Pymble Ladies' College

2026

Pymble Values Art Prize

Exhibition of Finalists

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which Pymble Ladies' College and Vision Valley stand. We pay respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to other First Nations people within our community.

COURAGE

I am open to new experiences to learn and grow



Dr Kate Hadwen

Principal, Pymble Ladies' College

Welcome to the second annual *Pymble* Values Art Prize celebrating female Australian artists and the enduring values of Pymble Ladies' College.

We were delighted to receive 326 submissions, which led to the difficult task of shortlisting just 41 finalists. Please know that each submission was considered with the Care, Integrity and Respect the artist deserves for having the Courage to put their work forth. Choosing a winner in any situation is a Responsibility we never take lightly. Thank you to all the courageous artists who have shared their work with our judges and College community.

Thank you also to our esteemed judges, Multidiscipline Artist Julia Gutman, Artist and Educator Jessica Ashton, *Pymble's* Head of Learning Area – Visual Arts Brigiat Maltese, and our Deputy Principal Lamia Rockwell for the gift of their time, thoughtful appraisal and expertise.

This exhibition reflects our focus on the value of Courage in 2026, which we define as being *open to new experiences to learn and grow.*

As you wander through, I invite you to consider the works in relation to the brief to visually explore the concept of Courage in a broad and inclusive manner.

Thank you to all the courageous artists who have shared their work with our judges and College community.

You will see how each artist has responded in their own unique way to convey personal courage in the face of adversity; courage to speak up for others; courage in vulnerability and honesty; or the collective courage of communities striving for change.

We look forward to installing the winning artwork at either our *Pymble* campus or Vision Valley campus, where it will stand proudly as a testament to outstanding female artistic talent in Australia and the importance our community places on values-led behaviour.



Artworks for sale

The *Pymble* Values Art Prize winner will receive $30,000 and their artwork will be acquired by the College. All other artworks featured in our Exhibition of Finalists are available for sale through our online portal, GalaBid.

To make a purchase, you will need to create a GalaBid account. Payments are made directly through GalaBid via credit card. No alternate payment methods are available.

Successful purchasers are responsible for collecting their artwork from the College. Details will be provided after confirmation of purchase.

Thank you for supporting our finalists.

SCAN TO PURCHASE ARTWORKS

Index of Finalists

Evie Adasal

Julianne Ross Allcorn

Sarah Anthony

Katy Arfai

Greer Arnott

Michelle Arnott

Maree Azzopardi

Kate Banazi

Julz Beresford

Adele Bevacqua

Georgia Bountros

Shanton Bradburn

Clare Brodie

Tania Burkett

Alli Geers

Fiona Halse

Genevieve Harnett

Freya Jobbins

Tracey Jones

Kerrie Knight

Louise Knowles

Stephanie McCready

Kerry McInnis

Sam Michelle

Bindi Mira-Bateman

Vinita Mishra

Libby Moore

Ro Murray

Sarah Neave

Susan O'Doherty

Lori Pensini

Nina Radonja

Amanda Jane Reynolds

Nadine Reynolds

Susanna Robinson

Rachel Rutt

Zoe Sernack

Mary Stack

Katie Thomas

Marisa Veerman

Lyra Zhu

Judging Panel

It was an honour to be one of the judges of the Pymble Values Art Prize this year. I love that this prize supports female artists and it's exciting to see that there are so many amazing female artists in Australia.

JESSICA ASHTON

ARTIST AND EDUCATOR
2026 PYMBLE VALUES ART PRIZE JUDGE



Jessica Ashton

Artist and Educator

Jessica Ashton is a Sydney-based artist and educator whose practice encompasses portraiture, landscape and still life painting. A three-time Archibald Prize finalist, she has also been recognised in numerous prestigious awards, including the Portia Geach Memorial Award, Mosman Art Prize and Parliament Plein Air Prize. Her work has been exhibited widely in regional and commercial galleries across Australia and is held in public and private collections.

An experienced educator, Jessica teaches painting from her Manly studio, portrait drawing at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and life drawing at the University of Technology Sydney.



Julia Gutman

Multidisplinary Artist

Julia Gutman is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice is anchored by an experimental textile process, with which she interrogates her own relationships and the performance of selfhood. Her figurative works are made primarily from donated fabric – worn clothes, slept-in sheets – and often replicate compositional moments from historical artworks, using her friends as models to respond to and reinvent the originals. Garments often become physical artifacts of the past – stand-ins for those we have lost, or relics of who we once were. In this sense, Julia works with the textures of memory, using found textiles as a vehicle for connection and collaboration.

In 2024, Julia presented her first institutional solo exhibition *life in the third person* at The Art Gallery of Western Australia. She was also commissioned by the Sydney Opera House and Vivid LIVE for the iconic Lighting of the Sails, creating her first video work, *ECHO*. In 2023, Julia was awarded the Archibald Prize, making her the youngest winner in 85 years. She was one of six exhibiting artists in Primavera 2022: Young Australian Artists at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. In 2024, she was a finalist in the Mosman Art Prize, as well as the Wynne Prize. She was a finalist in the 2021 Ramsay Prize at the Art Gallery of South Australia and the 2020 NSW Visual Arts Emerging Fellowship at Artspace Sydney.

Her work has been acquired by the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, and many notable private collections in Australia and internationally. Julia has exhibited across Australia and internationally in London, Paris, Rome, Milan and New York.



Brigiat Maltese

Head of Learning Area – Visual Arts, Pymble Ladies' College

Brigiat Maltese is an experienced educator and practising artist. With over 30 years in secondary education, she specialises in girls' education and achieving consistently outstanding outcomes.

Her own artwork has been recognised in several prestigious art awards, including as a finalist in the Wynne Prize, the Sir John Sulman Prize, the Dobell Drawing Prize, the Mosman Art Prize, and the Northern Beaches Environmental Art Prize.

Brigiat's practice explores the intersections of environment, identity and materiality, reflecting a deep engagement with both contemporary and traditional techniques. This is an approach that is mirrored in her own teaching philosophy.

Drawing on decades of creative and pedagogical experience, she brings a passion for how the visual arts reflects cultural values.



Lamia Rockwell

Deputy Principal, Pymble Ladies' College

Lamia spent her formative years in Lebanon and France before migrating to Sydney with her family in 1988. Raised in a family of educators – her mother and maternal aunts are teachers – she has drawn lasting inspiration from their commitment to nurturing young people, a legacy that continues to shape her own approach to education.

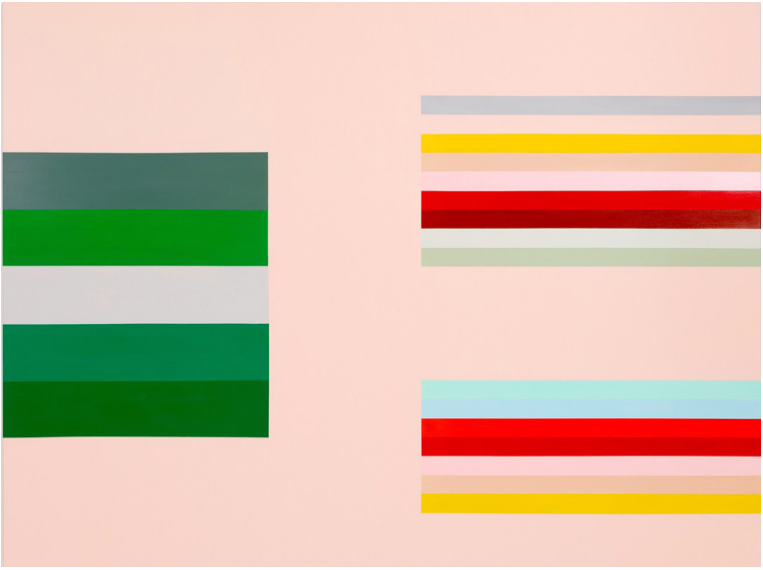
Throughout her 30 years in education, Lamia has had the privilege of working with students, staff and families from a rich tapestry of cultural backgrounds. Her personal value of embracing diversity is woven into every aspect of her role as Deputy Principal. Whether engaging with students, collaborating with staff, or connecting with parents, Lamia is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and seen.

She actively fosters open dialogue and mutual understanding, firmly believing that diverse perspectives enrich the entire community and stimulate growth and creativity.

Lamia values art as a powerful expression of diversity, believing it opens minds, bridges cultures and allows individuals to see the world through different lenses. It is a celebration of creative talent, a reflection of the diversity within our community, and an essential part of nurturing empathy, broadening horizons and strengthening connections. Art invites us to step beyond the familiar and meet new perspectives with curiosity. Her commitment to this is reflected in our 2026 Courage value statement – *I am open to learn and grow* – as well as our College values of Care, Integrity, Respect and Responsibility, all of which set the tone for this special exhibition.

Finalists

1



Evie Adasal

Big Pink

Synthetic polymer on poly cotton
150cm H x 200cm W

For me, courage is connected to changing the course of my life and committing fully to painting. Following a near-death experience, I became acutely aware of life's fragility and finite nature. I also found the courage to radically change my way of painting, moving from a more gestural approach towards an intuitive, reductive process. Although my finished works can appear highly resolved and preconceived, their direction emerges through the act of painting. Taking that risk, trusting my instincts and allowing myself to be vulnerable within the process, has transformed my practice. For me, courage is embracing uncertainty and continuing to move into the unknown.

2



Julianne Ross Allcorn

"Ad Explorandum Liber Natus" (*Born Free to Explore*)

Pencil, watercolour chalk pastel mixed media on 4 birch wood panels
95cm H x 125cm W

"Ad Explorandum Liber Natus" (*Born Free to Explore*) traces the pulse of renewal moving through the Australian bush. My practice draws on the intricate lives of its flora and fauna where each season unfurls as both struggle and promise. From my bush studio in the Lower Hunter Valley, I have watched birds, insects and animals face danger as they court, build nests and raise their young. Their resilience is matched by their curiosity and playfulness bringing flashes of joy to the landscape. This work asks us to pause and look more closely, not take our surroundings for granted. In nature's persistence we find courage to endure, adapt and begin again.

3



Sarah Anthony

Fast Track to PTSD

Oil on canvas
91cm H x 62cm W

This painting depicts prominent DEECA-registered wildlife rescuer and carer, mentor and CADS activist, Helen Round. Helen spent 12 years running East Trentham Wildlife Shelter, "rearing, repairing and rehabilitating kangaroos". Helen's rescue work and activism require her to regularly step into unpredictable, emotionally demanding situations which require constant learning, adaptation, and immense courage. I've depicted Helen here in a quiet moment feeding rescue joey, Mickey, who is snugly nestled in his fluffy pouch. I was drawn to paint Helen because of her immense courage, her warm and generous spirit and to highlight the traumatic underbelly of wildlife rescue work. The title of the painting comes from a passing comment Helen made, that her work is a "fast track to PTSD".

4



Katy Arfai
Be Yourself

Mirroring (Persian handcut mirror mosaic)
170cm H x 80cm W

Be Yourself explores courage as the willingness to question how we see ourselves and remain open to change. The fragmented reflection interrupts the certainty of a singular self-image, inviting the viewer to confront vulnerability, ambiguity and the possibility of seeing themselves differently. Hand-cut mirrored fragments transform the familiar function of the vanity mirror, reflecting identity as something continually shaped through experience, memory and perception. For me, courage lies in accepting that who we are is not fixed — and in being open to new experiences that challenge, reshape and expand our understanding of ourselves.

5



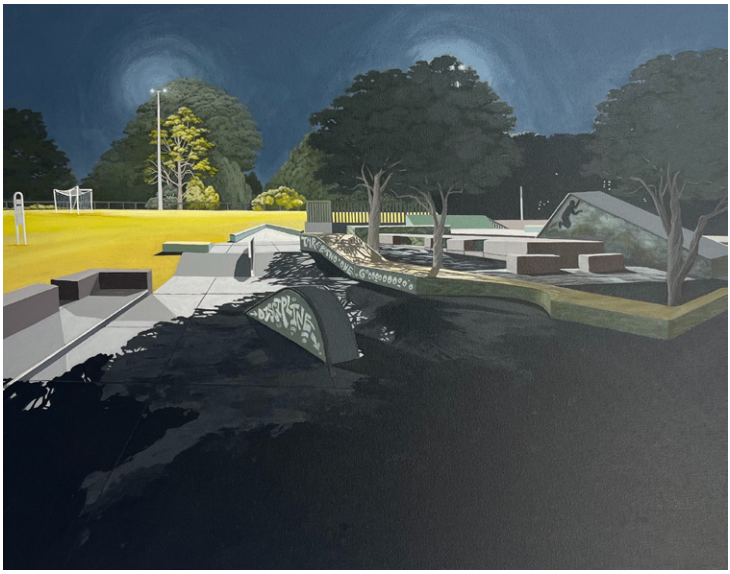
Greer Arnott

Seawinds #2

Acrylic on canvas
60cm H x 40cm W

There is courage in taking the first step. For years I created art but never moved forward to make it my career. The fear of the unknown and failure kept me immobile. And them I became a mother. The need to model following your passion forced me to conquer my fear and gave me the courage to take the first step. As I paint this gum I stand with my children at my feet, glad that I had the courage to take the first step and now the courage to take each step ahead.

6



Michelle Arnott

Playgrounds

Synthetic polymers on stretched canvas
85cm H x 67cm W

Playgrounds responds to the outdoor and sporting lifestyle of many Australians. It takes courage to show vulnerability, build competence, perhaps commit to a team and pursue relative mastery. In this painting I've chosen to explore the mystery and magic of a summer's night after all have gone home.
The grass breathes, the trees rustle and breezes flutter around the deserted blocks. Tomorrow will bring another day of personal challenges and camaraderie. In my work, I paint structures and sites, exploring the properties of shadows and building up many layers of synthetic polymers as an homage to significant personal or public cartography. I find enormous beauty in the light and angles of the everyday and value the stories that can be found in the intersection of the past and present.

7



Maree Azzopardi

What Remains

Mixed media - mulberry paper, bushfire charcoal, sumi ink, found wire, thread, acrylic on linen
105cm H x 77cm W

What Remains is about courage as something quiet and persistent. I'm interested in what happens after we have been broken, displaced or changed, and how we find a way to keep going. The work is built through layers of mulberry paper, hand-crushed bushfire charcoal, Japanese sumi ink, pigment, thread and salvaged wire on linen. I tear, erase, cover and reveal the surface, allowing previous marks and words to remain like fragments of memory. The red stitching becomes a small act of repair, while the wire moves across the work like a restless drawn line – sometimes tangled, sometimes finding its way forward. For me, courage is not about being fearless. It is about carrying our scars with us and continuing anyway. The damaged and repaired surface becomes a kind of map: evidence of what has been endured, what has been lost, and what remains.

8



Kate Banazi

Nicely Difficult

Silkscreen ink, acrylic, canvas, raw aluminium
50cm H x 35cm W

There is a vulnerability in allowing yourself to be seen, particularly when what is revealed is awkward, imperfect or difficult to resolve. But there is defiance in that too and I'm interested in the courage it takes to stay visible rather than retreat, to take up space without apology, and to resist the pressure to make ourselves more polished, more comfortable or easier to understand. The work doesn't try to correct what feels awkward or exposed. Instead, those moments are allowed to remain because perhaps courage is not about overcoming discomfort but being willing to inhabit it.

9



Julz Beresford

A Chance for Reflection

Oil on canvas
93cm H x 93cm W

As a female artist, I am drawn to the disparity between vulnerability and resilience, and to the idea that courage does not always have to be loud or visible. Sometimes courage is found in being still, in finding independence, and by simply having the courage to take up space. To follow one's own path and to grow authentically. I think for women it's important to be true to ourselves and not try to match or meet the expectations of others, especially in this new digital age where so much content is available to compare ourselves too. Strength, integrity and self-respect are integral in my art practice. I'm often in the landscape on my own and this stillness creates an opportunity for reflection and gratitude for what the landscape provides. Courage is being present in the moment; it might not be loud but instead deeply and honestly felt.

10



Adele Bevacqua

Perfectly Imperfect

Acrylic on canvas
36cm H x 28cm W

I painted this piece for *Pymble* with the hope of inspiring women to see the beauty in the imperfect. Sometimes we don't know how things will turn out, and the fear of starting can be what holds us back. But if you don't try, you'll never know. These imperfect, raw flowers are a reminder that not everything needs to be fully thought out; sometimes you just have to start and see where it takes you.

11



Georgia Bountros

Bull Addresses Mankind

2D artwork (archival ink and gold on inlaid parchment leather)
120cm H x 80cm W

My inspiration for *Bull Addresses Mankind* was prompted by the life and writing of Ernest Hemingway, who viewed bull-fighting as a tragic art form and as a profound metaphor for human courage. The bull as a metaphor transcends time. By extension, the bullring also carries deep metaphoric significance, standing as a secular cathedral where the matador confronts mortality, fear and grace. The matador may be viewed as a high priest in rituals that mirror Catholic liturgy and the sacrifice of the Mass. The bull too is frequently seen as a powerful metaphor for Christ's sacrifice and passion, noted in the work by a Christlike Crown of Thorns. Like Jesus, the bull enters an arena it did not choose, facing a preordained destiny. The arena surrounding the bull is hinted at in the ink drawings of the women, witnesses to the sacrifice, while the focus remains centred on the bull, so that viewers comprehend the intertwined nature of sacrifice and courage.

12



Shanon Bradburn

Dawn by the Murray River

Oil on canvas
92cm H x 275cm W

Dawn by the Murray River is a celebration of the Australian landscape through colour and light. The red river gum is the perfect subject to represent courage and adaptation of survival with in the ever-changing harsh conditions of our beloved country. A true inspiration for all Australians.

13



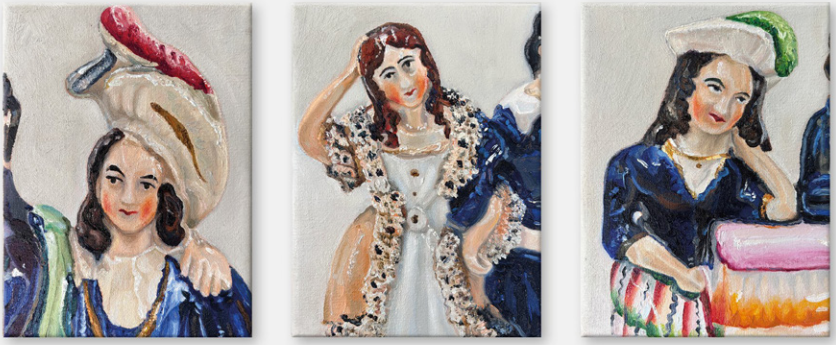
Clare Brodie

Radiance

Matt vinyl paint on cotton canvas
153cm H x 137cm W

Courage can come from knowing that we are connected to something larger than ourselves. In this painting, the sun becomes a source of energy, its rays extending through the landscape and connecting the elements within it. I think of us in the same way: as individuals held within a larger landscape of people, experiences and connections that sustain us and give us the courage to grow. The light is not fixed; it moves, changes and reveals different possibilities. For me, courage is trusting that source, remaining open to what it offers, and allowing it to illuminate a way forward.

14



Tania Burkett

Triptych: (1) Victorian Staffordshire Figure – Robert Burns and Highland Mary Spill Vase (Sampson Smith), c. 1851; (2) Victorian Staffordshire Figure – Glover and Vining as Yourawkee and Peter Wilkins (c. 1840); (3) Rare Victorian Staffordshire Figure – John Anderson and his Wife (Alpha Factory), c. 1850

Oil on canvas
20.3cm H x 15.2cm W

I'm delighted by the way context changes how we see an image. I found these images in an online marketplace. Amongst the photos of each couple, one unexpectedly centred on the woman, her titled husband forced to the periphery. The triptych preserves the original listings. The women are variously named, identified by a role, or simply described as "his Wife". As I painted their faces, I wondered about the ceramicist who first gave them an expression, a gesture, a look. Who are these women alongside their important husbands? Courage lies in questioning inherited stories and wondering whose stories remain untold.

15



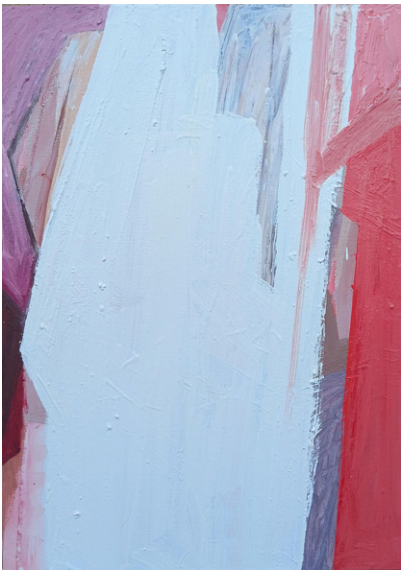
Alli Geers

Somewhere Out There

Acrylic on canvas framed in flooded gum
80cm H x 80cm W

Somewhere Out There considers courage in its quieter form. A small herd moves across an expansive landscape, surrounded by more unknown than familiar. There is no defined destination, only the decision to continue forward. The work reflects the vulnerability of leaving what is known and stepping into experiences without certainty of where they may lead. Through its deliberate scale and negative space, the painting places possibility ahead of the figures rather than behind them – exploring courage as openness: the willingness to move, change, learn and trust that something worthwhile may exist somewhere out there.

16



Fiona Halse

Love

Mixed media on canvas
71cm H x 51cm W

Loving deeply requires the courage to be vulnerable. There is a transfer of energy and gift of self and a pact with grief and loss. This painting has a central veil of white and the paint as a material surface emphasises the picture plane and invites the viewer to sense this vulnerability. Behind the white veil and the sides of the work there are areas of ambiguity – and love requires the courage to act even if unsure. My work seeks to convey a human presence and visceral essence, and the abstract forms I create embrace contradictions, multiplicity and poetic interpretations.

17



Genevieve Harnett

Tyre Monsters

Acrylic and collage on Perspex
84.1cm H x 118.9cm W

Tyre Monsters is part of my recent exhibition *Playscapes*, a series of paintings exploring playgrounds. I'm interested in these spaces as places of curiosity and imagination, where the familiar can also become strange and unexpected. In *Tyre Monsters*, the oversized tyres become strange creatures. Through a child's eyes they might be a little scary, but they are also inviting. Children watch others, join in, move through, around and underneath them, climb over them and eventually conquer them. For me, this is where the work connects to courage. Children are constantly encountering things that are new or unknown. Through curiosity and play, they find the courage to explore, take risks, learn and grow.

18



Freya Jobbins

Woman with Sword

Mixed media
92cm H x 92cm W

Woman with Sword stands as if she is in an Artemisia Gentileschi painting, with warm hues and detailed symbols. Looking closer at this warrior, you notice her mouth is covered and she is wearing armour and gloves made of human flesh. You see she is a decorated warrior, with bejewelled medal and rank on her shoulders showing her courage in battle. Wearing an adorned sporran made up of three hand grenades, and hidden behind her back is a sword, ready to be used at any moment, ready to purge the patriarchy.

19



Tracey Jones

Ready to Launch

Oil on canvas
66cm H x 66cm W

Courage is not a passive concept. Being open to new experiences for learning and growth is not enough, action is needed. My painting *Ready to Launch* is designed to empower the viewer to take the next step in their lives. The gloved hand holding the familiar form of a simple paper plane, poised to launch into a horizonless sky, suggests a future of limitless potential and possibilities. The subject matter and minimalist composition combine to evoke a moment of anticipation, suspended between vulnerability and commitment.

20



Kerrie Knight

Vellum

Photo
52cm H x 42cm W

A quiet, heavy breath taken at the edge of an irreversible choice. This work holds space for that fragile fraction of a second before the familiar completely unravels. It honors the raw, lonely vulnerability of change.

21



Louise Knowles

Finke Gorge National Park, N.T.

Oil on linen
40cm H x 50cm W

On a recent trip to central Australia, I was struck by its beauty, quiet spirituality and majesty. At first, the vast landscape feels overwhelming. With closer attention, it reveals warmth, texture and a beauty that is both compelling and slightly threatening. It raises questions not only for us as viewers, but also about the remarkable resilience of the flora and fauna that survive and thrive in these conditions: gums clinging to rocky gorges, tiny Mulla Mulla bushes regenerating each year, and rock wallabies enduring the hottest days. Their courage reflects years of adaptation to a changing climate and landscape.

22



Stephanie McCready

Time to Bloom

Linocut printmaking
152cm H x 70cm W

In a complex modern world with many competing messages and demands aimed at women, being true to oneself may be viewed as a courageous act. *Time to Bloom* reflects on the personal courage required for a woman to 'get out of her own way' – giving herself the permission to grow and reach her full potential, in any endeavour of her choosing. In this work the silhouette of a woman is depicted with her body entirely made up of local native flowers. The flowers are a metaphor for the full expression of her feminine energy and power.

23



Kerry McInnis

Into the Heart of It

Oil and oil stick on canvas
76cm H x 110cm W

"Every breath you take, every move you make, every bond you break, every step you take" (as Sting once wrote) takes courage. What we choose to do defines us and how we choose to do it requires courage and determination, sometimes against the odds. I've selected this painting from my recent body of work, to illustrate the theme of courage, because there lies, in the middle of this landscape, a core, a heart, around which the waters flow. It could be a rock or a gully, or a thicket of bramble. But it is central, solid, unafraid, and pivotal. It is courageous. The landscape and the future, revolve around this quality.

24



Sam Michelle

Scabiosa Bicolour Pink Arrangement

Oil on board
50cm H x 40cm W

For over twelve years I have worked as a full-time still life painter, building my practice around flowers grown in my own garden. Earlier this year, I approached a local propagation nursery, JD Propagation, and asked if I could learn alongside their team. It meant becoming a beginner again. I discovered new skills in propagation, plant health and cultivation that have transformed both my garden and my painting practice. The decision came full circle when the nursery provided me with over one hundred Scabiosa mother plants. They now form part of my garden and provide an ongoing source of inspiration, reinforcing the relationship between growing and painting. The Scabiosa depicted in this work represents the rewards that can come from embracing uncertainty, remaining open to learning, and simply being brave. A new custom timber support has also challenged me to reconsider the way my paintings are presented and experienced.

25



Bindi Mira-Bateman

She Shine with Bright Promise

Textile art
80cm H x 50cm W

Courage takes many forms, from bold action to quiet determination, and sometimes, smaller actions that allow vulnerability are the hardest ones to take. As an artist, you reveal deeply personal reflections of self and this also takes courage to share and to allow wider examination. Learning, attaining skills and knowledge are essential to growth and all have stages of uncertainty and doubt, however the effort to forge a path through is rewarding, alongside the sense of achievement and accomplishment. Taking the hesitant first step is a necessary and sometimes courageous act, to propel yourself along your joinery of life.

26



Vinita Mishra

The Courage to Reach

Acrylic on handmade paper
57cm H x 77cm W

This work explores courage as the choice to confront inherited patterns and move toward uncertain change. A woman stands between two trees, caught mid-transition. One tree holds portraits of women before her, bound by an unbroken chain — lineage, memory, and inherited pain. She does not reject her ancestry. Yet she steps forward, hand open toward the second tree — one that may look much the same as the first, offering no visible promise of difference. Only one small green branch breaks that likeness. It offers no guarantee, only possibility — growth or disappointment, equally. Courage is reaching anyway, without knowing the outcome.

27



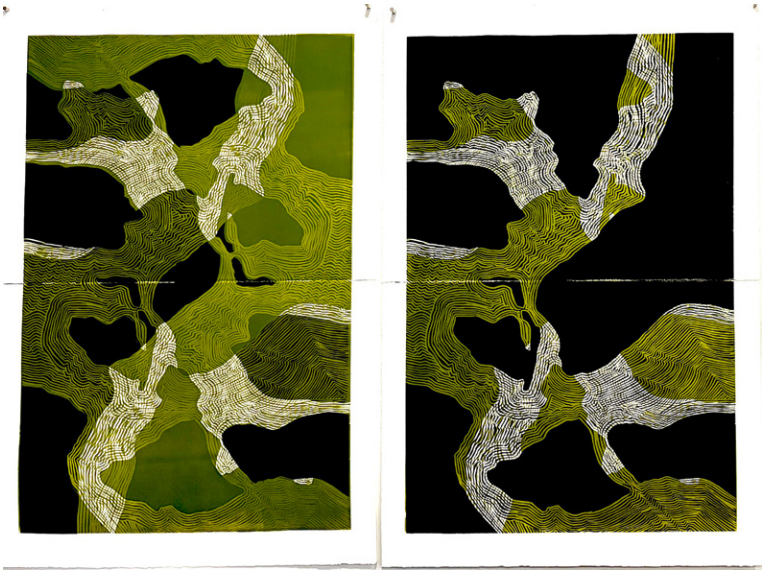
Libby Moore

Please Don't Look Straight Through Me

Acrylic on canvas
76cm H x 76cm W

In this semi-surreal tableau, multiple relationships and narratives unfold between six distinct glass and ceramic characters and one small egg, each carrying their own agenda, vulnerability, and desire. Invoking womanhood, motherhood, and the complexity of the human experience, these fragile forms become metaphors for the delicate balance between vulnerability and strength. Glass distorts, fractures, and breaks easily, echoing the ways motherhood can fragment the mind, body, and soul. Within fragility lies the possibility of transformation. To be vulnerable is not to be weak; it is to possess the courage to endure, to break, to rebuild, and to become something new.

28



Ro Murray

The Missing Isthmus II,I

Multiblock lino print on 300gsm
128cm H x 180cm W

For me the strategy of fertile/uncertainty is to be courageous as an artist. Courage to embrace uncertainty, not knowing, chance, and giving over control [can be seen as] as a generative tool rather than flaw. Fertile as the transformation of an impulse or idea in art with the strategy of uncertainty, to push boundaries into the new and unexpected, opening new worlds. These multiblock prints of the waterways near Woy Woy, based on a topographic map, become a fractured landscape, changing, like the tide.

29



Sarah Neave

Courage: The Pioneers by Frederick McCubbin 1904

Acrylic, cotton, garnet fibre art
230cm H x 130cm W

This piece came to me in a flash when I saw the call for submissions to this competition, and I felt compelled to step out of my artistic practice phase and emerge into the art despite my fears. Courage is such a powerful subject to express into any art form. Courage comes in so many forms, it can be silent or loud, it can be enduring great hardships and facing adversities you aren't equipped for and pushing forward regardless. Courage is arriving on a foreign land and choosing to explore and find your place, despite the dangers you may find. Courage is trusting in yourself because you're all there is. *Pymble* taught me courage, courage to try new things, courage to explore my world and the courage to endure and be strong because I am worthy of being seen and heard.

30



Susan O'Doherty

In Two Minds

Acrylic on canvas
152cm H x 122cm W

It takes courage for a woman to make the momentous decision to have children or not in an uncertain fractious world. This woman's existential sense of self is challenged and overwhelmed by her new reality as she washes her baby, feeling isolated, disconnected, judged by society, advised by an AI Bot. Shrinking walls enclose her, the TV looks to the past, the door slightly ajar, an ambiguous portal. The baby in the tub is determined, and resolute. Reds, maroons, and pinks symbolise blood, life and courage.

31



Lori Pensini

Maggie #1

Oil on raw linen
96cm H x 90cm W

Our impact on the natural world has sweeping consequences for all aspects of human wellbeing. *Maggie #1* invites dialogue around our social values, engagement with our environment and wildlife conservation, and asks us to consider how we perceive and experience the natural world. Here the magpie bird alchemizes with the human form as a meeting point between nature, culture, identity and belonging. To create a healthy equilibrium for ourselves, our family and our community, we all must share in our custodial responsibilities in caring and protecting country and the sentient beings that sustain it. Healing country heals people.

32



Nina Radonja

A Trip to the Balkans

Oil and acrylic on Yupo paper
23cm H x 23cm W

This work considers courage not as fearlessness, but as the decision to move towards something despite uncertainty. A fragment of an old comic depicts a woman apprehensive about travelling into the Balkans, while her companion encourages her forward. Removed from its original narrative and rendered as a *trompe-l'œil* object, the exchange becomes ambiguous: a small conversation about fear, vulnerability and the choice to proceed anyway.

33



Amanda Jane Reynolds

Buru-ee Guringai

Possum cloak, textile, weaving, ochres, paint, shells
90cm H x 79cm W

This story belongs here in my Ancestral Country. It's a story of deep time belonging, transformation, and having the courage to follow my Ancestors' calling. Remembering all our relations and speaking with Buru-ee Guringai – my sacred wind – belonging of ocean, land and sky.

34



Nadine Reynolds

Jone Ball September

Acrylic and silk thread on silk
240cm H x 140cm W

Courage is carried quietly through generations. The soft organic blue shapes below the authentic text, echo Camilla Betros' Shakespearean research into reclaiming the lost stories of the silk women — women whose labour, resilience, and artistry were long obscured. Jone Ball's last September was vastly different to ours, yet we move through the same month, the same turning of seasons, the same invitation to endure and begin again. Courage becomes a shared inheritance: a silken thread, reminding us that strength and gentleness often go hand in hand.

35



Susanna Robinson

Portrait of the Artist as Ophelia

Oil on linen
2000cm H x 1200cm W

In *Portrait of the Artist as Ophelia*, I explore my own uncertainty around the choice between motherhood and a life devoted to art. At this stage of my life, that choice has taken on a particular urgency: what does it mean to pursue one path when doing so may mean relinquishing another? For me, the work is about courage – the courage to sit with uncertainty, to question traditional expectations of womanhood, and to remain open to a future whose shape I cannot yet know. Through Ophelia, I explore the vulnerability of choice, while the palette and surrounding objects represent the creative life that continues to call me forward.

36



Rachel Rutt

Connection (Metamorphosis)

Textiles
125cm H x 70cm W

Assimilation is an experience shared by many but often defined by loneliness and isolation. Drawing from personal experiences of diaspora, this work contemplates the necessity for adaptation, which challenges individuals to find courage to connect with, embrace and learn from community, however difficult or frightening. Using weft and warp as parallels of human interaction and connectivity, this work reflects on the value of new connections to shape, repair, and bridge worlds. When we have the courage to view change and difficulty as a chance for transformation, we may access within ourselves a new tenacity. Courage to step outside our comfort zone and grow often begins with a single small gesture, followed by another – two potent threads beginning the fragile work of building a new foundation. This work is comprised of handwoven textile made on a 4-shaft floor loom using pigment, mulberry silk, stainless steel filament and stainless-steel rod.

37



Zoe Sernack

Where Stillness Gathers

Acrylic on birch panel
76cm H x 152cm W

Where Stillness Gathers explores courage not as an act of force, but as a quiet strength found in pausing, enduring and finding our way through change. The landscape becomes a place of refuge and reflection, where trees, earth and sky hold traces of what has come before. Working intuitively, I build the landscape slowly, allowing each layer to reveal and obscure what lies beneath.
The contrasting marks and shifting planes suggest a landscape in contrast movement, while quieter spaces offer moments of stillness. For me, courage can be standing still long enough to listen, to reconnect and to trust that even when the path ahead is uncertain, something steady remains within us.

38



Mary Stack

Still in Service

Oil on canvas
73cm H x 53cm W

This tea towel, now a paint rag, caught my eye with its signs of wear and use. The hole, distorted checks, and marks left by repeated handling give the familiar domestic object a different character. I was drawn to the way these traces suggest the presence of the person who handled it. Shifted from domestic object to artist's tool, it continues to be useful despite being worn. Seeing these signs made me think about courage, and how it's not always loud or heroic, but can be found in the quiet persistence of continuing through change and difficulty. In painting it, I wanted to capture something of that human presence in the cloth.

39



Katie Thomas

Where the Light Finds Me

Acrylic
104cm H x 104cm W

There is comfort in knowing that when I am struggling, I am not alone. People before me, at present and in the future will all go through a dark period at some time in their lives. Courage is to keep going, finding the light in the darkness, seeking beauty in the everyday. Without darkness there is no light. There is courage in talking about it. There is courage in seeking help.

40



Marisa Veerman

Bloom

Photography and embroidery
80cm H x 125cm W

Bloom expresses the comfort and courage we glean from the familiar, from our clothing that we wear time and time again. It considers dress as a material archive carrying traces of lived experience and inherited presence even in the absence of a person. It focuses on the quiet ways relationship persist, giving us the quiet courage to move through time, not fearing the past has been lost but assuring us that we can carry our connections close to us. Here, clothing operates as both an intimate artefact and a shared language, mediating closeness and inner strength.

41



Lyra Zhu

What Binds, Crown

Pastels, acrylic ink and coloured pencils on paper
73.5cm H x 53.5cm W

My works often begin with objects associated with Childhood – candy, toys, and ceramic figurines. Once symbols of innocence and imagination, they become vessels through which I revisit the questions we cannot avoid as we grow.
In *What Binds, Crowns*, a delicate ceramic figure is entwined with coarse rope. The rope restrains her yet simultaneously forms a crown. This contradiction lies at the heart of the work: what limits us can also shape us. The pressures, losses and experiences we carry do not simply disappear; they become part of who we are. Perhaps strength is not always found in breaking free, but in learning to transform what once weighed us down.

2027 Pymble Values Art Prize

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The 2027 Prize will honour our College value of Care represented by the statement, *I am kind to myself and others*.

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Pymble Ladies' College

pymblelc.nsw.edu.au

Avon Road Pymble NSW 2073
PO Box 136 North Ryde BC NSW 1670 Australia
+61 2 9855 7799

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