

Tanya MacNaughton

## Imprint of art in the everyday

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**W**hen it comes to judging art prizes, Fremantle Arts Centre curator Glenn Iseger-Pilkington sees it aptly as more of an art form in itself, rather than a science.

"Each of the judges will come to the judging process with a very different point of view, a different lived experience and a different kind of taste," Iseger-Pilkington explains.

"You need to get a rounded experience, you need to make sure there's expertise in local practice, in national practice and also, of course, in First Nations Australian practice and Torres Strait Islander practice. It's about getting that blend right, so that whatever is happening in terms of the conversation with the judges, that there's someone to represent and champion the different perspectives and world views that inform the works of art."

The judging panel for the 2023 Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award — Annika Kristensen, Timmah Ball, Tom Muller — exemplifies this and at the official opening night ceremony on August 4 announced Jacky Cheng's work *Yue Lao — God of Matchmaking and Marriage* as the winner of this year's \$16,000 acquisitive prize for the City of Fremantle Art Collection.

"The idea of a contemporary print award is so relevant today; how we see print has evolved over time," Broome-based Cheng says, whose artwork is made from recycled Chinese calendar papers.

"This created and continues to steer conversations of how we use and see the print medium in our day to day. The practice of denoting the daily activities through the use of a Chinese calendar has been passed down to me from my grandmother in Malaysia, and that intergenerational relationship

along with many others have informed *Yue Lao — God of Matchmaking and Marriage*.

"To me it is ultimately about relationships, whether that be our close family, with our community and even social experiments under the microscope of current culture — MAFS, Tinder and the like."

The \$6000 non-acquisitive second prize was awarded to WA artists Jay Staples and Stephen Brameld for their entry *Forest*.

For the first time in the Print Award's 46-year history — as one of the longest running and most prestigious print awards in Australia — Northern Territory artist Kieren Karritpul was presented with the inaugural \$5000 non-acquisitive First Nations Prize for artwork *Ngen'gi wumirri*

Peoples, Nauiyu Nambiyu (Daly River).

"This year we're really thrilled to have the support of Wesfarmers Arts in offering a First Nations print award that honours the contribution that First Nations people make to contemporary

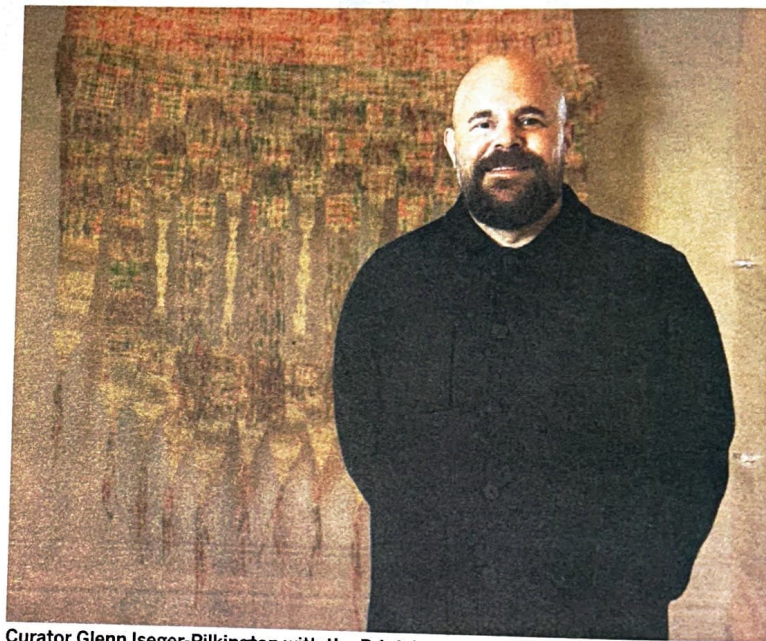
printmaking practices and, more broadly, contemporary Australian art," Nhanda and Noongar man Iseger-Pilkington says.

"To be able to offer that at, I think, a no more important time than in 2023 when we're considering the Voice to Parliament and representation for Aboriginal people in the country."

In celebration of Fremantle Arts Centre turning 50, the 2023 Print Award features the works of 50 selected emerging, established and cross-disciplinary artists, the exhibition presenting a diverse selection of printmaking practices and artist books, reflecting the state of contemporary Australian printmaking.

The annual award became a biennial prize in 2021.

"The Print Award was first established by then director Ian Templeman in 1976 after a kind of



Curator Glenn Iseger-Pilkington with the Print Award winning artwork by Jacky Cheng. Picture: Justin Benson-Cooper

great period of expansion and printmaking practices in Australia," Iseger-Pilkington shares.

"There's all kinds of different approaches to printmaking and I think the Print Award does ask that question, what is printmaking in the here and now and what constitutes a print? As an award that posits that question, we're really open to artists placing practices within that frame of contemporary printmaking. Anything that leaves a mark, that has a process in place where a surface transfers an image onto another, is a print."

This opens up a range encapsulating artworks of photography, 3D printed models and sculptures made of folded paper to etching, lithography, silkscreen printing and even using the sun on photosensitive emulsion.

"You can have everything from small prints that are smaller than an A4 page to prints that are five metres by two and a half metres, so it's really quite incredible in terms of that difference of scale," he says.

"Sometimes the smaller works can be the most impactful because they offer a really intimate experience between you and the work."

"There's something quite nice about it being a biennial program now because people can have a think about works of ambition that might take a little longer in terms of studio time and development time for ideas. I think the biennial program really creates a bit more space for printmakers to consider works of ambition."

**Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award exhibition is on until October 22. Entry is free.**

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