

ROBYNDAW YOUNG VISUAL ARTIST SCHOLARSHIP **2024**

FINALISTS EXHIBITION | 26 APRIL – 1 JUNE 2024





Foreword

Logan Art Gallery is delighted to be presenting the inaugural Robyn Daw Young Visual Artist Scholarship finalists exhibition that honours the late Robyn Daw's significant contribution to the development of arts and culture across the City of Logan. This exhibition continues the gallery's commitment to mentoring emerging artists from the Logan region and celebrating the vibrant cultural diversity of the city.

Contemporary art inspires the imagination, reflects our experience in the world and our connection to culture. As an artist centred project, the Robyn Daw Young Visual Artist Scholarship has supported emerging Logan artists to develop and create new artwork for this exciting exhibition. The exhibition showcases the artists creativity and innovative approaches to contemporary practice. As part of the development of the project the selected artists were invited to participate in a series of mentoring workshops with nationally recognised Queensland artist Dr. Kellie O'Dempsey.

I would like to sincerely thank Ian Friend and Dexter Daw Friend for their support of this exciting project. I would like to thank Rameen Ammar, Tegan Geange, Shaghayegh Ghorbani, Anamica Kumari, Laura Pittam, Taylah Te Rauna, Alesha Saeed and Nadya Wilson for sharing this spectacular body of artworks and Debbie Abraham for her inspirational words that honour Robyn Daw's memory and her support of the arts across Logan and providing a context for the scholarship and exhibition. I also extend my thanks to Dr. Kellie O'Dempsey for her amazing workshops that provided a launching pad for the scholarship artists' careers.

Niomi Sands
Creative Industries Program Leader
Logan Art Gallery



Robyn Daw: legacy

(1958–2022)

For a robust and inclusive arts environment, it is crucial to support young emerging artists, alongside artists from First Nations and culturally diverse communities. Fresh and varied perspectives are exciting – resonating with new possibilities for arts practice and interpretations of the human experience.

This viewpoint reflects a key motivation for Robyn Daw's work in the arts and cultural sector, particularly evident in her role as Creative Industries Program Leader at Logan City Council. Robyn wholeheartedly embraced the diversity of Logan, home to people from more than 234 cultural backgrounds, with almost half the population under 30 years old. She championed the arts and firmly placed local people at the centre of cultural development, policy, programming and placemaking – consistently finding meaningful ways of bringing artists and communities together.

The Robyn Daw Young Visual Artist Scholarship is a fitting tribute to someone who dedicated her career to arts and culture. It offers an exceptional chance for both the scholarship recipient and finalist artists to create new work for exhibition while gaining valuable insights into navigating the art world. Additionally, it provides audiences with the opportunity to appreciate this talent and experience work reflecting the City of Logan's rich diasporic cultures through the eyes of young artists.

To appreciate the significance of this legacy, it is important to gain some understanding of Robyn Daw, the person, the artist, and the dedicated cultural leader.

Robyn's voice resonated with clarity and confidence, yet it always left room for others to express themselves, fostering an inclusive environment where success was celebrated without bias. She extended this generosity of spirit by sharing her expertise and life experience, particularly with emerging colleagues, nurturing the next generation of cultural leaders.

As a friend, colleague and mentor, Robyn provided unwavering support, demonstrating a genuine interest in others, and offering guidance whenever sought. More than this, Robyn's way of living served as inspiration – she remained committed to her principles, while being open to adjusting her approach in response to new insights – always striving for the most ethical outcomes.

With textiles at the heart of her art practice, Robyn worked as a weaver at the Australian (then Victorian) Tapestry Workshop in the late 1980s. Throughout her life she continued to create art across various media including drawing, printmaking, sculpture and textiles. She also exhibited extensively, particularly earlier in her career.

In 2023, audiences had the opportunity to witness the breadth of Robyn's practice through two exhibitions. The first was *Lux Aeterna* at Jan Manton Gallery, Brisbane. Alongside a suite of works by life partner Ian Friend, Robyn's large-scale works on paper heightened the sense of beauty and emotional force evident within the gallery space.

Curious Nature, the second exhibition, was presented at Logan Art Gallery. As a considered survey of prints, drawings and tapestries spanning several decades, it encapsulated Robyn's life-long commitment to art practice, her deep understanding of aesthetics, composition and materials, and an undeniable sense of curiosity. Selected tapestries travelled to Melbourne for an exhibition of the same title at the Australian Tapestry Workshop. Promotional material described the work as evoking Robyn's 'love of process, of repetition, of quietness, of reduction, of elegant understatement'.¹

Her legacy as an artist endures through her works being held in various private and public collections including Ararat Gallery–Textile Art Museum Australia, Logan Art Collection, National Gallery of Australia, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Tamworth Regional Gallery and Wangaratta Art Gallery.

Robyn's extensive career was grounded in intellectual rigor and practical engagement through creating art, empowering others to do so, or enhancing their educational or cultural experiences. She frequently sought fresh perspectives to inform her already deep knowledge of art and the sector by undertaking further studies, travelling, and connecting with people.

It was an enduring curiosity and dedication that also fuelled Robyn's exploration into new professional pathways. Early roles encompassed lecturing in art history and theory at the University of Tasmania in the mid-1990s, to educational and curatorial roles in from 1997–2007 at (then) Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Art Gallery, State Library of Queensland, and the National Gallery of Australia.

Continuously leveraging her talents to contribute to the arts and cultural sector, she embraced roles at Arts Queensland, initially focusing on arts development and later transitioning to public art strategy, before taking up her most recent role at Logan City Council in 2012.

As the Creative Industries Program Leader, Robyn was deeply passionate and proud of the collaborative achievements of her team. So much so she presented a paper entitled, *Discovering Your Own City: connecting people, art and heritage*, to an international audience at the 25th ICOM Conference in Kyoto, Japan (2019). This philosophy is reflected in the new Living Museum of Logan at the redeveloped Kingston Butter Factory Cultural Precinct. This was one of Robyn's most significant projects. Through creative repurposing of this heritage site, the community now comes together there for enriching artistic and cultural experiences.

Robyn also launched into several freelance curatorial projects: among standout projects were two national touring exhibitions, *Material Witness: 15th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial* for Tamworth City Gallery (2003) and *Life in Your Hands: art from solastalgia* for (then) Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery (2012).

Beyond curating, she lent her voice to exhibition catalogues and art journals, presented at both national and international conferences, and actively engaged with national and international industry committees and boards.

The essence of Robyn's enduring legacy is captured within this Scholarship, generously supported by Ian Friend and Dexter Daw Friend, with Logan City Council.

It's multi-faceted structure, coupled with its strong ties to Logan and emphasis on culture as inspiration, reflects Robyn's unwavering commitment to authentic arts and cultural development.

Congratulations to the artists in the 2024 cohort, and to future cohorts over the coming four years. Without a doubt, Robyn would look on this project with immense pride, knowing her legacy continues to thrive through such an impactful initiative.

Debbie Abraham
Arts and Culture Consultant

References:

¹ Australian Tapestry Workshop: <https://www.austapestry.com.au/content/robyn-daw-curious-nature>

Logan Arts: <https://www.loganarts.com.au/creatives>

Museum and Galleries Queensland: <https://magsq.com.au/gallery-and-museum-achievement-awards/gamaa-2022/gamaa-2022-individuals-paid-staff>

Ian Were: <https://art-random.net/art>



Robyn Daw at Logan Art Gallery, 2017



Robyn Daw, *False luddite*, c. 1990/91, tapestry 43x61 cm



Alesha Saeed

I am a Pakistani, Muslim woman born in Logan who is a dedicated landscape painter. Lately, my artistic journey has led me to explore social and cultural issues intertwined with my family history of partition, all anchored in the common belief in hope through faith in God.

But where? is a landscape painting depicting a monumental building in Palestine, Dome of the Rock, Olive Trees, and what I describe as displaced people walking towards the Gold Dome representing finding refuge and hope in faith.

The primary focus of this work is the ongoing genocide in Gaza and displacement of people. *But where?* is an invitation to viewers to reflect the current situation and to advocate for empathy, awareness, and a collective pursuit of peace.

This artwork holds urgency as it depicts the current crisis unfolding and illustrates the impacts of colonisation. Its display at Logan Art Gallery serves as a gesture of solidarity, prompting dialogue and education, while also serving as a form of protest against the longstanding suppression and prejudice towards pro-Palestinian narratives.



But where?, 2024, acrylic on canvas and fabric, 300 x 120 cm



Anamica Kumari

Born in Zimbabwe with Indian heritage, I spent my childhood in Botswana before moving to Brisbane in 2004 with my extended family. Being based in Logan, I have developed a strong connection to this place, which has played a significant role in shaping my identity as an Australian. Through my artistic practice, I delve into diverse thoughts using a creative lens that is deeply influenced by my beliefs and travels.

Inspired by my recent trip to India, *Belonging through the elements* comprises 6 layered figurative paintings and one textile sculpture using the elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether to explore ideas of personal and universal belonging.

Being exposed to multiple environments and raised in a family with diverse beliefs, religions and experiences has been a unique blessing. It has empowered me to explore and shape my own belief systems, unrestricted by societal expectations or traditional conventions. The work is an elemental and biographical journey that reflects what I describe as spiritual essence, visualising inherent strengths rather than conforming to religious dogma.



Belonging through the elements, 2024, mixed media, variable sizes



Laura Pittam

Born in Queensland, my life has been scattered with fragments of my mother's Swiss French culture. As a result, I felt isolated from Swiss and Australian communities, feeling like my cultural connection wasn't strong enough to be valid.

Working in Logan, my practice consists of representational paintings and collages that investigate the beauty in the mundane.

Le Mal Du Pays is a series of figurative and landscape paintings derived from photos I have taken of my grandmama's chalet combined with family childhood photos. Varying in size, the intimate works are surrounded by Swiss playing cards forming a winning hand in Jass.

After a recent trip to Switzerland, experiencing my mother's childhood home and culture opened my eyes to what my life could have been. I was left grieving and longing for an idealised life.

Le Mal Du Pays explores the romanticised, fictional reality created in response to my cultural separation and disconnection.



Le Mal Du Pays (homesickness), 2024, acrylic paintings on wooden board, variable sizes



Nadya Wilson

As a mixed Anglo-Malay woman born and raised in Logan, I have felt a distance between my Australian and Malay heritage. Using poetry as a lens to distil human experience and sensation within my practice; I have begun to examine the disconnection I feel within my bicultural identity.

My textile work *for all your words my tongue fails to hold* investigates my disassociation from my Malay heritage. Drawing from my Malay-Singaporean mother's Javanese ancestry, I have explored the wax-resist technique of batik to dye 23 cotton squares blue with varied multiples of a pattern and a poem drawn onto them. I stitch these batik pieces together into a single body, projecting my desire to connect to the Malay culture and language I feel detached from. My poem *mother mine* used within the work seeks reconciliation between my love for words and inability to understand my mother's mother tongue.



for all your words my tongue fails to hold, 2024, wax, artist's hair and batik on cotton, 164x60 cm



Rameen Ammar

As an emerging artist who has been working and practicing in the Logan community, I have managed to establish ties both on a professional and personal level. As a Muslim-Australian artist, the Logan community effectively reflects my multicultural heritage as my artwork centres around my Muslim identity, feminism, and equality.

Connection is an interdisciplinary sculptural installation consisting of connected cushion fabric comprising a chain link, looped video of media footage and a soundscape; which also includes a scent.

As an artist I want to showcase the interlinkage between various religions and the concept of peace. *Connection*, therefore, displays the interconnectedness of religions through an interlinking chain process. As a Muslim-Australian artist, I wanted to display my Muslim identity and those of various other religions in a peaceful and contemporary manner.

This artwork is relevant as it discusses religious diversity and its synchronisation with peace. The artwork also leans towards the elements of the psychological state of Being; as a general concept.



Connection, 2024, mixed media floor-based installation, variable sizes



Shaghayegh Ghorbani

I'm an Iranian artist who moved to Australia in 2016, and now Logan is my home. A passionate and versatile artist I work in mixed media creating thought provoking work.

Whisper of Taboos consists of mixed-media panels of figures and text connected by small floating figurative ceramic sculptures. A feminist work, *Whisper of Taboos* is set against a backdrop of a limitless, timeless cosmos represented in Persian blue and metallic gold. The work uses imagery to depict a realm where love and freedom converge. It is a testament to the universal yearning for emancipation from the chains of conformity, where the angels (the human beings) are trying to unchain themselves from all those forceful rules.

As a woman from a religious background, I exercise self love, respect and openly practice the freedom to express and share love to all. I am interested in removing boundaries and breaking cultural taboos which bind women.

🌐 sherryart.com.au



Whisper of Taboos, 2024, mixed media including canvas painting and sculpture figures, acrylic and ceramic, 150x200 cm



Taylah Te Rauna

As a Māori woman, my family's roots are from small town Te Kuiti, Aotearoa (New Zealand) until we moved to Logan, Brisbane in 2006. My art journey began in the final years of high school. My art teacher told me 'Art is more than just a painting or drawing'. Since then, my practice comprises installations that create immersive spaces based on shared and personal experience.

Vital Organs takes its imagery from the childhood board game 'Operation'. Using a hanging punctured white screen and Māori cultural objects. My work features a video of a Māori woman lying down, limbs splayed, from aerial view as if being operated on, with objects suspended in front of the woman. They are not connected.

Growing up in Australia, it was common to hear negative connotations linked with my culture. Frequently confronted with negative stereotypes, I purposefully disassociated myself from my culture.

As a result, my future self struggled feeling comfortable with my cultural identity. *Vital Organs* highlights the importance of embracing cultural differences and addresses self-censorship, belonging, and racism.



Vital Organs, 2024, installation including video projection, cultural objects and white screen, variable sizes



Tegan Geange

I am a proud Māori woman born and raised in Queensland. Growing up I discovered a longing to express my Aotearoa bond through different art practices and mediums. Researching my historical background, and creating personal pieces that connect me to my heritage through centuries of oral storytelling.

White Sheep? consists of 5 self-portraits on an elongated sheet of cotton paper. The portraits are slowly turning away, accompanied by a Māori strip going across the chin of each face. This work explores notions of authenticity, questions of truth and my cultural experience with stereotypes.

Apart from my sister and I, my whole family were born in Aotearoa. They all have Māori features, while I am what's called a waka blonde, and I often have to justify my Māori heritage to others who question it. The intention of this piece is to highlight that skin, clothes, love and personality don't define who we are or our cultural identity.



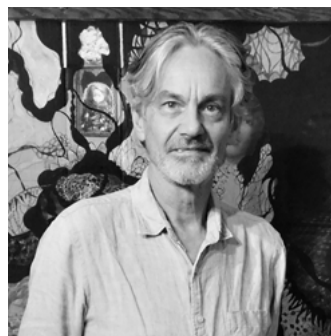
White Sheep?, 2024, photographed digital print on cotton paper, 125x50 cm

Panel members



Dr. Nicola Hooper

Dr. Nicola Hooper is a Meanjin/Logan-based artist and educator who lives and works on the lands of the Yuggera people. She holds a doctorate in Visual Arts from Queensland College of Art and Design, completed in 2019. Her artistic exploration revolves around human/animal relationships, often delving into the realms of fairy tale iconology and its subversive undertones. Hooper is a multi-disciplinary artist who works primarily with lithography, creating wallpapers, sculptures and 2D works. She has also been involved with several public art projects including *Factory Stories* at Kingston Butter Factory Cultural Precinct. Nicola's *Zoonoses* exhibition is currently undertaking a 12 venue, 3 year national tour.



Michael Wardell

Michael Wardell has worked as a curator at Monash University Gallery, Melbourne, 1976-78; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1978-86; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1998-2006; Artspace Mackay (Director, 2006–11) and Logan Art Gallery (Coordinator, since 2012). From 1986 to 1997, he owned and managed 13 Verity Street / Michael Wardell Gallery, Melbourne.

Michael has contributed essays and reviews to a wide range of Australian art journals including *Art Network*, *Art & Australia*, *Artlink*, *World Art*, *World of Antiques & Art*, *Imprint*, *Portrait*, and the *Australian Book Art Journal*, as well as numerous catalogue essays. In 2006, he wrote the chapter 'Ideas and Actions' in the book, *Contemporary: Art Gallery of New South Wales Contemporary Collection*. He has delivered lectures and papers at various galleries, universities and seminars throughout Australia and he has spoken on radio and television arts programmes in Canberra, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.



Sha Sarwari

Sha Sarwari, a Hazara born in Afghanistan is a multidisciplinary visual artist. His artistic practice encompasses a diverse range of mediums. Through his work, Sha intricately weaves together allegorical layers, resulting in a visual experience that evokes poetic sense.

Sha holds an Honours degree in Visual Arts from Victoria College of Arts, Melbourne University (2018), a Bachelor of Fine Art from the Queensland College of Art and Design, Griffith University (2015) and a diploma of Graphic Design from TAFE (2005).

In 2020 Sha was one of the recipients of the Incinerator Art Award; Art for Social Change. In 2018 he was awarded the Fiona Myer Award for excellence at VCA, Melbourne University. In 2017 he was awarded Most Critically Engaged Work at CCP Salon, Australian Centre for Photography, Sha is the recipient of the inaugural prize of 2016 'Home' Art Prize – The Walker Street Gallery & Arts Centre. In 2015 Sha was awarded High Commendation at The Churchie National Emerging Art Prize.



Aunty Peggy Tidyman

Aunty Peggy Tidyman identifies as a descendant of the Gunggari people from Mitchell, South West Queensland. Aunty Peggy has only had a short career as an artist, following her retirement after working with Education Queensland for 32 years. Seeking a new interest to engage in during her senior years, Aunty Peggy started painting Aboriginal art on a smaller scale with arts and crafts. For many years, she admired artwork by famous Aboriginal artists, and she felt it was a positive way to share her story in an artistic format and share her rich cultural heritage with others.

Using contemporary colours, Aunty Peggy's work includes various pieces of contemporary Aboriginal art on canvas using dots and strokes, including traditional symbols as well as modern symbolism to give an impression of her life stories.

Aunty Peggy is also deeply proud to share her Chinese heritage through a combination of Aboriginal art on lanterns and other specific cultural items. Her work has been exhibited multiple times including in Taiwan in 2021, 2022 and 2024 with the World Arts & Multi-Culture Inc. Brisbane, the Buddha Light International Association over the past ten years and Logan Art Gallery.



Mentor

Dr. Kellie O'Dempsey

Dr. Kellie O'Dempsey creates site-generated installations and performances that integrate projection, video, collage, architectural space, gestural line, performance and digital drawing. Creating in both solo and collaborative formats with sound artists and contemporary dance practitioners, O'Dempsey's diverse practice explores, deconstructs and heightens the concept of public space as shared experience. O'Dempsey manipulates space and alters perception to transform and reinvigorate the familiar, and to create a sense of brilliance. Using performance, play, line and colour, O'Dempsey's public productions enable an inclusive form of cultural interaction. The immersive site installation and performance drawing works invite the audience to engage directly with the visceral process of making. Kellie's past performances include: Art after Dark; Pier 2/3; 18th Biennale of Sydney; MONA FOMA, Hobart; White Night Melbourne; and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Acknowledgements

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