

New Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf to open 4 November

Much-loved 1897 Double Bay heritage building overlooking Blackburn Gardens and Sydney Harbour has been restored and reinvented as a contemporary public art gallery

The winner of the 20th Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize will be announced at the inaugural exhibition opening



Sydney, Australia: Sydney's newest public art gallery, *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf* will open to the public on Thursday 4 November 2021, housed within the architecturally reworked 122-year-old St Brigid's building overlooking Sydney Harbour in Double Bay. The gallery's revised opening date follows the NSW Government's announcement that museums and galleries will be permitted to reopen after the state passes the 70 per cent double vaccination target, and will comply with public health requirements.

Launching with an inaugural exhibition featuring the finalists of the 20th Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf* will be the heart of a new cultural precinct, including the Council Chambers built in 1863, the picturesque Blackburn Gardens, Murray Rose Pool, Redleaf Beach and kiosk, presenting a year-round program of contemporary art exhibitions, artist residencies and public programs.

The winner of the 20th Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize will be announced on Wednesday 3 November 2021, at a Covid-safe unveiling of the new gallery and virtual presentation. From Thursday 4 November, the Prize's finalist exhibition will feature 52 works - each measuring up to 80cm in any dimension - by artists from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom alongside the Council's collection of 19 previous winning works from the Prize. This year's finalist sculptures were selected from a record 844 entries by a judging panel, comprised of Director Curatorial and Digital, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia **Dr Lara Strongman**, Art Historian, Curator and Industrial Archaeologist **Joanna Capon OAM** and celebrated artist and fashion designer **Jenny Kee AO**.

Cr Susan Wynne, Mayor of Woollahra, said: *'Woollahra has a well-established connection to the arts which includes the much-loved Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Australia's pre-eminent award for small sculpture. Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf will be an artistic hub where people can connect with art through exhibitions, residencies, workshops and public programs. We are excited to open the doors to this fantastic new public gallery for the community to enjoy.'*

The exhibition program for *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf* will be led by respected curator **Sebastian Goldspink** in his role as Gallery Coordinator. A proud descendant of the Burramattagal people of Western Sydney, Sebastian is also the curator of the 2022 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art and was a co-founder of ALASKA Projects in Kings Cross.

Media Release

27 September 2021



'It's an honour to be involved in the launch of this new gallery and to be returning to work in the building that I learnt to read in as a child in its former use as the Double Bay Library. It was a special place for myself, and many people who grew up in the area. I have a definitive connection with the building and the local community it has always supported. I look forward to working closely with artists, curators and the team to deliver a dynamic and accessible art space that showcases the deep love and history of art in the East. A place that fosters opportunities for artists to generate new creative memories for future generations,' said **Sebastian Goldspink, Gallery Coordinator, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf.**

The heritage building that houses the new *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf* has been restored and reinvented by Tanner Kibble Denton Architects to create four high calibre exhibition spaces while keeping all of the original details including crown moulding, arched windows and original wooden flooring. Spread across two levels, the gallery will also include spaces for community activity and for digital and new media art practice, including a podcast room.

The downstairs cultural hub situated below the gallery will become the new home for the established *Woollahra Artist in Residence Program*. The program provides rent-free, non-residential unfurnished studios for artists to work in. The first round of artist residencies will feature artists **Susan Baird, Penelope Cain, Rox De Luca, Wendy Yu** and **Sharon Billinge**. The cultural hub will run selected Council-led cultural and creative programs available for the community to visit or hire for use.

The gallery will be run by Woollahra Council with a focus on an annual exhibition calendar presenting a diverse range of artists, from emerging to established, procured and programmed through a yearly expressions of interest call out. The exhibition calendar will be bolstered with travelling exhibitions and partnerships as well as the Council's existing program including the celebrated annual Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize exhibition.

Woollahra is recognised as the home of many of Australia's most acclaimed artists, authors and filmmakers, including poet Banjo Patterson, Nobel Prize winning author Patrick White, iconic opera singer Dame Joan Sutherland as well as internationally recognised visual artists Charles Blackman, Russell Drysdale, Fairlie Kingston, Margaret Olley, Lloyd Rees and Martin Sharp. The area also has one of the highest concentrations of commercial galleries in any local government area in Australia. *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf* will support many non-commercially represented artists.

Built in 1897, the *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf* building, known as St Brigid's has a rich and extraordinary history. Over its lifetime, it has been home to many important local families, the headquarters for the Royal Commission on Espionage and a community gathering place as the *Woollahra Arts Centre* when Woollahra Council bought it in the 1950s. It was most recently the treasured *Double Bay Library*, before its relocation to Kiaora Place.

Further information on programming and opening activity will be provided in coming weeks. The Gallery will adhere to strict COVID-Safe guidelines in line with the NSW Government's Public Health Order and ensure the safety of visitors and staff.

Ends

MEDIA CONTACT: To request interviews, imagery and information in relation to the Prize and Gallery, please contact Articulate: Kym Elphinstone, kym@articulatepr.com.au, 0421 106 139 or Sasha Haughan, sasha@articulatepr.com.au, 0405 006 035.

IMAGERY FOR MEDIA USE: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yhk95oycwmlbdhc/AAA5Q-a2Ac_jraO69sCJdumUa?dl=0

IMAGE CAPTIONS (Above, left to right): Kate Howard, *Remnants*; St Brigid's building pre-renovation, James Horan, 2019 and Stuart Mclachlan, Cardinal Sins

ABOUT WOOLLAHRA GALLERY AT REDLEAF

Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf located at 548 New South Head Road, Double Bay will be a cultural hub in the community, a destination where all are welcome. Over its lifetime, this significant heritage building has had a rich and diverse history. It has been home to many important local families, the headquarters for the Royal Commission on Espionage, and a community-gathering place as the *Woollahra Arts Centre*. It was most recently the treasured *Double Bay Library* before its relocation to Kiaora Place. The vision of the gallery is to be the cultural heart of Woollahra and support creative talent to flourish. It will be a collaborative space for all to connect

Media Release

27 September 2021



with and be enriched by the arts. The gallery will focus on contemporary art through the yearly exhibition calendar of a range of diverse shows by different artists.

ABOUT SEBASTIAN GOLDSPIK

A proud descendent of the Burramattagal people of Western Sydney, Sebastian Goldspink is an independent curator and Founder of ALASKA projects. In 2011, Sebastian opened the ground breaking space ALASKA projects as a platform to exhibit contemporary visual art in unused or disused spaces – showcasing over 500 artists across 150 exhibitions. Sebastian has curated exhibitions nationally in Australia and internationally in London, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Christchurch. He has collaborated with institutions including Museum of Contemporary Art, Museum of Old and New Art, National Art School, Performance Space, Art Month Sydney, Sydney Symphony and Kaldor Public Art Projects. In 2020, Sebastian was named as the curator for the 2022 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art for the Art Gallery of South Australia.

ABOUT THE WOOLLAHRA SMALL SCULPTURE PRIZE

Established in 2001, the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize is Australia’s pre-eminent award for small sculpture presented by Woollahra Council. In 2021, an increased prize pool of \$29,000 will be offered to mark its 20th anniversary. The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize attracts strong support from artists, collectors and critics and is the first national acquisitive prize for an original sculpture of up to 80cm in any dimension. Each year the winning work is acquired by Council and forms part of the permanent public collection which is on display all year round for the community to enjoy for free. Visitors can discover some of the world’s most exciting contemporary sculptures and often be introduced to the most innovative artists working in the medium. The Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize will be the opening exhibition for *Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf*.