

# National Photography Prize 2024 finalists

---

 [timeout.com/sydney/news/take-a-look-at-the-finalists-of-the-national-photography-prize-for-2024-041724](https://www.timeout.com/sydney/news/take-a-look-at-the-finalists-of-the-national-photography-prize-for-2024-041724)

When you live in an utterly image-saturated culture, it can be all too easy to underestimate the power of the photograph, as well as the skills and processes behind the creation of an impactful image. Add the fact that practically all of us walk around with a device fitted with a camera in our pocket at all times, and the ominously growing prevalence of AI-generated imagery, and this muddies the waters even further. Freshen up your perspective by checking out the 2024 finalists of the **National Photography Prize**, Australia's longest-running acquisitive photographic award. Established in 1983 at the **Murray Art Museum Albury** (MAMA) on Wiradjuri Country, where it is still hosted to this day, the biennial award and exhibition is a snapshot (pardon the pun) of where photography is at as a medium.

From traditional film stills to digital imagery, unassuming smartphone snaps and camera-less imprints – when does a photographic piece count as art? Likewise, what qualifies a photograph as an important piece of documentation? The finalists of the National Photography Prize might just have the answers – these artists are pushing the boundaries of the photographic medium, and challenging existing languages and techniques. **MAMA** is a fresh and experimental gallery with a strong focus on photography, and Time Out's **Alannah Le Cross** (that's me) headed out there to explore the [2024 National Photography Prize exhibition](#) (*showing 'til September 1 2024, free entry*) with some guidance from MAMA's Senior Curator **Nanette Orly**. Check out her findings.

---



Photograph: MAMA/Jeremy Weihrauch | Installation view of 'IMPOSSIBLE DESIRE', Ali Tahayori, 2023.

## Ali Tahayori: 'IMPOSSIBLE DESIRE'

---

Ali Tahayori's intimate black and white series is pungent with queer longing and the messiness of sexual discovery – as well as that particular universal brand of melancholy that can arise when you revisit the site of a formative moment from your youth, only to be confronted with its ordinariness. **'IMPOSSIBLE DESIRE'** features a video work and a series of hand-painted photographs (containing a bodily fluid – we'll let you guess which one) captured inside a public toilet in the artists' hometown of Shiraz, Iran, where he had his first intimate experience as a teenager. Living and working on Gadigal Land, Sydney, Ali translates the traditional Iranian craft of Āine-Kāri (mirror-works) into a contemporary visual vocabulary. Working with images captured on his behalf by a friend, Ali poignantly combines a discourse about diaspora and displacement with an exploration of same-sex attraction.

*[FYI: The National Photography Prize is showing for free at [MAMA, Albury](#), until September 1. Find out more about the exhibition [here](#). Albury is a 5.5-hour drive from Sydney, and a 4-hour drive from Melbourne. It can also fairly easily be reached by plane or train, and you can score train fare from Melbourne for as little as \$8 – a bargain!]*

**Stay in the loop: sign up for our free [Time Out Sydney newsletter](#) for more news, travel inspo and activity ideas, straight to your inbox.**