

**Media Advisory
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Announcing the Walters Prize 2016 – A showcase of outstanding New Zealand art – what you need to know

The Walters Prize is New Zealand's most prestigious contemporary art prize and 2016 marks the eighth iteration of the biannual award at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

The Walters Prize awards the most outstanding contribution made to contemporary art in New Zealand by an artist in the period preceding the prize (known as the prize years).

The artist who produces the winning artwork receives \$50,000, while each finalist receives \$5,000 as recognition for being shortlisted.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport says over the last 14 years the Walters Prize has showcased some of the most powerful and imaginative artwork made by New Zealand artists.

The Walters Prize was initiated to help create a greater understanding of contemporary art in New Zealand and to make contemporary art a more widely recognised, debated and prominent feature of the country's cultural life.

Shortlisting

Each Walters Prize iteration begins with Auckland Art Gallery's Director selecting a jury of four people from across the country who are well known as experts in the field of contemporary art. The jury shortlist four new contemporary artworks, each of which have been exhibited for the first time in the prize years. The 2016 jurors and finalists will be announced in March.

Exhibiting

The four artists whose artworks are selected are known as finalists. They are invited by Auckland Art Gallery to re-exhibit the work for which they were chosen, or, as a new guideline for 2016, to propose an alternative work. These four artworks are then exhibited at the Gallery in *The Walters Prize* exhibition.

The Walters Prize for 2016 has free entry and will be held from Saturday 16 July to Sunday 30 October, 10am to 5pm daily, at Auckland Art Gallery.

Judging

The Walters Prize winning artwork is chosen by an international judge, a leading figure in the international visual art world. The judge views *The Walters Prize* exhibition and selects the winning artwork, which is announced at the Walters Prize Gala Dinner. The 2016 judge will be announced in July.



Founding benefactors
and principal donors

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Criteria

To be eligible for the prize, an individual work that has been created within New Zealand or in the context of the artist's connection to New Zealand can be selected as a finalist. The work must have been publicly exhibited for the first time during the two years preceding the prize in New Zealand or elsewhere in the world, and must have been seen by at least one jury member.

History

The Walters Prize was established in 2002 by founding benefactors and principal donors Erika & Robin Congreve and Dame Jenny Gibbs working together with Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and (from 2004) major donor Dayle Mace, who provides a finalist award to each nominated artist. Founding sponsors were EY, who dedicated their support until 2010 and Saatchi & Saatchi, whose relationship with the Prize continued until the end of the 2014 prize. In 2014 the Auckland Contemporary Arts Trust provided support as a Principal Donor and Elevation Capital joined as a Major Sponsor.

Previous winners

2014: Luke Willis Thompson for *inthisholeonthisislandwhereiam*, 2012

2012: Kate Newby for *Crawl out your window*, 2010

2010: Dan Arps for *Explaining Things*, 2008

2008: Peter Robinson for *Ack*, 2006

2006: Francis Upritchard for *Doomed, Doomed, All Doomed*, 2005

2004: et al. for *restricted access from abnormal mass delusions?*, 2003

2002: Yvonne Todd for *Asthma & Eczema*, 2001

(ends)

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