

Judge announced for *The Walters Prize 2021*, opening this weekend at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki



Photo: James Hill

Kate Fowle, director of Moma PS1 in New York, has been appointed as the judge for this year’s Walters Prize, New Zealand’s contemporary art prize, which opens this Saturday 15 May at Auckland Art Gallery

Fowle says she is looking forward to working with New Zealand’s top contemporary artists.

‘The Walters Prize is an internationally recognised award with a legacy of extraordinary artists and a remarkable lineage of prior success and engagement,’ she says.

The Walters Prize is Aotearoa New Zealand’s most significant contemporary art award. Established in 2002, this will be the tenth iteration of the Walters Prize, which was created as a platform to show excellence in the visual arts.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Kirsten Lacy says she is delighted to announce Kate Fowle as the Walters Prize judge for 2021.

‘We’re honoured to have Kate Fowle as judge for this year’s Walter Prize. Kate has an exceptional reputation and is world-renowned for her work at both Garage in Moscow and MOMA PS1, and we’re looking forward to working with her,’ says Lacy.

Curator of Contemporary Art Natasha Conland says Kate Fowle joins a legacy of high-calibre international judges.

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'Having an international judge for the Walters Prize brings a level of impartiality and fresh critical engagement that has been an important part of the prize format,' she says.

'The exhibition – and the announcement of the winner of this renowned award – means the Walters Prize provides an opportunity for all New Zealanders to discover the pulse of contemporary art in the country today,' says Conland.

The winning artist will be announced following Fowle's decision at the Walters Prize award dinner to be held in the Gallery on Saturday 7 August.

Conland says that in the event Kate is unable to travel, a virtual exhibition will enable an excellent viewing experience for the judge.

'It is our hope that we will welcome Kate in person in Auckland, nonetheless, we will work alongside New Zealand government travel restrictions impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic,' says Conland

The artworks nominated for the Walters Prize are selected for their outstanding contributions to contemporary art in New Zealand in the preceding years.

The selected artists for this year's iteration are Fiona Amundsen, Sonya Lacey, Mata Aho Collective with Maureen Lander and Sriwhana Spong.

The 2020 Walters Prize jury members are Charlotte Huddleston, Melanie Oliver, Nathan Pohio and Allan Smith.

The Walters Prize dinner will be held in the Gallery on Saturday 7 August. Details about this occasion, including event partners and ticket sales will be announced in a media release to follow.

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

**For more information, high-res images
and interview requests contact:**

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About 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, Russia, 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.

About the Walters Prize

The Walters Prize profiles outstanding examples of contemporary New Zealand art. Named in honour of pioneering modernist painter Gordon Walters (1919–1995), the Prize aims to make contemporary art more widely recognised and debated.

An independent jury of curators and artists researches national and international exhibitions to nominate four finalists whose work is recreated for display at the Gallery. A key feature of the Walters Prize is that it brings to Auckland a distinguished judge with an international perspective. The judges so far have been Harald Szeemann (2002), Robert Storr (2004), Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (2006), Catherine David (2008), Vicente Todolí (2010), Mami Kataoka (2012), Charles Esche (2014), Doryun Chong (2016) and Adriano Pedrosa (2018).

The Walters Prize was established in 2002 by founding benefactors and principal donors Erika & Robin Congreve and Dame Jenny Gibbs, together with Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. From 2004 Lady Dayle Mace became a major donor, providing an award to each of the finalists. 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 iteration. In 2014 the Auckland Contemporary Arts Trust provided support as a principal donor and Elevation Capital joined as a major sponsor. More recently, Christopher and Charlotte Swasbrook have moved to support the prize as major donors.