

2023 Dobell Exhibition Grants

This year's round of the Dobell Exhibition Grant was assessed on Friday, 28 October 2022 by a three-member panel consisting of; Brett Adlington, CEO Museums & Galleries of NSW; Michelle Belgiorno, Chair, Sir William Dobell Art Foundation and Gina Mobayed, Curator and Consultant.

The panel assessed 7 applications from public and regional galleries across NSW. This was the first year offering two categories of support - \$10,000 and \$30,000 – and strong exhibition proposals were received from a range of regional cultural hubs.

After robust discussion, the panel unanimously awarded the \$30,000 grant to the **Blue Mountains City Art Gallery** for their proposed exhibition ***Sensorial*** and the \$10,000 category was awarded to **Wagga Wagga Art Gallery** for ***Precious***.

The panel commended *Sensorial* as a timely, joyful and well-planned proposal building on already established relationships with neurodiverse artists and community groups and empowering them to create an exhibition and programming that embraces all senses.

Precious was praised for its clever utilisation of work by Sarah Goffman to reimagine the celebrated National Art Glass Collection, whilst exploring broader themes of the beauty and value of plastic as a medium, presented within Wagga Wagga Art Gallery's 2023 program dedicated to the environment.

Overall the panel was very impressed by all applications and the depth of concepts and programming offered, providing avenues to hope and social reconnection after recent environmental and health disasters. The panel encouraged applicants to ensure enough time for adequate consultation when developing projects with external community groups or organisations and to include letters of support from partners when appropriate.



2023 Dobell Exhibition Grants Recipients

Blue Mountains City Art Gallery – *Sensorial* – \$30,000

Sensorial is an exhibition embracing all our senses: moving beyond the dominance of sight within the gallery space. Hearing and the sensation of touch will be given equal priority for experiencing these works. A diverse selection of artists will create immersive environments to be experienced through a variety of senses. Taking the lead from the neurodivergent community who often have a unique range of senses and can feel, hear, smell and sense things others don't notice, this exhibition aims to be an inclusive space for those who are often overwhelmed by bright lights and loud noises.

Curated by Rilka Oakley, the exhibition will showcase local and national artists whose work creates a full experiential environment that is empathetic to the needs of neurodivergent and all visitors to the exhibition. Participating artists include Liam Benson, Hannah Surtees, Inspired by Art (accessible art group) led by Clare Delaney, Alison Bennett with Dean Walsh, and the Katoomba Neurodiversity Hub with Amy Bell, with more artists to be announced.



Public programs developed in consultation with Accessible Arts and Katoomba Neurodiversity Hub will suit the needs of anyone who identifies as neurodiverse and/or living with a disability but also engage more general audiences from the area, visitors from Sydney and Regional NSW. There will be free drop in spaces with family friendly activities designed by local participating artist Hannah Surtees as well as 'Bad Embroidery' and collaborative artwork making workshops with Liam Benson, amongst others.

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery – *Precious* – \$10,000

Australian artist Sarah Goffman will utilise her practice of exploring the aesthetics of plastic to reimagine and recreate works from the National Art Glass Collection. A commentary on the beauty and preciousness of plastic and the vandalism of pollution, the works will be exhibited in the National Art Glass Gallery in 2023.

During 2023 Wagga Wagga Art Gallery will devote its entire exhibition programming to considerations of the environment – from the sublime to climate crisis. It is within this context that Dr Lee-Anne Hall will curate *Precious*, an exhibition which asks audiences to reconsider their relationship to plastic. Goffman's practice has long critiqued plastic as a material which is monstrously damaging to the environment, human and animal life. Playful and intellectually rigorous, Goffman's artworks are created with the material she critiques - salvaged and single use plastics. Coupled with her interest in mimicry, fakes and replicas, she creates works that people can identify with, bottles that once held Coca-Cola or Dynamo Liquid, while also weaving into the work commentary on the ubiquitous nature of garbage and the vandalism of pollution.



Across the six-month showing of *Precious*, the Gallery will deliver public programs that engage with a broad demographic of community and visitors. Goffman will mentor a select regional artist from the gallery's Regional Arts Development program, audience engagement will include school group tours, school holiday Art Camps, artist and curator talks, and educational offerings around sustainability in the community.

For more information about the Dobell Exhibition Grant please contact: **Susan Wachter, Funding & Programs Manager**, susanw@mqnsw.org.au

The Dobell Exhibition Grants program is supported by the Sir William Dobell Art Foundation and managed by Museums & Galleries of NSW.

Images

Page 1: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, National Art Glass Collection (image shows plinths with glass artworks in a bright room with people walking about), Photo: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery.

Page 2: Hannah Surtees *Binding Experiments* 2022, wrapped objects. (Image shows four objects wrapped with green and grey wool and patterned fabric).

Facilitator Clare Delaney with three Inspired by Art participants in their recent exhibition at Blue Mountains City Art Gallery (image shows 4 people smiling and standing in front of a large multiple panel drawing in green, pink, orange and brown). Photo: Silversalt.

Page 3: Photo of Sarah Goffman. Photo by Ross Coulter.