

MA Art Prize

Celebrating and supporting the next generation of Australian artists The MA Art Prize is an acquisitive prize valued at \$25,000, awarded each year to one emerging or early-career artist showing new work with a gallery at Sydney Contemporary.

Launched in 2023 by MA Financial Group, Principal Partner of Sydney Contemporary, the Prize was created to identify exceptional new talent, support artists at a critical point in their career, and build lasting connections between emerging practice and serious collecting. The 2026 winner will be announced ahead of the opening of Sydney Contemporary.

"At MA Financial we believe a vibrant arts community is a vital part of our dynamic culture, and we are proud to support artists by providing a platform to exhibit their work and connect with a wider audience. Now in its fourth year the MA Art Prize aims to shine a light on the depth of talent within Australia's contemporary art scene, and play a meaningful role in helping artists realise their potential and progress in their professional journey." – Andrew Martin, Managing Director & Head of Asset Management, MA Financial

The 2026 MA Art Prize winning artwork will be exclusively revealed at Sydney Contemporary ahead of its acquisition by the MA Financial Group corporate art collection.

THE ARTISTS

2026 Finalists

"The calibre of entries for this year's MA Art Prize has been exceptional, with a record number of submissions reflecting the strength, diversity and ambition of Australia's emerging and early-career artists. We congratulate the five finalists, whose work demonstrates remarkable creativity and artistic vision.

At MA Financial, we are proud to support the next generation of Australian artists through the MA Art Prize and our partnership with Sydney Contemporary. We believe investing in the arts helps foster a vibrant cultural landscape, while creating meaningful opportunities for artists to gain recognition, connect with new audiences and advance their careers.

As the MA Art Prize continues to grow, it is rewarding to see its increasing impact and reputation within the contemporary arts community. We look forward to celebrating the finalists and shortly announcing this year's deserving recipient."

— MA Financial Group Managing Director and Head of Asset Management, Andrew Martin



Alex Walker

Alex Walker is a Naarm/Melbourne-based darkroom photographer whose series of large-scale, handmade colour darkroom prints explores the materiality and conceptual role of light within the darkroom process. The work reflects on light's essential function – not only as a physical entity but as the primary agent of creation within analogue photographic practice. This process, where light bends, shifts, and interacts with the film, forms the very foundation of an analogue photograph.

Alex Walker, *Portals 07 & 08*, 2026 Presented by Void_Melbourne



Binyurr Wirrpanda

Guḍurrku (Brolga) depicts the migratory return of brolgas to the freshwater springs of Yalata, sacred homelands of Binyurr Wirrpanda's Dhuḷi Djapu clan. Wirrpanda's brolgas swirl through the skies and dance across tidal floodplains, evoking the creation journey of the Djang'kawu Sisters who manifested as guḍurrku along the Dhuwa songline.

Meticulously etched onto a reclaimed aluminium road sign from Country, this work transforms weathered material into a shimmering canvas. Embodying the Yolŋu edict "if you paint the land, you must use the land," Wirrpanda's Yirrkala-based practice carries forward generations of sacred cultural knowledge in a deeply resonant contemporary form.

Binyurr Wirrpanda, *Guḍurrku*, 2026 Presented by Alcaston Gallery



Jackson Farley

Farley's overlays contemporary Australian culture onto a sixteenth-century Flemish pastoral landscape, collapsing inherited European visions of paradise into everyday national debris. Through absurdity and humour, Farley confronts uncomfortable questions of ownership, belonging, and national identity. The composition stages an unstable collision of nostalgia and spectacle, asking how these myths shape belonging and control unceded land. Ultimately, Farley's practice exposes the contradictions embedded within archaic power structures and belief systems.

Jackson Farley, big things, clive, ned, ned on horse, star wars, brett, margaret, my uncle's car, fancy soap, slappy machines, the libs nuclear station finally built, kangaroos, an afl ball, aukus sub, that airline that went bust that my late grandfather had heaps of unused voucher points to and an emu with cockatoos also, 2026 Presented by NO FANTASY



Rebecca Diele is a Naarm/Melbourne-based artist whose practice investigates systems under pressure. Grids, thread, wire, paper and ink are each pushed to the edge of their own structure. Order is proposed, then interrupted in the form of tension. Warping and accumulation reorganise her works from within. Rather than resolving into stability or collapsing into chaos, each piece sits on a precipice, holding a fragile equilibrium. Diele's work resists easy reading, asking viewers to stay with tension rather than ever resolve it.

Rebecca Diele, *Just a Glimmer*, 2026. Presented by The Renshaws'

Estée's practice highlights myth-making and rituals surrounding mourning, celebration and commemoration. This diptych considers the cycles of leaving, waiting and becoming that shape a life. Figures drift, hover and reach across the composition as nests, eggs and a solitary bird guide movement through a luminous yellow field that functions simultaneously as landscape, shelter and shared ground. An empty nest sits beside one figure while another shelters a single egg, holding absence and possibility within the same landscape. At its heart is the simple proposition that everyone is waiting for someone.

Painted in a restricted palette of red, blue and yellow, the work combines gestural brushwork with moments of intimate figuration. Chance enters through pooled paint, drips and instinctive marks, allowing the image to evolve. Repetition across the diptych, through nests, looping forms and reaching bodies, echoes the painting's interest in care, transformation and what is still to come.

Renée Estée *Empty Nest (we all wait for someone)* 2026 Presented by COMA

THE ARTISTS

Since its launch in 2023, the MA Art Prize has recognised three exceptional emerging artists – each bringing a distinct and powerful voice to contemporary Australian practice.

Past Winners



2025 WINNER



2024 WINNER



2023 WINNER

Juanita McLauchlan

Juanita McLauchlan is an emerging Gamilaraay artist based in Wagga Wagga, whose practice is deeply informed by her Indigenous heritage. Working across materials and concepts with an experimental and rigorous approach, McLauchlan uses her cultural foundation as both a guiding framework and a generative force. Her winning work, *Mandaymanday / String of Stars*, was presented at Sydney Contemporary 2025 with Cassandra Bird, and marked a significant moment in an already compelling early career.

Mandaymanday / String of Stars, 2025 Presented by Cassandra Bird

Alfred Lowe

Alfred Lowe is a ceramicist whose hand-built stoneware works blend technical mastery with rich cultural storytelling. *All Dressed Up I*, a hand-built stoneware work with sgraffito and raffia, presented by Sabbia Gallery at Sydney Contemporary 2024, exemplifies Lowe's ability to hold tradition and contemporaneity in the same breath. The acquisition of this work by MA Financial Group marked a significant moment for both the artist and the Prize.

All Dressed Up I, 2024 Presented by SABBIA

Corban Clause Williams

Corban Clause Williams is a Manyjiljarra artist from the Pilbara region of Western Australia, whose practice is rooted in time spent on Country at Kaalpa. Showing in the FUTURE sector at the inaugural Sydney Contemporary 2023, Williams' work brought the untold narratives of remote Australian life to a national audience, and announced a singular voice in contemporary First Nations art. His selection as the first ever MA Art Prize winner set an extraordinary benchmark for the Prize.

Presented by EG Projects

THE JUDGES

2026 Judging Panel

Andrew Martin

Managing Director & Head of Asset Management, MA Financial

Andrew is a Managing Director at MA Financial Group and the Head of the firm's Asset Management business. He has over 30 years' experience in global investments as a principal investor and adviser across a range of sectors including real estate, infrastructure, private equity and energy. Driven by a strong passion for the arts, Andrew founded the MA Art Prize, complemented by his personal collection of contemporary art chronicling Australia's artistic talent over recent decades.

Andrew Pridham

Group Vice Chairman, MA Financial Group

Andrew Pridham AO is Co-Founder and Group Vice Chairman of MA Financial Group, with more than 30 years' experience in investment banking. Formerly a senior executive at J.P. Morgan and UBS, he has led major M&A and capital markets transactions, and played a leading role in the significant growth of J.P. Morgan's Australian business. He has served on the board of the Sydney Swans since 2002 and has been Chairman since 2013.

Amelia Hill

Senior Advisor, MA Financial

Amelia is a Senior Advisor to the MA Growth Ventures team, assisting with new investments and as an advisor to existing portfolio companies, particularly ahead of further capital rounds or exits. With over 20 years of investment banking experience, Amelia brings a wealth of corporate advisory and capital raising knowledge to the team.

Jarrold Rawlins

Director of Curatorial Affairs, MONA

Jarrold is the Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), Tasmania. With previous experience in the commercial arts sector as co-founder and Director of Uplands Gallery, as well as founding partner of KalimanRawlins gallery, Rawlins has worked across multiple art fairs both domestically and abroad, and has written on contemporary art for many years in a variety of publications.

Sebastian Goldspink

Independent Curator

Independent curator and founder of ALASKA Projects Sebastian Goldspink is a proud descendant of the Burramattagal people of Western Sydney. He is the former Director of both the Hazelhurst Arts Centre and Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf. As a curator, he has presented national and international exhibitions in London, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Christchurch. In 2022, Goldspink curated the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia entitled *Free/State*. He is a regular writer and commentator on Australian contemporary art.

Sue Cato AM

Principal, Cato & Clive

Sue has been a leader in corporate communications and issues management for over 20 years and is an avid art collector. She is a board member of Carriageworks and is a member of Chief Executive Women. Sue is a regular panelist on ABC TV's *The Drum* and on the 2UE Breakfast Show and is a commentator on business issues for the national press.

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