
about the prize

The Walters Prize is named after the pioneering New Zealand modernist artist Gordon Walters [1919-1995]. It was established in 2002 to 'promote interest in New Zealand contemporary art and make it more accessible to a larger and more culturally diverse public'.

The Prize has a different format to many competitions as artists do not enter – a jury of New Zealand curators and critics select four finalists who have made an 'outstanding contribution to contemporary visual art in New Zealand in the two years previous'. Selection is made on the basis of a particular body of work and this year the jury commented 'We have chosen artists whose work we consider timely, important and distinctive. Each has affected us – as regular viewers of current practice – in memorable ways'. The artists present their work in an exhibition at Auckland Art Gallery and, on the basis of this presentation, an international judge selects the prize winner.

It is New Zealand's biggest art award - each finalist receives \$5,000 and \$50,000 goes to the winner - and is staged every two years.

The Prize is possible because of the philanthropy of several individuals, people who are already very significant supporters of the visual arts in New Zealand. Its Founding Benefactors and Principal Donors are Robin and Erika Congreve and Jenny Gibbs, while Dayle Mace is a Major Donor. Several sponsors also provide considerable support for the staging of the exhibition and its programmes.

the jury for 2004

Christina Barton, Lecturer in Art History, Victoria University of Wellington.

Dr Deidre Brown, Senior Lecturer in Architecture, National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Auckland.

Greg Burke, Director, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth.

Justin Paton, Curator, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, and *Landfall* Editor.

the judge for 2004

Robert Storr is a leading international art curator and writer who was Senior Curator at New York's Museum of Modern Art (1990–2002). He is also Director of The Venice Biennale in 2007.

the artists for 2004 – and the jury's statement on each

RONNIE VAN HOUT is one of a number of contemporary artists who explore the image of the artist as a wayward figure in contemporary life. But he brings to this subject an array of idiosyncratic obsessions that situate his practice in the realms of the personal and the local.

No Exit Parts 1 and *2* present the artist in a multitude of guises - creepy nature worshipper, alien abductor, abject idler, frustrated artist - in situations as solipsistic [a metaphysical view that the self is the only thing that exists] as the series' title. His works do something rare in the world of contemporary art – make you laugh but leave you strangely moved.



Ronnie van Hout

No Exit Part 1 2003

courtesy Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington
First exhibited Linden, Melbourne, and The Physics Room, Christchurch, respectively, 2003

ET AL. is a conundrum, a shifting group of artistic entities designed to jam the systems and institutions of art. Their installations over the last two years – seen in such shows as *abnormal mass delusions?* and *Public/Private* – have consistently produced an eerie critique of our human condition, exposing our tendency to trust inevitably flawed intellectual models and technological solutions.

In such light, *restricted access* from *abnormal mass delusions?* with its massing of adjusted and recycled objects behind a mesh barricade, is a sombre experiment in resisting the relentless drift to obsolescence.



et al.

restricted access from abnormal mass delusions? 2003

Courtesy the artists
First exhibited Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, 2003

JACQUELINE FRASER has enjoyed outstanding international success in the last two years. She brings an astute and elegantly barbed sensibility to her consideration of contemporary issues.

Her installation <<*Invisible*>> was conceived for *Artes Mundi*, an award exhibition at Cardiff's National Museum and Gallery featuring ten artists selected by leading international curators. In it Fraser uses glamorous textiles to clothe a line-up of wraith-like female figures, combining these with pithy epithets that sting us about our fascination for fashion in a world of inequality and grief.



Jacqueline Frase

<<*Invisible*>> 2000

Courtesy Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
First exhibited National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff, 2003

DANIEL VON STURMER, though born in Auckland, may be less well known to New Zealand audiences, having made most of his work in Australia. His video installation *The Truth Effect*, seen last year in Melbourne and Sydney, is a breath of fresh air. It orchestrates simple materials in a series of lightly wrought situations within the confines of a simple white box.



Daniel von Sturmer

The Truth Effect 2003

Courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne
Made with the assistance of Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
First exhibited Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2003

Represented via video, the box becomes something more: a spacious light-filled room, the white cube of the modern art gallery, a television studio or laboratory. What we see defies the simplicity of both origins and means, conveying to the viewer a new sense of the marvellous.

the previous winner

The inaugural winner of the Walters Prize [2002] was camera artist Yvonne Todd - here's how the announcement was reported in The Herald:

Yvonne Todd wins \$50,000 Walters art prize

16.07.2002 9.00pm - by LINDA HERRICK, arts editor

A 28-year-old Auckland photographer who used to moonlight as a wedding photographer and waitress at strip joint Showgirls has tonight won the inaugural \$50,000 Walters Prize for contemporary art.

The choice of Yvonne Todd, who graduated from Elam Art School just last year, shocked the pundits who had been predicting one of the three other finalists - all older, all male - would take the prize, which was announced last night at a swanky dinner for 120 invited guests at Auckland Art Gallery.

The final selection was announced to gasps and applause by Harald Szeemann of Switzerland, a two-time Venice Biennale curator who arrived in New Zealand a few days ago.

The dinner was attended by the Walters Prize principal donors Erika and Robin Congreve, and Jenny Gibbs, and Prime Minister Helen Clark, who arrived after a television debate. The evening was MCd by television presenter Kate Hawkesby.

Todd's Walters Prize exhibition, *Asthma & Eczema*, comprises a series of Photoshopped images of enigmatic, banal objects such as a dewy rose, shadowy silhouettes in bridal wear, and highly stylised, slightly seedy female portraits.



Yvonne Todd with The Prize judge for 2002 Harold Szeeman

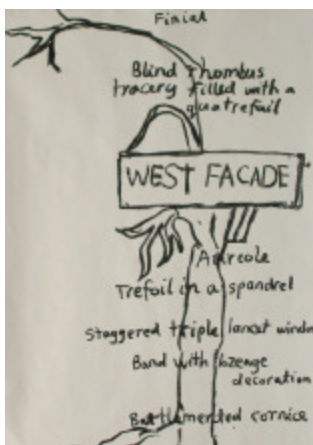


Yvonne Todd *Chlora* 2001
LED Print, Courtesy of Ivan Anthony, Auckland

The other finalists in 2002 included a camera artist, a painter and an installation artist.



Gavin Hipkins
The Homely 1997 – 2000
80 C-Type prints each 600 x 400 mm, edition of 8
Courtesy of City Gallery, Wellington and
Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington



John Reynolds
Epistomadologies 1 - 91 [selection] 2001
oilstick on metallic paper
Each 1000 x 700 mm
Courtesy of Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland



Michael Stevenson
Revolution in New Zealand 1 - 40 2000/02
gouache and photocopy on hand dyed paper in wire display racks
600 x 420 mm each
Courtesy of the artist, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington,
and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, Australia

defining roles - excerpts from the prize rules

8 JULY

The selection of artists shortlisted for representation in the biennial prize exhibition will be made by a New Zealand based group of invited experts, the prize jury. Membership of the jury will be determined and appointed, from prize to prize, at the discretion of the organising gallery. The final determination of the prize award is based on the shortlisted artist's representation in the exhibition and is made by the prize judge.

The jury will comprise no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) individuals with recognised expertise in the visual arts and/or in allied contemporary cultural arenas. Jury membership can include but is not limited to those who are senior practising artists, art critics, writers, curators, art museum directors, art historians, or those otherwise prominent in allied contemporary cultural arenas.

The organising gallery is required to keep membership of the jury confidential until the announcement on the shortlisted artists. At the same time, members of the jury are required to retain confidentiality as to their membership until that time. The purpose of maintaining confidentiality over membership of the jury is to ensure that members can more effectively undertake their role from the relative anonymity of being a regular and interested observer of visual art exhibitions, thereby more easily retaining their critical independence and freedom to act.

9 JUDGE

The prize judge is chosen and invited by the founding benefactors and principal donors in consultation, as necessary, with the organising gallery. The judge will be an eminent national or international figure in the world of the visual arts or an allied cultural arena. He or she will be of such standing as to act to focus public, critical and media attention on their role. Those invited to be prize judge may include but are not limited to being senior practising artists, art critics, writers, curators, art museum directors, art historians and the like. The decision of the judge in making the prize award will be considered final and binding.

defining eligibility and intent

The fact that the chosen artists do not have to be born in or be resident in New Zealand, and that works may not have been exhibited in New Zealand before, is explained in **section 4** of The Prize rules.

4 SCOPE

The Walters Prize seeks to determine and publicly acknowledge the most outstanding contribution made to contemporary visual art in New Zealand in the two-year period preceding its award, the prize years. For these purposes "contemporary visual art in New Zealand" is defined as being an individual work or body of work of contemporary art which has been predominantly created within New Zealand or in response to the artist's experience of New Zealand. The work or body of work must have been publicly exhibited for the first time during the prize years, either in New Zealand or elsewhere in the world.

In this respect the prize takes no regard of the artist's actual or perceived identification as a New Zealand artist, whether they self-identify or are recognised as such. Moreover, an artist's potential for inclusion in the prize should be determined without reference to their ethnicity, country of origin or current nationality.

other art prizes and awards

The major contemporary art awards currently offered in Australasia are:

Moet & Chandon Art Award [Australia]

Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Art Prize

Trust Waikato Contemporary Art Award [Waikato Museum of Art and History]

The Wallace Trust /Visa Gold Art Award [James Wallace Charitable Trust]

Walters Prize [Auckland Art Gallery]

Mazda Emerging Artist Award [for post-grad and 3rd & 4th year students]

and exploring some new territory:

Vodafone Digital Art Awards

We could also include the **Montana World of Wearable Art Awards** – while not strictly contemporary art, this arguably has the most profile and has established both a collection and a museum.

The Turner Prize

The Turner Prize is named after the painter J. M. W. Turner [1775-1851] is staged at the Tate Gallery. It is one of the most significant overseas awards and is given to a British visual artist under 50. Established in 1989 it is worth £20,000. Because of its media profile it is often considered as a model for other

prizes - it has turned some artists into household names and attracts celebrities like **Madonna** to present the prize.

The exhibition and prize rely on commercial sponsorship and currently Channel 4, an independent television channel, is the principal sponsor with documentaries on the artists and a live broadcast of the award ceremony.

The build-up to the announcement of the winner receives intense attention from the media, much of it critical, addressing the question 'what is art?' The following link will take you to some of the publicity around the 2001 Turner Prize jury's controversial selection of Martin Creed's **Work #227: The Lights Going On and Off**. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/1701400.stm> for reaction to the award.

The list of previous winners, which includes **Grayson Perry, Richard Long, Anish Kapoor, Tony Cragg** and **Damien Hirst**, and even finalists, reads like a 'who's who' of British art.

discussion

here are some ideas around the awarding of art prizes that might be useful discussion starters.

the public's perception of art awards

The awarding of art prizes often opens up discussion about the nature of contemporary art – in doing so they can give rise to healthy debate and sometimes controversy.

In what ways can art awards enhance the public's awareness or understanding about art?

Often art awards have a public choice section as well as the 'official' award decided by the jury or judge – this gives the public a chance to vote for their favourite and introduces an element of democratisation.

Role-play the different criteria that the public and the judge might use to come to their decisions.

artists' perception of awards

Awards aren't just about money – certain expectations may be placed on the winner's work and the way it may re-shape their career. When the winner of the 2002 Walters prize was announced Gallery Director, Chris Saines stated 'There will be an extended moment of adjustment that needs to be made, the consequence of people talking about their work. In some ways it makes it hard for the artist to move through and past it. I hope it opens opportunities for the artist and that it sets off other changes in her career. '

What kinds of impact do you think the winning of an award or grant would have on an artist's practice? – you may be able to find and interview a local artist or craftsperson who has received an award or Creative New Zealand grant.

does it work?

The stated aim of the Walters Prize is 'to promote interest in New Zealand contemporary art, making it more accessible to a potentially larger and more culturally diverse public'.

Collect promotional, daily and art press material on The Prize and analyse the degree to which this has been achieved.

what kinds of awards are there?

Some awards relate to subject e.g. portraiture or landscape painting while others focus on particular media – Wearable Art or even the Cyclone #8 Wire Art Award!

Find out about the entry conditions for some of the other awards mentioned above – most have web-sites with these details.

other support for artists

Competitive prizes are only one of the ways that artists are able to receive funding and recognition. Investigate some of the other opportunities for artists to receive support through the awarding of **grants** and **residencies**.

Here is a site that lists some of these <http://www.mch.govt.nz/awards/arts.html>

the public and private sectors

Awards also provide an opportunity for both individuals [patrons] and the private sector [businesses and corporations] to support the arts. Businesses also gain something by having their 'brand' associated with artistic achievement.

benefactors

The Walters Prize is made possible by the generosity of private benefactors and also has sponsorship support from the private sector [see below for details].

Who should be responsible for supporting the arts? What do individuals and the private sectors corporations gain from this support?

grants for travel and overseas residencies

One of the most generous New Zealand prizes in the past was the Moët and Chandon Art Award which made it possible for artist between the ages 20 and 40 to spend nine months in France with accommodation and a studio in a chateau near Paris, plus a cash prize of \$25,000.

Cultural agencies also make it possible for artists to travel for study and work overseas. Creative New Zealand's residency programmes include Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, the International Studio & Curatorial Program, New York and the Cook Islands Artists' Residency. The latter is for New Zealand-based Pacific Islands visual artists and is a partnership with the Cook Islands Ministry of Cultural Development.

WALTERS PRIZE BENEFACTORS, DONNORS AND SPONSORS

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