18 December 2015
For Immediate Release

**Top students recognised with Helpmann Academy Graduate Exhibition selection and awards**

**Adelaide Central School of Art** is celebrating the achievements of its largest cohort of graduates from the Bachelor of Visual Art (Honours) and Bachelor of Visual Art degree courses since the School opened, with one in two students selected to exhibit in the **2016 Helpmann Academy Graduate Exhibition** and five students recognised with awards.

The following **fourteen outstanding graduates** have been selected for the annual Helpmann Exhibition, which will showcase South Australia’s **top emerging visual artists** from Friday 12 February to Sunday 6 March 2016:

- Andrew Clarke, 32, of Stepney
- Edwina Cooper, 21, of Somerton Park
- Nancy Downes, 34, of Forestville
- Francois Evangelista, 27, of Seaton
- Jonathon George, 29, of Adelaide
- Susan Hamilton, 64, of Mitcham
- Lisa Losada, 52, of Norwood
- Grace Marlow, 21, of Lobethal
- Tara O’Conal, 32, of Wayville
- Michael Schaefler, 46, of Kensington Park
- Jane Skeer, 50, of Linden Park
- Cassie Thing, 54, of Wistow
- Timmi Tsapaliaris, 22, of Rostrevor
- Luke Wilcox, 32, of Prospect

“The panel commented on the quality, diversity and sophistication of the work being produced from the Adelaide Central School of Art graduates,” said **Jane McFarlane**, CEO Helpmann Academy, who was on the selection panel. “They have developed a strong foundation that will ensure this dynamic cohort of alumni will continue to grow and develop well into the future.”

**Five top graduates** were also named as the **recipients of six awards** that acknowledged their achievements in both theory and practice, at the opening of **PROPOSITIONS 2015 Graduate Exhibition** on 5 December 2015. Hon John Hill, Chair of SALA Festival, opened the exhibition with over 500 people in attendance. The award winners named were:

- **Andrew Clarke** of Stepney, recipient of the **James Martin Award** for a high achieving BVA graduate
- **Nancy Downes** of Forestville (First Class Honours), recipient of the **Tracey Whiting Award** for a high achieving BVA (Hons) graduate
- **Grace Marlow** of Lobethal (BVA graduate) received two awards, including the inaugural **Adelaide Central School of Art and Artlink Magazine Art History Award** and also the **NAVA Ignition Award** for a high achieving student in Professional Practice
- **Leah Craig** of Mylor, co-recipient of the inaugural **Alan Young initiated Board of Governors Award for Excellence** (BVA graduate)
- **Jane Skeer** of Linden Park (First Class Honours), co-recipient of the inaugural **Alan Young initiated Board of Governors Award for Excellence** (BVA (Hons) graduate)

Ingrid Kellenbach, CEO Adelaide Central School of Art, said that award selection was extremely difficult due to the high standard of work: “The graduates are remarkable, both in their work and in the optimistic and confident expression of their visual intelligence.”
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“It is no surprise that fourteen of our graduates have been included in the 2016 Helpmann Academy Graduate Exhibition. We strive for excellence here at the School and this is reflected in the outstanding breadth, diversity and quality of work from this group,” Kellenbach said.

Hon John Hill said to the graduates: “What we have before us today is a body of works done by serious artists … I congratulate you sincerely on your achievements and your courage to go through this unique system combining skills and self-development with public exposure.”

PROPOSITIONS 2015 Graduate Exhibition includes 264 works throughout Adelaide Central Gallery and the School, and will close at 12noon Wednesday 23 December 2015.

The School is also celebrating the achievements of 2011 graduate, Julia McInerney of West Croydon, who was recently named the recipient of the 2016 Carclew Ruth Tuck Scholarship worth $12,500, and also received the 2016 Adelaide Critics Circle Emerging Visual Artist Award.

About the Award Recipients

Andrew Clarke

Andrew, 32, who works predominantly in painting and drawing, graduates with a Bachelor of Visual Art as a top performing student.

“It was a wonderful feeling to hear my name called out. I’m humbled to receive the James Martin Award. This year has been challenging but very rewarding. I have a couple of exhibitions in the pipeline for 2016, so I’ll be keeping busy preparing for them,” he says.

Andrew’s supervisor, eminent Adelaide artist Chris Orchard, says, “Andrew held a fierce commitment to figuration in both drawing and painting. He drew from a deep well of tradition but was able to turn this potent visual language to a contemporary, psychologically loaded series of compelling images.”

Nancy Downes

Nancy, 34, graduates with a Bachelor of Visual Art (Hons) with First Class Honours. Nancy is a sculptor and installation artist who also works in painting.

“I really enjoyed my Honours year, and felt that it worked as a kind of melting pot where things that had been lurking bubbled to the surface,” she said. “It was amazing to have been given the time and support to then take those discoveries, intuitively follow them wherever they would take me, and then really push that as far as I could both in making and research.”

Nancy was supervised by eminent Adelaide artist, Nic Folland. “Nancy sets a new standard for the alumni. Her ambition has been rewarded with numerous publications of her work in recent months, and opportunity is knocking at her door,” he said. “To experience Nancy’s installations is to feel embraced within the threads and fibres of our dearest memories, where our body reacts to the tactility of seductive materials. Nancy has only just begun to share her story, and we will be watching keenly for the chapters to come.”
Grace Marlow

Grace, 21, who works across disciplines including video, painting, textiles and sculpture, graduates with a Bachelor of Visual Art among the top achieving students.

“I’m really grateful to have received these awards. It’s a fantastic way to end a year of hard work and an encouraging start to my art career. I’m looking forward to undertaking further studies in the New Year,” said Grace.

Grace was supervised by eminent Adelaide artist, Nic Folland. “Grace Marlow is a young artist with rare and exceptional talent,” he says. “She is able to refine the enormous and impossible challenges of reconciling Australian identity, to produce works that locate her own uncertain position with poetic and engaging results. To receive these two awards not only highlights the level of recognition that Grace is receiving Australia-wide, but demonstrates that the industry is watching her closely with great expectations for the future.”

Leah Craig

Leah, 30, is one of the top achieving graduates from the Bachelor of Visual Art and works predominantly in painting.

“It was a bit of a shock to get to get this award, lovely, but completely unexpected. My paintings are little and they depict supermarkets, yes, supermarkets. Not being partial I have chosen to select elements from the wonders of all the local IGAs, Woolworths, Coles and Foodlands. Why? Because there is something unexpectedly wonderful about them. This is what Adelaide Central School of Art has taught me, to not only draw, paint and sculpt but to re-evaluate my viewfinder, because the most unexpectedly wonderful things can be found in the most common and overlooked places,” she says.

Leah’s supervisor, Adelaide artist Julia Robinson, says, “I am delighted to see Leah recognised for her compelling series of paintings. Leah’s commitment to her emerging art practice is highly commendable and we can all look forward to where she takes it from here.”

Jane Skeer

Jane, 50, completed her Bachelor of Visual Art (Hons) with First Class Honours. She works predominantly in sculpture and installation.

“I timidly enrolled at Adelaide Central School of Art part-time to learn to paint, not thinking that I would get hooked on the system. My kids had grown up and my self-esteem was low at that time so I cannot believe what I’ve achieved in the past 5 years,” she says. “This year I have allowed myself the freedom to ‘play’ as key method of my art practice. As an adult we forget what it’s like to play and really connect with material things.”

Jane’s supervisor, Adelaide artist Sasha Grbich, says: “Jane presents materially sensitive, quietly interactive works that entice viewers to watch, touch and move through sculptural objects. It has been my pleasure to support Jane as she developed her ambitious body of work.”
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About Adelaide Central School of Art

Adelaide Central School of Art is an independent, not-for-profit, accredited Higher Education Provider that offers intensive training for students looking to develop careers as practising artists. The School offers undergraduate degrees, specialist short courses, workshops and masterclasses. The studio-based teaching program emphasises structured sequential learning developing practical skills in parallel with rigorous intellectual inquiry.

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