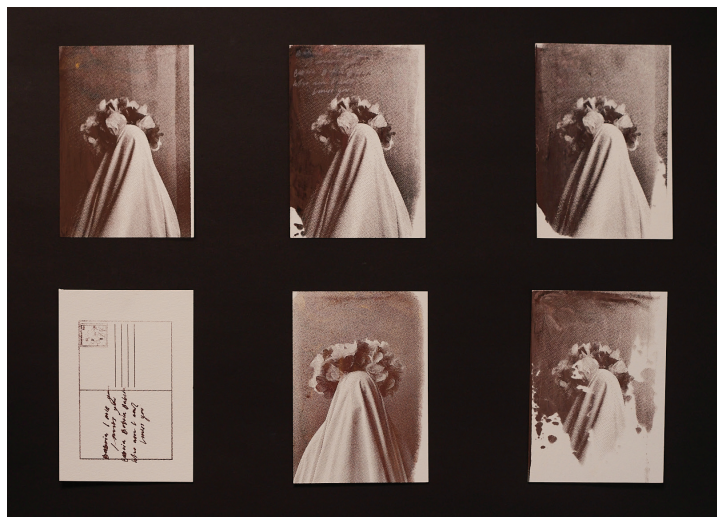
Local Paradise 2023

Single-channel video, 3:17 minutes, 16:9, colour, sound

Teenage life; a constructed series of events that lead to ideas of your future. Some have grasped this idea already, some on the cusp, some are scared, lost in a sense of nostalgia, resisting the push of graduation and age.

To be honest, I'm just lost, living in the present age, scared of what's to come and scared of what has been, lost in the abyss of my own paradise. The last three months of my life shoved into 3 minutes and 17 seconds.

It depicts not only how I'm existing, but how I'm approaching it. What is 'it'? Don't really know, don't really care as long as I'm doing something. Step after step, indulging in a façade, which I don't try to hide behind. It just means I can close my eyes and float into my own Local Paradise. Where's yours?



Soleil Knight

Australia b.2006
Maroochydore State High School

Postcards from Babcia 2023

Digital photographs screen-printed on card

There is a divide between my Polish heritage and my knowledge of my family's origin, and their experiences that enabled them to live safely in Australia.

My artwork is a series of postcards inspired by Glen Skien and Cindy Sherman. The subject is a figure covered in a white sheet, wearing a floral headband. The white cloth over the face represents the disconnect I experience with my Polish heritage and the loss of cultural connections through emigration.

The floral headdress features poppies, the national flower of Poland, to symbolise peace and death while the screen-printed sepia postcards illustrate an aged effect. The text on the postcards – 'Babcia, I miss you' - emphasises absence and the loss of connection with my Babcia, my Polish great-grandmother.



Sophie Armstrong-Wearne

Australia b.2006
St Andrew's Anglican College

We are the Waves – Tides of fate 2023

Installation of single-channel video, 9:16, 0:50 minutes, colour, sound and gouache and sand on resin

Our actions, driven by our ignorance and ambition, have become the accelerators of climate change, paving the way for rising sea levels that wreak havoc upon our fragile coastlines. We then find ourselves as unwitting victims, as the world around is destroyed by this impending climate disaster leading to humanity's literal downfall.

A continuous cycle unfolds: mistakes, consequences, perseverance, and eventual surrender to our inevitable fate. The sequence of events serves as an important reminder of the finite timeline of human life along with the uncertain fate of the world we inhabit.

The fragility of existence is presented before our eyes as the natural landscape is devastated by human hands. Traditional representations of landscape artwork are subverted to highlight the contemporary issue of coastal erosion and the anthropogenic impact on this landscape.



Sydney Twidale

Australia b.2006
Goondiwindi State High School

Dirty Laundry 2023

Digitally manipulated photographs on cotton rag paper and folded 'chatterboxes'

Dirty Laundry is an autobiographical installation inspired by whimsical secrets passed down through my Chinese family lineage. The two-part installation, featuring two-dimensional and three-dimensional elements, comprises three historically referenced self-portraits and a collection of paper chatterboxes made from the printed photographs.

Personal relationships inherited intergenerationally reconstruct my Chinese heritage of migrant hawkers and launderers to inform the portraits. The chatterboxes, originally used as spice containers in Chinese kitchens, reference child's play through a dual metaphor symbolising both the naivety and innocence of new generations, as well as the nostalgia tucked away in the hidden folds of past family secrets.

The act of unfolding the chatterbox draws an analogy to airing 'dirty laundry', allowing the artist and audience to reflect on the perception of family ties versus the reality of family lineage.



Tahlia Atkinson

Australia b.2006
Corinda State High School

Proof of Me 2023

Oil on found objects

The concept of presence demands a time when there was absence. The transience of life is universally feared, grieved and speculated.

This brings forth the desire for a personal legacy, often through developing tangible 'proof' of existence. The immortalisation of oneself is garnered in personal possessions; belongings act as a window to the owner.

My assemblage gathers such possessions, collectively contributing to my whole portrait, and explores the relationship between materials and identity. The larger the collection of belongings, the greater the picture depicted. Simultaneously, these belongings find themselves as tokens of identity wherein their loss can cause a form of grieving.

Jarring sections of negative space between the found objects allude to both losing something and objects failing to fully articulate someone's character. With such insight, onlookers can construct and devise my identity which, without such consideration, would otherwise fail to represent anything at all.



Will Chaseling

Australia b.2007
Yarrabilba State Secondary College

The Beetle Bag 2023

Hand-sewn pleather, felt, foam, metal zipper

I created a functional bag in the form of a Hercules beetle inspired by designer AmanoJaku to Hesomagari's 'Bug Bags'.

This work explores my love for bugs and belief that they should not be so feared. I used colour both realistically and symbolically. Hercules beetles are green and black; however, I also intended for the black to symbolise eeriness and fear, and green to represent life and sickness, feelings that people often associate with insects.

Additionally, I created a small heart, which is placed inside the bag, representing the sentience of even the smallest of creatures. This was intended to enhance the meaning of the work as, without this accompanying explanation, audiences would not know that the beetle had a heart, much like they assume insects do not.

I wanted to make a statement about how misjudged these beautiful creatures are.

The views and opinions expressed in the artist statements contained in this document are those of the student artists and not those of the Department of Education or QAGOMA.

The team

2023 Regional coordinators

Central Queensland region

Peta McAllister, Yeppoon State High School

Darling Downs South West region

Matthew Chivers, Mary MacKillop Catholic College

Far North Queensland region

David Marsden, Cairns State High School

Metropolitan region

Teresa Seminara, Brigidine College

Rosie Fitzhenry, Bracken Ridge State High School

North Coast region

Liz Clout, Nambour State College (South)

Michelle Evans, Hervey Bay State High School (North)

North Queensland region

Melissa Ballard, Ryan Catholic College

South East region

Clayton Smith, Marsden State High School

2023 Regional galleries

- Brisbane Institute of Art
- Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery
- The Artist Hub Gallery
- Butter Factory Arts Centre
- Gatakers Artspace

- Emu Park Art Gallery
- Townsville City Galleries
- Tanks Arts Centre

2023 State selection panel

- Professor Elisabeth Findlay, Director, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University
- Dr Courtney Pedersen, Senior Lecturer - Contemporary Art, Queensland University of Technology
- Brett Elphick, Head of Department of Arts, Springfield Central State High School
- Megan Campbell, Visual Art and Religion, Mary MacKillop College
- Rebecca Smith, Program Officer, Learning and Curriculum, QAGOMA

2024 Exhibition opening event student musicians

- Stretton State College

Executive Director, Strategic Communication and Engagement

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Director, Community Engagement and Events

- Liz Williamson

Manager, Programs and Events

- Jane Shea

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- Jessica Masters

Program support

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- Lucy Nielson
- Jessica Spina

Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art

- Terry Deen, Head of Learning
- Rebecca Smith, Program Officer, Learning and Curriculum
- Rachael Ryan, Program Officer, Learning and Curriculum
- Simon Wright, Assistant Director, Learning & Public Engagement
- Jenna Hoskin, Senior Graphic Designer, Design, Web & Multimedia
- Aidan Robertson, Senior Multimedia and Web Designer, Web & Multimedia
- Rebecca Shaw, Exhibition Designer, Exhibition Design
- Dominique Furphy, Audio Visual & Lighting Coordinator, Exhibition Design
- Sarah Gillow, Registration Assistant, Registration
- Katie Cornell, Assistant Registrar, Exhibitions, Registration
- Catherine Collyer, Associate Conservator, Conservation
- Chris Booth, Installation Coordinator, Installation

Design, Publicity and Marketing

- Strategic Communication and Engagement, Department of Education

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