

# AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI

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## Judge announced for New Zealand's premier art prize: The Walters Prize 2014

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**Charles Esche**, curator, writer and the director of Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Netherlands has been named the international judge for New Zealand's premier award for contemporary art, the Walters Prize.

Esche heads the curatorship of significant international exhibitions, such as this year's São Paulo Biennale, the Riwaq Biennial (Palestine, 2009 and 2007), the 9th International Istanbul Biennial 2005 and 4th Gwangju Biennial (South Korea, 2002). He is also co-founder and co-editor of leading art publications, *Afterall* Journal and Books.

'We are privileged to have Charles Esche as our judge and to be able to connect him with the New Zealand art community,' says Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki Director Rhana Devenport. 'Charles has an outstanding international reputation and leads the exploration of new territories in art through innovative curatorial strategies.'

'His large-scale exhibitions attract curators and artists the world over, offering audiences an insightful lens on global art practice. As director of the Van Abbemuseum, Charles has taken risks to offer visitors ground-breaking experiences and, as a supporter of publishing on contemporary art, he is mentor to both art writers and curators.'

The *Walters Prize 2014* exhibition opens on **Saturday 12 July**. The finalists' artworks will be exhibited for four months and entry to the exhibition will be free. The winner, judged by Esche, will be announced at the Walters Prize dinner held on **Friday 26 September**. In addition to the \$50,000 prize, the winning artist receives a fully supported trip to New York with the opportunity to exhibit at Saatchi & Saatchi's world headquarters.

'I am delighted to have this opportunity to improve my knowledge of the art scene in New Zealand,' says Esche. 'Recent experiences with New Zealand artists encouraged me to accept the generous invitation to judge the Walters Prize and I expect my time there will be inspiring.'

'As well as my formal duties, I wish to meet artists and get a sense of their ambitions and hopes. I am also interested to hear about the cultural and political balance in the country, and how the idea of contemporary art is being constructed there.'

The Walters Prize is awarded for an outstanding work of contemporary New Zealand art exhibited during the past two years. The Prize aims to make contemporary art a more widely recognised and discussed feature of cultural life. Named in honour of the late New Zealand artist Gordon Walters, the Prize was established in 2002 by Founding Benefactors and Principal Donors Erika and Robin Congreve and Dame Jenny Gibbs; Dayle Mace has provided further support as Major Donor with Auckland Contemporary Art Trust as Principal Donor. This year the Walters Prize is additionally supported by Major Sponsor, Elevation Capital, joining Founding Sponsor Saatchi & Saatchi.

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**FINALISTS FOR THE WALTERS PRIZE 2014**

- *All You Need Is Data - The DLD 2012 Conference REDUX*, 2013, by **Simon Denny**: at Kunstverein Munich 19 January – 10 March 2013 and at Petzel Gallery, New York, 20 June – 27 July 2013
- *If you find the good oil let us know*, 2012 – 2013, by **Maddie Leach**: at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and off-site 25 June 2012 – 14 February 2014
- *inthisholeonthisislandwhereiam*, 2012, by **Luke Willis Thompson**: at Hopkinson Mossman (formerly Hopkinson Cundy) and off-site 14 – 31 March 2012
- *Mo'ui tukuhausia*, 2012, by **Kalisolaite 'Uhila**: from the exhibition 'What do you mean, we?' at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, 3 March 2012 – 6 May 2012.

The four finalists will each receive a participation fee of \$5000, thanks to Dayle Mace.

The *Walters Prize 2014* will be exhibited from **12 July until 12 October 2014**.

Photo-file of Charles Esche attached.

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