

BONANZA Sculpture Prize 2015

Opening Speech by Cliff Burt

**Vice Chair: Contemporary Sculptors Association/
Yarra Sculpture Gallery**

Many thanks to all the people who supported the Yarra Sculpture Space and the Contemporary Sculptors Association through 2015, and congratulations to the Bonanza exhibiting artists, without whom the show would not be possible.

We especially want to thank the sponsors of our prizes for their generous support, people who have supported us over the years, and once again this year - Ponch Hawkes for donating her photography services, Cameron at Fundere Foundry for casting work, Savaad at Yering Station Art Award, the people at the Art Almanac and finally, the anonymous donor who made this year's cash prize possible. We would also like to acknowledge the continued support of our landlord the City of Yarra, support that has made a vital contribution to the development of sculptural practices in this city.

Our judge this year was Kirsty Grant, Director of Heide Museum of Modern Art. Prior to her current position, Kirsty was Senior Curator of Australian Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, and instrumental in acquiring and presenting some of the most important exhibitions presented by that institution over the last decade. We thank Kirsty for generously donating her time to make the award selections. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend the opening of Bonanza, but has forwarded her notes.

I'll read directly from Kirsty;

Sorry I can't officiate tomorrow but I hope it goes well. Have attached some brief notes on each of the works I selected- I'm trying to imagine you reading them and not sure they are what you would say, but do your best to channel me...

Thanks for inviting me to judge the prizes today- it was fun! Congratulations to all of the artists whose work is exhibited and sorry I can't be there to announce the awards in person.

This Year's show offers an amazingly diverse selection of sculptural works, from the carved and cast to assemblage works and everything in between. It's fascinating to see what people are doing in their studios, what materials they are using, what they are doing with those materials and what ideas are motivating them to create.

1. CSA \$1000 Cash Award

This work stood out to me for its clever and unusual combination of three dimensional form, colour and use of digital technology. Like a minimalist painting - cool, crisp and refined - that has been plugged in to an electric socket and come to life, it presents a series of luminous colours rotating across a grid of three screens, beautifully resolved and presented (with echoes of 70s disco floors thrown in for good measure!).

Recipient: No.1 *My fireplace* by Veronica Caven Aldous

2. Ponch Hawkes Photography Services

One of the relatively few figurative sculptures in the show, this work caught my attention for its representation of mankind overwhelmed by technology- or at least that's what it said to me. I also loved the use of bright colour and pattern, a bit like the iconic Memphis designs of the 1980s.

Recipient: No.37 *Returning to Memphis* by Robert Waghorn

3. Fundere Fine Art Foundry

Memories of childhood came rushing back when I saw this work, which is modest in scale and simple in subject matter. Lego built in the shape of a simple house prompts so many recollections, but turns them on their head by casting this familiar and everyday object in bronze.

Recipient: No.15 *Home Built Lego House* by Paul Gorman

4. Yarra Sculpture Gallery Free Exhibition

This work stood out for its innovative use of a very unexpected material, creating a compelling representation of its subject, the Australian continent and two blue icebergs. Global warming writ large, with icebergs melting just as foam deteriorates and crumbles... I will look forward to seeing a full exhibition of work by this artist.

Recipient: No.44 *Sponge Bergs* by David Waters

5. Yering Station Art Gallery Automatic Entry

A beautifully resolved form in a material that requires extraordinary skill to work, this is a classic piece of contemporary sculpture.

Recipient: No.31 # by Faustas Sadauskas

6. Art Almanac Subscription

I responded to the obvious element of fun in this work and delight in the use of colour and pattern. While it works really well at this scale, it could be a maquette for a large public sculpture and that's something I'd like to see in Melbourne!

Recipient: No.25 *Chromosome Playground* by Merle Parker

We look forward to hosting the next Bonanza, and the opportunity to again exhibit the work of our members. Many thanks to all who helped on the show, and on many other exhibitions and working bees through 2015. The CSA is a volunteer organization, and the YSG cannot operate without membership support. The committee urges all to contribute if they can, in any capacity- from gallery sitting to joining the committee. With your continued support, the CSA will see in its 20th year in style.