



AND THE WINNER WAS ...

There have been some big wins for artists down under recently, both on the world stage and at home.

WORDS | EMIL McAVOY

First up, the Australia Pavilion was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion for Best National Participation at La Biennale di Venezia 2024. The first time an Australian artist has received this accolade, Kamilaroi/Bigambul artist **Archie Moore** took out the award for his exhibition *kith and kin*.

In *kith and kin*, Moore transforms the Australia Pavilion with an astonishingly expansive family tree, connecting the artist and his family with more than 2500 generations – and spanning over 65,000 years – to include the common ancestors of all humans.

Awarding the accolade, the jury of the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia said: “in this quiet, impactful pavilion, Archie Moore worked for months to hand-draw in chalk a monumental First Nation family tree... This installation stands out for its strong aesthetic, its lyricism and its invocation of a shared loss of an occluded past. With his inventory of thousands of names, Moore also offers a glimmer of the possibility of recovery.”

Also in Venice, Māori art collective **Mataaho Collective** won the Golden Lion for the Best Participant in the 60th International

Exhibition *Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere*, considered one of the highest accolades for art. Renowned for large-scale installations, Mataaho Collective is a collaboration between four Māori women artists who have made work using a single authorship since 2012: **Erena Arapere-Baker** (Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangātira), **Sarah Hudson** (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūhoe, Ngāti Pūkeko), **Bridget Reweti** (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Te Rangi) and **Terri Te Tau** (Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne ki Wairarapa). Their large-scale work *Takapau* is an installation made of

woven and latticed polyester hi-vis tie-downs. It opens the Arsenale section of the Biennale and serves as waharoa or gateway to the rest of the show.

Marikit Santiago has been named the recipient of the prestigious 2024 La Prairie Art Award, an acquisitive award championing Australian women artists. Founded in 2022 and presented by the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) and Swiss luxury skincare house, La Prairie, this award acquires new work for the gallery’s collection and provides a residency for the artist in Europe. As part of this residency, Santiago travelled to Switzerland in June to attend the Art Basel International Art Fair as a guest of La Prairie.

Santiago is a Filipina–Australian artist based in Darug land, Western Sydney. Her two paintings *A Seat at the Table (Magulang)* and *A Seat at the Table (Kapatid)* which will enter the AGNSW collection are intimate portraits portraying two generations of Santiago’s family: her parents and sister. In response to the news, Santiago said: “The La Prairie Art Award is a tangible reward for my parents whose sacrifice and hardship in migrating to Australia provided opportunity and the privileges of my upbringing, which, I firmly believe, allowed me to pursue a career in art while raising a family.”

Also facilitated by the AGNSW is the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship, a significant annual award for Australian painters aged between 20 and 30 years. The annual scholarship, now in its 25th year, was created from an endowment by **Brett Whiteley’s** mother, **Beryl Whiteley**, was inspired by the profound impact international travel and study had on her son resulting from his win of the Italian Government Travelling Art Scholarship at the age of 20.

This year the scholarship was awarded to seven artists. **Mark Maurangi Carrol**, age 28, from Randwick in Warrane/Sydney, was awarded a three-month residency at the Cité



internationale des arts, Paris, beginning in July, along with \$50,000. Six other artists each receive \$10,000 and a two-week residency at Shark Island Kangaroo Valley in New South Wales: **Sis Cowie, Joseph Christie Evans, Visaya Hoffie, Lauren O’Connor, Oliver Scherer, and Angus White**. These artists, along with five other finalists, were selected from 181 entries by guest artist judge **Guido Maestri**. Maestri says he finds Carrol’s work “captivating and unique both in its physicality and conception. Here is a young artist exploring his identity, culture and history in a most thoughtful, delicate and mature way.”

On receiving the premier award, Carrol said: “to be afforded the chance to continue my artistic practice abroad within such a culturally and historically significant place as Paris is a great undertaking. This opportunity will provide me with ample time to work uninterrupted, free from my usual balance of working part-time and painting in between. It marks my first trip to Europe, offering me the chance to witness in person many works of art I studied as a student.”

In Aotearoa, The C Art Trust Award has been quietly making a significant impact on the lives of its recipients for 10 years now. The Trust co-ordinates a group of patrons to provide an award of NZ\$50,000 to support

OPPOSITE: Archie Moore with *kith and kin* 2024, Australia Pavilion, Venice Biennale. PHOTO: ANDREA ROSSETTI. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND THE COMMERCIAL, WARRANE/SYDNEY.

ABOVE: Kathy Barry, *The Loom of Time*, 2017-19. Watercolour and graphite pencil on paper, 16 parts, 70 x 72cm each. PHOTO: TED WHITAKER. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND TE PATĀKA TOI ADAM ART GALLERY.

a promising mid-career New Zealand artist for a period of 12 months. Their aims are to foster connections between a community of patrons, artists and galleries; develop audiences and advocate for the collecting of New Zealand contemporary art; and encourage the appreciation and understanding of contemporary practices.

The 2023-4 winner is Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington-based artist **Kathy Barry**. Barry produces exquisite watercolour paintings that capture the unseen energy fields she began to see and feel in 2012. In this context, audiences might link aspects of her practice to the pioneering artist-mystics **Hilma af Klint, Emma Kunz** and **Georgiana Houghton**. Barry works full-time in her studio, recently staged a major show of paintings in *Energy Work* (alongside **Sarah Smuts-Kennedy**) curated by **Christina Barton** at the Adam Art Gallery in Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington in 2022, and is featured in the international group show *Duty of Care* at the Institute of Modern Art in Meanjin/Brisbane this July to September.