

# MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY 18-FEB-22 8:00AM



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## EMERGING ARTISTS AWARDED LANDMARK PUBLIC ART COMMISSION VALUED AT \$150,000 FOR GOOLWA WHARF PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

With a submission that thoughtfully connects the past to the present, artists Amber Cronin and Anika Gardner were declared the recipients of the Helpmann Academy Major Public Art Commission for the Goolwa Wharf Precinct. Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC made the announcement last night at the 2022 Helpmann Academy Graduate Exhibition awards at ACE Open.

The partnership between Helpmann Academy and Alexandrina Council with the generous support of the K & S Langley Fund, will see Amber and Anika receive \$150,000 to bring their artwork to life as the redevelopment of the Goolwa Wharf Precinct unfolds in 2022.

This significant commission comes at a time when Australia's arts and cultural sector has been devastated due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and the economically precarious position many artists – especially emerging – have found themselves in.

This career defining result comes after Amber and Anika were shortlisted last year and received mentoring from Tony Rosella at George Street Studios to refine their concept.

The judging panel were impressed by the way the winning artists spent extensive time connecting with a wide cross section of the Goolwa community – from local residents to business owners and Ngarrindjeri community representatives – to gain a deep and genuine understanding of the area. Their submission strongly met the themes of *'family and connectedness'* as visitors and users to the Goolwa Wharf Precinct will experience when the artwork is installed in March 2023.

Amber and Annika's design features three separate and distinct sections that will be woven through the precinct, for visitors and users to explore and self-discover. The duo has created an artwork of 'deep remembering' that visitors and residents alike will delight in. The installed artwork will also feature designs from contemporary Ngarrindjeri and Narangga artist, Cedric Varcoe.

On winning the commission, artist Anika comments, *"This opportunity is a rare chance to create something on such a large scale... I'm speechless! It's going to be such a wonderful learning curve for myself as I work with Amber, Cedric, and Tony from George Street Studios to deliver the work. I'm beyond excited to further my understanding of public art and create a work bringing Ngarrindjeri stories to the forefront."*

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Installation artist, Amber Cronin echoes Anika's sentiments, *"for an emerging artist this commission represents an unparalleled opportunity to work on a large-scale public artwork. This isn't something that happens every day! I am thrilled to be working together on this project with Anika and for the personal and creative development it will offer me as an artist."*

This Major Public Art Commission would not be possible without the generous support of the K&S Langley Fund.

Sarah Langley, K&S Langley Fund comments, *"for many years we have had an ongoing relationship with the Helpmann Academy, for a collaborative jazz scholarship. We were looking to strengthen this relationship and help profile emerging young South Australian artists and support their careers and craft. We recognised that art is all around us. Whether we hear our favourite song on the radio or drive past a street mural, it is part of our daily experience, but we lose sight of the impact art can have on our community. From art shows in galleries to public art in the park, art gives us an opportunity to gather with other people, interact have conversations!"*

Alexandrina Council Mayor, Keith Parkes said, *"Amber and Anika's artwork uniquely captures the spirit of Goolwa, both past and present. The design shows great sympathy and harmony to the Goolwa Wharf Precinct and will provide much enjoyment for residents and visitors to discover. Our township is committed to supporting and championing arts and culture in our region, through our partnership with Helpmann Academy and the support of the K & S Langley Fund, we are excited to be able to create a unique piece of public artwork."*

The partnership is something Jane MacFarlane, Helpmann Academy CEO is incredibly proud of. *"Providing an opportunity, for a major public artwork commission, was possible through the progressive and forward-thinking team at Alexandrina Council and the generosity of the K & S Langley Fund. Developing large scale artworks is no small feat, so I am feeling proud and thrilled that Helpmann Academy has been central to this success. Supporting emerging artists is why we exist. This commission and winning design from Amber and Anika is a major accomplishment."*

**-ENDS-**

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## ABOUT HELPMANN ACADEMY

The only organisation of its kind in Australia, the Helpmann Academy empowers South Australia's most promising emerging creatives to realise their visions and build sustainable practices. Helpmann provides professional development opportunities including grants, awards, fellowships, mentorships, masterclasses, advisory services, and international artist residencies, all tailored specifically for South Australia's higher education students, tertiary graduates, and emerging artists. The Helpmann Academy is a unique collaborative partnership, unifying the skills and resources of the state's universities. Since 1994, the Helpmann Academy has been empowering emerging creatives, promoting South Australia as a centre for excellence in creative education, and contributing to the artistic community of the state.

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