

BLUETHUMB ART PRIZE 2020

We take a closer look at the Aussie online gallery and the winners of this year's art prize

Founded in 2012, Bluethumb represents more than 11,000 emerging and established artists from Australia and partners with 25 of Australia's most remote Aboriginal-owned-and-operated not-for-profit art centres to give you access to more Australian artists and their work than anywhere else in the world. It has sold more than 35,000 original Australian artworks, to everyone from first time art-buyers to established collectors and Australia's finest architecture firms.

Co-founders George and Edward Hartley started out in 2012 with a mission to empower Australia's artists and open up the world of original art to everyday collectors. As a small business with no funding, the odds were definitely against them. "Established art galleries and those in the industry scoffed at the notion of buying art online, of treating all artists equally and allowing collectors to trust their own judgement," says Edward. "We thought it made sense and launched anyway."

"But more than that we didn't want Australia to have to wait until our artists made it into an exclusive gallery to discover their art," adds George. "Musicians had SoundCloud as a platform to manage their music careers, but artists had nowhere to sell their art online."

Bluethumb invests in building technology, such as its art prize platform, that improves the lives of Australian artists and Australia's arts ecosystem.

THE COMPETITION

After a year's hiatus, Bluethumb's innovative art prize came back when Australian artists needed it most. While many art prizes had been postponed or cancelled due to COVID lockdowns and restrictions, the team at Bluethumb worked hard behind the scenes to make the Bluethumb Art Prize 2020 the biggest and best yet, with a \$10,000 top cash prize

and once-in-a-lifetime prize packages for more artists than ever. Last year's judging panel included Australia's best-known living artist — the legendary Ken Done — and our very own *Grand Designs Australia* magazine editor, April Ossington.

Due to the uncertainty of holding events last year, the awards ceremony took place virtually on Instagram Live in November, building on Bluethumb's highly successful lockdown events. The winner's exhibition will be held this year at 1 Denison, North Sydney.

Art prize director, Freddy Grant, and the Bluethumb selection panel spent 10 days looking carefully at more than 2,500 Bluethumb Art Prize 2020 entries. To put this into perspective, that's more than double the number of entries for last year's record-breaking Archibald Prize and beat the previous record of 2346 set in 2018. "The standard was so high it was an almost impossible task, and we couldn't be prouder of our artist community. You're all winners in our eyes!" says Freddy.

THE PRIZES

Thanks to sponsors 1 Denison, *Grand Designs Australia* magazine and Eckersley's Art & Craft, Bluethumb was able to offer more prizes than ever in 2020. The two category award winners with the highest overall scores won the top cash prizes: \$10,000 Bluethumb Art Prize sponsored by 1 Denison. \$2,000 Bluethumb Art Prize Runner-Up Award sponsored by *Grand Designs Australia* magazine.

Each category award winner was invited to exhibit at the Bluethumb Art Prize Winners exhibition and received a \$500 Eckersley's Art & Craft gift voucher to stock up on art supplies, plus a Bluethumb marketing package worth \$1,000 to further boost their online presence and sales. bluethumb.com.au

THE JUDGES

Ken Done

An artist who needs no introduction; a national treasure who is as iconic as his art.

Kim Leutwyler

An Archibald Prize favourite and one of the top 50 most influential LGBTQIA+ allied Australians (*Cosmopolitan*).

Blak Douglas

The first Indigenous artist to win the Kilgour Prize in 2019.

Kim Hyunji

The Bluethumb Art Prize 18 winner and international rising star.

April Ossington

Editor of *Grand Designs Australia* magazine and art aficionado.

Gavin Wanganeen

Australian Football League (AFL) legend, acclaimed contemporary Indigenous artist and Aboriginal activist.

Bindi Cole Chocka

Award-winning photographer, including the Victorian Indigenous Art Award, and one of Melbourne's top 100 most influential people (*The Age*).

THE WINNERS BLUETHUMB ART PRIZE WINNER



ABOVE *Mt Giles, MacDonnell Ranges — Circular Landscape* watercolour paint, framed by Hubert Pareroultja. This also won **LANDSCAPE AWARD**
BELOW Hubert at work



WINNER, HUBERT PAREROULTJA

Hubert Pareroultja of Iltja Ntjarra (Many Hands) Art Centre is a senior Western Arrarnta-Luritja man who lives at Kulpitharra/Lundara outstation west of Hermannsburg (Ntaria). This is his homeland. Hubert has been painting watercolours since he was a young boy, following in the footsteps of his father Reuben Pareroultja and uncles Otto and Edwin Pareroultja. Reuben, Otto and Edwin were part of the original Hermannsburg School watercolour movement and were all acclaimed artists. When Hubert was a kid he watched the original Hermannsburg School watercolour artist Albert Namatjira and his father and uncles as they painted. Hubert paints many of the same locations that Namatjira and the Pareroultja brothers painted, in particular Hermannsburg, Mt Sonder and James Range. Hubert lives and works in the West MacDonnell Ranges to this day. His work is displayed in many important collections. In 2020 he was announced the winner of the prestigious Wynne Prize by the Art Gallery of NSW.



"I FEEL HIS APPRECIATION AND COMPREHENSION OF HIS OWN MOTHERLAND IS SOMETHING THAT NO OTHER ARTISTS CAN EMULATE. THE MYSTIC AND SUBTLE COLOUR PALETTE AND THE CIRCLE FRAMING BEAUTIFULLY CAPTURE THE ETHEREAL SPIRIT OF THE LANDSCAPE." — **KIM HYUNJI**



RUNNER-UP
Young Mother with Sick Baby by Dianne Golding



ABSTRACT AWARD
Family Day Out by Kelilah Taylor-Ware



STILL LIFE AWARD
Arrangement 24 by Jane Reynolds

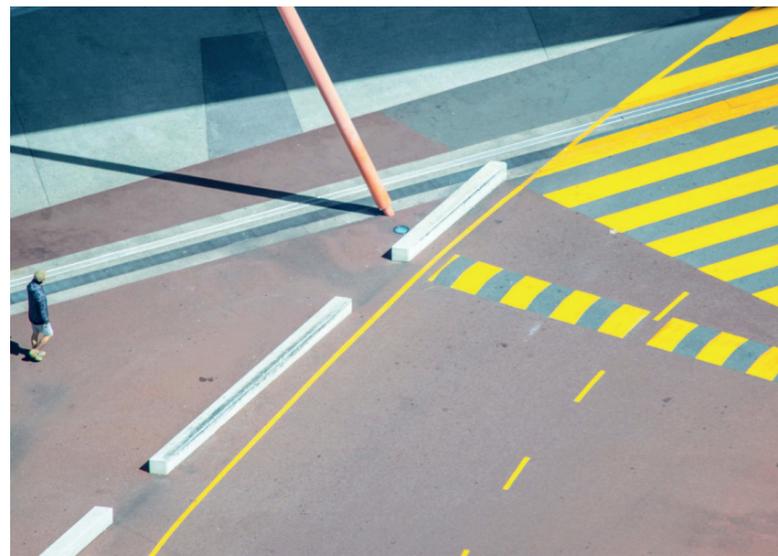
ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AWARD
Young Mother with Sick Baby by Dianne Golding



"I'M INFATUATED WITH THE WEAVERS. THESE CREATIONS ARE SO ABSTRACTLY ACCURATE THAT THEY DEFY ABSTRACTION AND SHOULD BE MADE COMPULSORY AS CHRISTMAS GIFTS TO ALL AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS." — **BLAK DOUGLAS**



"I SEE A GREAT POTENTIAL IN HER WORKS TO CAPTURE AND TO GIVE A VOICE TO HER COMMUNITY. THERE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THE WAY SHE DEPICTS THE EMOTIONS OF THE SUBJECTS." — **KIM HYUNJI**



PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD
Smaller Like Man Ed. 6 of 25 by Ed Fetahovic



"THERE IS GREAT TECHNICAL SKILL IN THIS PORTRAIT. IS SHE LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OR REMEMBERING THE PAST? WHO KNOWS? IT'S A FINE PAINTING." — **KEN DONE**



"A TECHNICALLY ON-POINT REALIST PAINTING THAT OFFERS A NARRATIVE THAT LEAVES YOU ASKING MORE QUESTIONS RATHER THAN GIVING ANSWERS." — **BINDI COLE CHOCKA**

PORTRAIT AWARD
Phoebe by Tara Gibbs

