



PBEAT2025 PRIZE WINNERS ANNOUNCED 23 MARCH 2025.

NOTES:

- The Honorary Judge, Anne Flanagan is on the Board of the Sydney Biennale; and is a former member of the Bundanon Trust Board; and a former Deputy Director of the Art Gallery of NSW.
- Visitors can still vote for the People's Choice Award (\$1,000) until 5pm Saturday
- The Artist in Residence, Local Emerging Artist and Community Works are not eligible for People's Choice voting.
- The Artist in Residence, Fiona Gavino, from Fremantle, WA, received \$5,000 plus \$5,000 toward travel and accommodation.
- The Local Emerging Artist, Anna Francesca Seymour, from the NSW Central Coast, received \$2,500.
- All the works, including The Artist in Residence and Local Emerging Artist works – are for sale. Contact the Artist directly via the information in the catalogue, or contact the Arboretum at contact@pearlbeacharboretum.org.au

FIRST PRIZE (\$3,000): Joanne Mott for “Drop Inns”.

Materials: Yucca leaves, clay, oxide. **Dimensions:** 20 x 100 cm.

Statement: A site-responsive art installation, Drop Inns, inspired by the Pearl Beach Arboretum ecosystem. Three droplet-shaped sculptures, woven from yucca leaves and clay, will be suspended from tree branches and serve dual purposes: aesthetic artworks and experimental habitats for the threatened Eastern pygmy possum. These sculptures highlight the urgency of addressing habitat loss for native wildlife, bridging contemporary art with environmental problem-solving. Crafted from robust, biodegradable materials, the sculptures are designed to support pygmy possum nesting in size and shape. Drop Inns embodies PBEAT 2025's theme, "Harmony through Nature," encouraging increased consideration for more-than-human beings we share the planet with.

Biography: Joanne Mott is an interdisciplinary Australian artist who makes a broad range of artworks including Sculpture, Installation and Site Responsive Art. Her works engage the themes of ecologies, environment, sustainability and placemaking, and her practice includes creating Community Art projects. joannemott.com



Images by the Pearl Beach Arboretum.

HIGHLY COMMENDED (\$1,000): to Andrew Alter for “A Stretch of the Imagination”.

Materials: Palm fronds, paper bark, bamboo, Norfolk pine needles, and hardware. **Dimensions:** 8 X 3 X 2 metres.

Statement: Charismatic megafauna steal the limelight at the expense of a broader ecological world! At the same time they draw attention to, and symbolize, the magnificence of nature. Paperbark mâché and palm fronds allow us to imagine a giraffe in Pearl Beach. Is she more or less than she really is?

Biography: Andrew Alter draws inspiration from local materials to craft larger than life forms that explore unreal possibilities. His interests in conservation across international borders help shape his approach to seeing and hearing old things in new ways.



Image by Andrew Alter (L) and the Pearl Beach Arboretum.

HIGHLY COMMENDED (\$1,000): to Vaneesa Drinkwater for “Colour Your World”.

Materials: Natural palm materials, woven fibres. **Dimensions:** 200 x 150 x 60 cm.

Statement: This work has been inspired by the leaf litter found in the Arboretum, the interactive nature of outdoor installations and the opportunity to bring colour and fun to your day!

Biography: Vanessa Drinkwater is a local Central Coast artist who creates conceptual sculptural installations, figurative and abstract ceramics and other forms of mixed media. Her work evolves depending on the material being investigated at the time. Recent works include varying combinations of ceramic, copper, glaze and ironbark. This is her third PBEAT Art installation and makes use of forest floor litter, recycled wire and found fibres.



Images by the Pearl Beach Arboretum (L) and Vanessa drinkwater (R).

SCHOOL PRIZE (\$500): Terrigal High School Stage 5 Visual Arts for “Ephemeral Embrace”.

Teacher: Gail Wright. **Students:** Isla Adames, Bella Battiston, Scarlett Booth, Emily Brand, Allira Chittick, Tahlia Dyer-Nixey, Mia Kannanthanathu, Zoe Laidlaw, Bodhi Lee, Sienna Leslie, James Maljers, Mati Mantell, Emilee Mason, Evie Parkin, Scarlett Pearson, Gabby Prescott, Ava Rees, Jemma Roberts, Pax Rollo, Rose Viveiros, Ruby Watsford.

Statement: Inspired by seed pods, this installation symbolizes the interconnectedness found in nature. These pods, woven from organic materials have been crafted to mimic the delicate yet resilient forms of natural nests. Each piece evokes a sense of sanctuary, drawing attention to the balance and symbiosis that exist within ecosystems. By incorporating the cyclical nature of seed dispersal and growth, the pods embody the seamless connection between all living organisms, inviting contemplation on sustainability, nature’s rhythm, and the vital need for ecological harmony.



Image by Terrigal High School (L) and the Pearl Beach Arboretum (R).

HIGHLY COMMENDED UNDER 16 (\$250 + \$250 to Umina Beach Public School): to Reya Gillet for “Hidden Beauty”.

Materials: Angophra bark, stringy bark, leaves and palm fronds.

Statement: We share our world with so many amazing creatures, many of whom go unnoticed, camouflaged or hidden so well in the bush. The world’s insect population is declining but they are so important for the world’s ecosystems. Hidden beauty looks to draw attention to the often overlooked tiny creatures we share the world with and show how beautiful they can sometimes be. It focuses on a very stunning specimen, the Emperor Gum Moth.

Biography: Freya Gillett is 10 years old and is a student at Umina Beach Public School in year 5. She has always been very artistic and enjoys drawing, painting and making sculptures. Freya Gillett lives in Pearl Beach and is inspired by the beautiful environment here and its many incredible inhabitants.



Image by the Pearl Beach Arboretum.

HIGHLY COMMENDED UNDER 16 (\$250 + \$250 to Norwest Christian College): to Skye Neate for “Drop Bears are Real”

Materials: Repurposed items that Skye had - old netballs, old school hats - inner band, outer band, rim, discarded false eyelashes, old towel, used jelly cups.

Statement: Koalas are endangered in Queensland, NSW, and the ACT. The major causes are climate change, land clearing, diseases, vehicles and dogs. Pearl Beach and the surrounding Brisbane Water National Park had a koala population until about 22 years ago. Efforts have been made to re-establish koalas in this area but the state government has opted to work with other sites. However, it is still an important issue for those who love Pearl Beach. I am taking a humorous approach to this issue by highlighting the myth of Drop Bears, a predatory marsupial often used to scare tourists. My installation will be showing a koala like creature with sharp teeth and claws hanging from a gum tree.

Biography: Skye Neate is 11 years old and is in year 7. She has always been interested in drawing, painting and making models. She is particularly interested in using art to support the environment and highlight its vulnerability. This is the fourth time Skye has entered PBEAT.



Image by the Pearl Beach Arboretum.

HIGHLY COMMENDED UNDER 16 (\$250 + \$250 to Pennant Hills High School): to Eve Bodley for “Balls in the Air”.

Materials: Recycled materials.

Statement: ‘Balls in the air’ seeks to show the balance of life in 2025 where so many competing things take our attention. This is showcased against the backdrop of nature – a place often thought of as representing relaxation and peace, that similarly has strong competition at its foundation. Eve’s first passion in life is sport, netball specifically. Combining representative sport with the balls of school, family, friendships and the demands of daily life (even as a 12 year old) can be a challenge as represented by the ‘Balls in the air’.

Biography: Eve Bodley is 12 years old and a student at Pennant Hills High School in Sydney’s north-west. She has a long association with Pearl Beach having spent many family holidays there. Eve has entered PBEAT for the past three years.



Image by the Pearl Beach Arboretum.

MESSAGE FROM THE HONORARY JUDGE, ANNE FLANAGAN

First, I'll start with the School Prize of \$500. I'm delighted to give it to Terrigal High School for '*Ephemeral Embrace*' located in the Arboretum's Wildlife Corridor. Large seed pods swing, twist and turn with the breeze. The pods are folded, woven and felted from palm fronds and organic matter – each one is unique. The initial drawings are in the catalogue and it's great to see the final work so well resolved and sited. Thank you to the talented students at Terrigal High School and their teacher, Gail Wright.

For the Under 16, I decided to give 3 equal prizes with \$250 going to the student and \$250 to their school. Thank you Freya Gillett, *Hidden Beauty* is a delightful work. Your Emperor Moth is well camouflaged on the leaf littered ground. Look for it! Thank you Skye Neate for *Drop Bears are Real*. It's a fun work; those drop bears stare at you while koalas cling to each other. Thank you Eve Bodley for *Balls in the Air*. Eve loves sport and found an amusing way to hang painted netballs that seem to chat to each other.

And now for the main prizes, the Artists' Prizes. With so many entries this year I decided to give 2 Highly Commended Prizes at \$1,000 each. Congratulations Vanessa Drinkwater for *Colour Your World*, a playful work that invites us to engage with the act of painting. Yes, a large brush paints the landscape – literally. The handle is woven from palm fronds bound with recycled wire and the large brush, made from palm flowers and bracts, is painted pink that animates the site. Great to see your initial drawing and notes for this work in the catalogue.

Congratulations Andrew Alter for *A Stretch of the Imagination* It's cheeky. A giraffe, the tallest living terrestrial animal, peers down at you from towering trees in the Arboretum's palm grove. Look up. One can only delight in the strange juxtaposition of this totally 'out of context' plant eating animal constructed using palm fronds and paper bark. And do look underneath to see the structure that he built to support his giraffe. A weird and wonderful work.

Now, to the winner of the First Prize of \$3,000. Congratulations Joanne Mott for *Drop Inns*. Your work is thoughtfully sited within the Arboretum. Three enigmatic sculptures woven from yucca leaves and clay hang from a large branch of the adjacent eucalyptus. The sculptures hold the space. They offer experimental habitats – contemporary art tackling the loss of habitat 'head on'. The work is conceptually strong – here science and art interact with a powerful statement about how artists engage in environmental practice. Joanne is from Gisborne, Melbourne, I hope you are here.