

For immediate release
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Art and religion collide in Australia’s most contentious art prize
The 60th Blake Prize, 28 October–23 December 2011



Nell, *A Year on Earth, 2011*. Enamel on NZ kiln-dried pine. Image courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

2011 marks the 60th anniversary of one of Australia’s most controversial art prizes – The Blake Prize.

An exhibition of selected finalists from the 60th Blake Prize, including 2011 winner Khaled Sabsabi, opens to Queensland audiences on 28 October at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Art Museum.

As one of Australia’s longest-standing and most highly sought after art prizes, the Blake Prize has stimulated a sometimes contentious dialogue between art and religion.

Sydney artist Khaled Sabsabi was awarded the 2011 Blake Prize for *Naqshbandi Greenacre Engagement*, a video installation examining Islamic faith and prayer.

The 60th Blake Prize exhibition includes the winning work by Sabsabi, as well as a line-up of some of Australia’s leading and emerging contemporary artists, including:

Cairns-based Torres Strait Islander Brian Robinson, whose quirky large-scale linocut explores the biblical narrative of Noah’s Ark through the his cultural heritage. In place of Noah’s and his flock of animals we find a group of Torres Strait Islander warriors herding pop-culture figures such as Astro Boy and the Ninja Turtles on to the Ark in preparation for the flood.

And Queensland-born Indigenous artist Danie Mellor, whose work addresses Australia’s shared history, often through the lens provided by his spiritual connection with his mother’s country in the Atherton Tablelands.

According to the 2011 judges, the 60th Blake Prize exhibition invites the viewer to experience different religious practices and universes, helping to demystify the unknown and esoteric.

Published in conjunction with the 60th anniversary is *The Blake Book: Art, religion and spirituality in Australia* by Rosemary Crumlin (Macmillan, 2011), which offers a visual social history of Australia and a well-documented history of The Blake Prize.

The 60th Blake Prize marks the first time the Prize has been on show in Brisbane in over ten years. QUT Art Museum is the first stop and the only Queensland gallery on the exhibition’s national tour.

The 60th Blake Prize will be officially opened by Professor Sasha Grishin AM, The Sir William Dobell Professor of Art History, Australian National University, on Thursday 27 October.

The 60th Blake Prize
28 October–23 December 2011

QUT Art Museum
Gardens Point campus, 2 George Street, Brisbane
www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au | Ph 07 3138 5370 | artmuseum@qut.edu.au
Open: Tue-Fri 10am – 5pm, Sat & Sun 12pm – 4pm

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