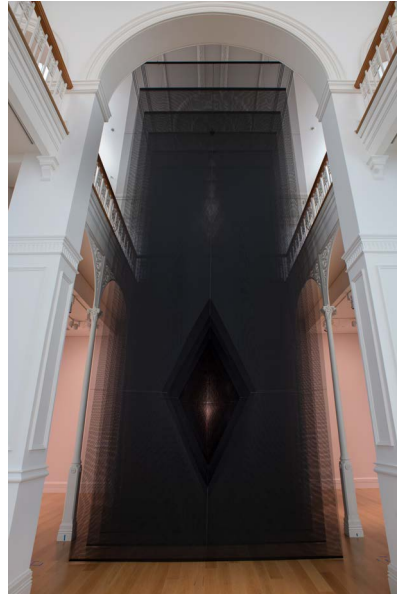


Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander win Walters Prize 2021



Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander, photo by Jos Wheeler



Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander, *Atapō* (installation view), 2020, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2021

Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander have been announced tonight (Saturday 7 August) as the winner of the Walters Prize 2021, New Zealand’s most prestigious contemporary art award.

The announcement was made by this year’s Walters Prize international judge, Kate Fowle, Director of New York’s MoMA PS1, at a gala dinner held at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander receive \$50,000 for the honour.

Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander were awarded the Prize for their presentation of *Atapō*, 2020.

In judging the award for which there were four finalists, Fowle said, ‘The installations bring nuanced perspectives on social, cultural and political urgencies of our time that each deserve our attention and engagement. As such, it does not feel appropriate to award the prize based on a personal selection of one work over another, particularly when I cannot physically be present with them.’

‘Instead, I would like to award the Prize to Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander as a celebration of the inspiration they bring through their sustained collective practices, as well as for the potential futures they offer in their collaborative thinking and generative processes. For me, these qualities, together with the commitment the artists have to creating proximity, signal the work that needs to be done by all of us in the coming years, regardless of the barriers we encounter.’

Fowle made her selection from exhibited works by artists Fiona Amundsen, Sonya Lacey, Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander, and Sriwhana Spong.

‘The eight women that were selected by the jury and the four installations that they have produced reveal incredible sophistication in how to invite us to embrace often fluctuating or contradictory perspectives on a story or a phenomenon that is otherwise somehow out of reach. As different in form and subject as each presentation is, there is a powerful, unifying force in how they each ask us to slow down, listen, be present, think again and be aware of our environment, ourselves, our contexts,’ says Fowle.

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With a legacy that now stretches over a decade from the Prize's inauguration in 2002, Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander join a celebrated list of former Walters Prize winners: contemporary New Zealand artists Ruth Buchanan (2018), Shannon Te Ao (2016), Luke Willis Thompson (2014), Kate Newby (2012), Dan Arps (2010), Peter Robinson (2008), Francis Upritchard (2006), et al. (2004) and Yvonne Todd (2002).

The Walters Prize recognises outstanding works of contemporary New Zealand art produced and exhibited during the immediately preceding years.

Held biennially, the Walters Prize aims to make contemporary art a more widely recognised and debated feature of cultural life. Named in honour of the late New Zealand artist Gordon Walters, the Prize was established in 2002 by Founding Benefactors and Principal Donors Erika and Robin Congreve and Dame Jenny Gibbs, working together with Auckland Art Gallery.

The winner of the Walters Prize 2021

Mata Aho Collective and Maureen Lander, *Atapō*, 2020

Mata Aho Collective was established in 2012 by:

Erena Baker, born 1984 (Te Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangitira), Palmerston North. Lives and works in Palmerston North.

Sarah Hudson, born 1986 (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Pūkeko, Ngāi Tūhoe), Auckland. Lives and works in Whakatāne.

Bridget Reweti, born 1985 (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangī), Te Puke. Lives and works in Dunedin/Ōtepoti.

Dr Terri Te Tau, born 1981 (Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne ki Wairarapa), Sydney. Lives and works in Pōhangina Valley, Manawatū.

Maureen Lander, born 1942 (Te Hikutu, Te Roroa, Ngāpuhi, Pākehā), Rawene. Lives and works in Whangamata.

For images and interviews

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Exhibition details

The Walters Prize 2021

When:
Saturday 15 May 2021 to
Sunday 5 September 2021

10am–5pm daily
10am–9pm Fridays

Where:
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Cnr Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
Auckland, New Zealand

Admission:
FREE

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Notes for Editors

Walters Prize information

The Walters Prize is New Zealand's most prestigious contemporary art prize and 2021 marks the tenth iteration of the biennial award at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. The Walters Prize awards the most outstanding contribution made to contemporary art in New Zealand by an artist in the two-year period preceding the prize. The Walters Prize was initiated to create a greater understanding of contemporary art in New Zealand and to make contemporary art a more widely recognised, debated and prominent feature of the country's cultural life.

History

The Walters Prize was established in 2002 by Founding Benefactors and Principal Donors Erika & Robin Congreve and Dame Jenny Gibbs working together with Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and (from 2004) Major Donor Dayle, Lady Mace, who provides a finalist award to each nominated artist. Founding Sponsors were EY, who dedicated their support until 2010 and Saatchi & Saatchi, whose relationship with the Prize continued until the end of the 2014 prize. In 2014 the Auckland Contemporary Arts Trust provided support as a Principal Donor and Elevation Capital joined as a Major Sponsor, followed by Chris and Charlotte Swasbrook as Major Donors in 2016.

Previous winners

2018: Ruth Buchanan for *BAD VISUAL SYSTEMS*, 2016/2018, mixed media installation

2016: Shannon Te Ao for *Two shoots that stretch far out*, 2013–14 and *Okea ururoatia (never say die)*, 2016

2014: Luke Willis Thompson for *inthisholeonthisislandwhereiam*, 2012

2012: Kate Newby for *Crawl out your window*, 2010

2010: Dan Arps for *Explaining Things*, 2008

2008: Peter Robinson for *Ack*, 2006

2006: Francis Upritchard for *Doomed, Doomed, All Doomed*, 2005

2004: et al. for *restricted access*, 2003

2002: Yvonne Todd for *Asthma & Eczema*, 2001

Kate Fowle

Kate Fowle is the director of MoMA PS1. She was appointed in 2019 after six years as the inaugural chief curator of the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, and director-at-large at Independent Curators International, New York. Previously, Fowle was the inaugural international curator at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing from 2007 to 2008 and chair of the Master's Program in Curatorial Practice at California College of the Arts in San Francisco, which she co-founded in 2002. Before moving to the United States, Fowle was codirector of Smith + Fowle in London. From 1994 to 1996 she was curator at the Towner Art Gallery and Museum in Eastbourne, East Sussex.