



Selection and judging process 2026

Selection Process

From the online entries, a panel of three arts practitioners from different areas of contemporary Australian art, shortlist the finalists. The acquisitive winner is chosen from the finalists by a single judge who is prominent in one of the many aspects of contemporary art industry in Australia. This framework remains for 2026; however, a key change to this process involves a blind selection panel process.

Role of the Selection Panel

The job of the selection panel is to bring its considerable expertise to the task of determining which of the many artists working in different media should be nominated as finalists.

The panel is asked to select artwork based solely on artistic merit, via the images supplied by the artists, as being worthy of exhibition in a national competition, ignoring an artist's reputation or lack thereof and evaluate each entry on what the artist has presented.

- There are no 'themes' or other conceptual limitations on selection
- Entries do not need to relate to Central Australia or Alice Springs
- The panel is not bound to select a particular number of works
- The panel should consider the desirability of exhibiting a diversity of media

Stage 1

Panel members are provided with a link to be able to individually consider artworks:

- reviewing all eligible, anonymised entries (images/video links + artist statements supplied via the entry system) online
- assess each work on its merits and vote to assist in the formation of a finalist list

Criterion	What to look for (non-exhaustive)
Artistic strength & clarity	conceptual coherence; clarity of artistic intent in the statement; strength of visual/experiential resolution
Technical realisation	command of chosen medium(s); relationship between method and meaning
Audience impact	potential to engage Australian audiences in person; relevance and resonance
Feasibility & safety	suitability for indoor exhibition; scale limits; electrical tagging; installation clarity

Stage 2

- if required entries are considered in an additional viewing and further discussion of merit for inclusion
- ASAF board member will moderate the online meeting, confirm the finalist list and record consensus results for prize inclusion
- all panel members have equal rights in the selection process
- as this is a blind judging process it is incumbent upon each panelist to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest (COI) and recuse if required
- in order to maintain non-bias, strict confidentiality and maintain the anonymity of artists we rely on panelists not to discuss the identity or name of any artist or artwork they may feel they recognise
- we ask that everyone uphold best-practice protocols described below during deliberations

To remove identity-based influence and support fairness across media and career stages, ASAF will:

- Anonymise files before panel access (remove artist name, age, location, bio, social handles)
- Assign unique entry codes; panel view is limited to: title, category, dimensions, anonymous 300-word statement, and up to two images or a ≤5-minute video link + still
- Remind panelists that panel scoring should respond to the artwork itself, not the presumed identity of the artist. Prohibit external research (no web searches to guess identity) during assessment
- Require conflict of interest (COI) self-checks
- Reveal artist identities only after the finalist list is locked and recorded

Judging Process

Role of the Judge

A judge is appointed to select the acquisitive winner from among the finalists chosen by the panel.

How judging works

The judging is based on artistic merit at the judges discretion. There is only one winner and ultimately the judge chooses whichever work is a standout to them - how that decision is reached is entirely their decision. Providing 1-4 highly recommended mentions is also welcome.

The judge will view hung / displayed works, over 2 days, in person at Araluen Art Centre.

Non-prejudicial judging instructions

- Apply the same criteria as the selection panel, adding your qualitative judgement on outstanding contribution to contemporary practice
- Winner (acquisitive): select one work and provide a 150–250 word citation describing why it exemplifies excellence and impact
- Highly Commended (no financial award): at your discretion, you may confer non-monetary mentions to notable works (typically 1–4), to be announced on the Opening Night and listed online with a one-sentence citation each