



Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize Committee Minutes

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Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize Committee Minutes

**Minutes of the Meeting held on
Tuesday 19 November at 5.00pm
Council Chambers, upstairs Woollahra Council Chambers.**

1 PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Present: Councillor Anthony Marano (Chair)
Elizabeth Hastings Arts Industry Representative
Karin Olah Community Representative
Christopher Dawson Community Representative

Staff: Jo Jansyn Cultural Development Coordinator
Lynn Garlick Director Community Services

Apologies: Councillor Mary-Lou Jarvis
Councillor Nick Maxwell
Stella Downer Arts Industry Representative
Alison Renwick Arts Industry Representative
Professor Ian Howard Arts Industry Representative
Bernard Curran Community Representative
Ali Yeldham Arts Industry Representative

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

2018 project evaluation minutes provided.

3 2019 WOOLLAHRA SMALL SCULPTURE PRIZE SUMMARY

3.1 Exhibition Summary and Statistics

The Cultural Development Coordinator circulated and spoke to the following information:

- a) How visitors found out about the exhibition/Prize
- b) Website feedback comments

Approximately 3472 visitors attended the exhibition over the three week/four weekend period including the launch night. This is a record visitation and can be supported by the highest number of in person Viewer's Choice votes (1053 compared to 847 in 2018).

The prize continues to attract entries from overseas, with 39 international entries received from 24 countries, including New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Finland, Sweden, Israel, UK, Brazil, Japan, Hong Kong, USA and Serbia. Eighteen (18) of the 43 finalists for this year were interstate artists, one

finalist hailed from the UK and another from New Zealand. 98% of entries were submitted through the online entry form, which includes an online payment option. A cumulative number of 9401 entries have been received for the WSSP in its 19-year history.

Twelve sales of work occurred during the exhibition, which is the highest number of works sold. The launch event itself saw record attendances and there was a wider diversity of groups visiting the exhibition, including some new social groups such as the Art Gallery Society of NSW members.

The opening hours and length of exhibition worked well. The busiest periods were during the 11 am to 3pm time period and on weekends. The Committee agreed that a longer exhibition period would work in the St Brigid's Gallery space in future.

Social media was a successful engagement tool this year with the number of followers of the Prize on Instagram, in particular, increasing significantly.

The Prize currently has 6,437 subscribers (compared to 5,829 at the same time last year) for its E-News with the most popular E-News being the Viewer's Choice announcement in November followed by the Winners' announcement in October.

3.2 Launch and Launch Sponsors

The launch was again successful with comments about the quality of the food and service, and a record number of attendees. The Mark Moran Group very generously supplied the food and service staff. Other in-kind sponsors were again very generous with contributions to the evening including beverage supplied by Taylors Wines. Efforts to find sponsors were successful this year with The Mark Moran Group, Catalina Rose Bay, The Intersection Paddington, D'Leanne Lewis, John Symond AM and Crawford's Casting supporting the Prize.

There was feedback that the speeches should be shortened and that the sound quality of the PA needed more attention.

3.3 Media Report

The Cultural Development Coordinator circulated a media report provided by Articulate. The public relations service provided by Articulate was thorough and excellent coverage was gained for the finalists and the exhibition. Feedback was given by Articulate that there was not as much interest in the exhibition by media due to competing events as well as the more muted tones of the artworks. This year Articulate produced a mid-year animated video for social media that focused on the exhibition which was popular amongst followers.

A dedicated focus on content for the Prize's social media by staff generated an increase in the number of social media followers, particularly with Instagram.

When asked how they heard about the Prize on in person Viewers' Choice slips, the most significant responses were the following (in order from the highest): word of mouth, passing by Redleaf, Email/E-news, Internet and the Wentworth Courier.

3.4 Feedback from Artist/Viewers/Gallery Staff

Gallery staff reported the following feedback from visitors:

- many returning visitors from previous years.
- a collection of works that particularly resonated with visitors this year as the works were less conceptual.
- crowd pleasing exhibition.
- visitors reported they would be happy to see the exhibition move to the new community art gallery proposed for St Brigid's.
- pricing of works affects the sales i.e. the twelve works that sold were more reasonably priced.
- overall feedback by visitors was extremely positive.

3.5 Administration (entry fee, commission fee, prize monies)

The entry fee for the Prize is currently \$45 inc GST per entry and prize monies are currently include:

- The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize – an acquisitive award of \$20,000 (Woollahra Council will keep the winning work)
- The Special Commendation – a non-acquisitive award of \$2,000
- The Mayor's Award – a non-acquisitive award of \$1,000
- The Viewers' Choice – a non-acquisitive award of \$1,000

Council's commission on sales of artworks is set at 40%. If an artist is represented by a gallery, Council's commission is split with the gallery. The Committee felt that the commission fee was accurate.

The Committee were reminded that there will be an increase to the entry fee to \$50 inc GST, to be supported by an increase in prize money of the main prize to \$25,000 when the Prize moves to the St Brigid's Gallery in 2020.

3.6 Community Programs

The Artists Talks received their best audience to date with Professor Ian Howard coordinating the question and answer time for participating finalists. Participants mentioned how valuable it was to talk with fellow artists about their various practices. Artist talks were recorded and, with the artists' permission, are now hosted on the Sculpture Prize website.

Free sculptural workshops were held on the weekends which were pitched as 'family'. This meant that they catered for all age groups. All workshops were at capacity and waitlisted.

The number of schools/classes and community organisations visiting the exhibition increased on previous years. Tour slots were booked by Woollahra Preschool, Cranbrook School, two of Council's Walking Groups, Miroma, Woollahra Library Friends, Bushcare Volunteers and Art Gallery Society of NSW members. The Kids Guide was popular, particularly the descriptions that included questions for children to discuss with their guardians.

Action: Continue to investigate and improve audience development opportunities for Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize Community Programs.

3.7 Additional comments, suggestions, opportunities for improvement

The Committee complimented gallery staff on their knowledge of finalists' works and their ability to engage with visitors. The Committee agreed that there are new opportunities to develop aspects of the Prize with a new gallery including opening up the entries to wall hanging sculpture, inclusion of slightly more finalists as well as promotion around the 20th anniversary. The Committee also had a discussion around 'blind' judging of the prize at preselection and agreed that this was a fairer way to proceed.

ACTION: Cultural Development Coordinator to circulate the above discussion points regarding blind preselection, wall hanging works and additional finalists to Committee members who were not able to attend for further feedback.

4 2020 EXHIBITION DATES

Exhibition and launch dates for the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize have traditionally been based around the Local Government Conference as this gives more availability of rooms in the Council building. Based on next year's conference dates, the launch would occur on Friday 9 October. This date is not ideal as it is in school holidays and comes after the long weekend. Moving the Prize to the new gallery would give some flexibility with dates and currently the launch date of Friday 23 October is being targeted.

5 2020 SPONSORSHIP

The Committee acknowledged the value that sponsorship support provides to growing the Prize as it allows for an external publicist to be engaged, as well as the development of community programs that engage locally as well as virtually. The target for cash sponsorship for the 2019 Prize was \$18,000 and this amount was achieved. It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract cash sponsors.

The Cultural Development Coordinator raised longer term sponsorship packages however it was agreed that it would be more feasible to look into this when the St Brigid's Gallery space is established and is able to offer tax deductibility status.

Action: The Chair and Committee to approach any new contacts (in addition to current sponsors) regarding sponsorship.

Action: The Cultural Development Coordinator to update the sponsorship package and circulate this to the Committee.

6 JUDGES

The Committee had a discussion prioritising judges and a strategy for approach. It was agreed that 'big names' need to be targeted for a 20th anniversary prize.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business

8 NEXT MEETING: 2020 MEETING DATES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED.