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RURAL NSW ARTIST WINS \$20,000 SCULPTURAL ART PRIZE

Murrumbateman artist, Wendy Teakel has taken home the [Sculpture at Scenic World](#) 2019 Major Award, rising above fierce competition to win the coveted \$20,000 cash prize.

Wendy's work, *Cycle*, was selected from a field of 25 finalist's works by a highly esteemed judging panel including UNSW Deputy Dean for Art & Design, Professor Marie Sierra; independent curator, Axel Arnott; and Blue Mountains-based artist, Heidi Axelsen.

The judges applauded all finalists for their range of interpretations, acknowledging Wendy's installation as a "bold and confident work that is elegantly realised".

"*Cycle* references Australian agriculture and the way we instruct our boundaries. The grid provides the viewer with a map-life reference while the subtle elliptical outline floats the work on the site," the judges commented.

Accepting the award in front of approximately 300 guests at the Sculpture at Scenic World launch on Friday April 12, Wendy said she was "humbled and delighted" by the win, which will allow her to expand on her artistic practice and continue exhibiting works within Australia and abroad.

"It is overwhelming to be acknowledged for your vision among such a high calibre of artists," she said, adding that Sculpture at Scenic World Curator Justin Morrissey inspired her to enter the exhibition for the first time in 2019.

"I'm grateful to have the opportunity to work with such a talented curator who has inspired me to step outside of my comfort zone to draw attention to the fragility of our natural environment," she added.

Wendy also acknowledged the talents of all exhibiting artists and made a special mention of Scenic World's continued commitment to support the arts, community and education.

"Congratulations to Scenic World for hosting a world class event which acknowledges artists and the environment and plays an important role in supporting art in our community. I hope it continues for a long time," she said.

CONTACT.

LOUISE WALLACE
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

LOUISEW@SCENICWORLD.COM.AU
+61 [0] 2 4780 0200

Mr Morrissey commended all finalists for pushing the boundaries of their practice to create artworks that tell a unique story and blend seamlessly into the natural environment.

“It’s a privilege to have the opportunity to showcase art in such an iconic location and I’m delighted to see the major award go to such a talented artist whose work explores complex themes in such a relatable way,” he said.

Other awards presented at the exhibition launch include the \$2,000 Scenic World Staff’s Choice Award which was awarded to Louis Pratt for his work *Regret*, and the \$3,000 Environmental Award which was presented to Jan Cleveringa for his installation, *The Corporate Snake*.

Louis Pratt also took home the \$2,000 Blue Mountains Cultural Centre Opportunity, with the 2019 Sculpture at Scenic World prize pool totalling \$30,000 for the second year running.

Western Australian artist Jennifer Cochrane also received an honourable mention for her work, *Impossible Shadow #14*, which the judges recognised for striking a “deeply satisfying balance between the natural and introduced languages of the site”.

Now in its eighth year, Sculpture at Scenic World continues to gain momentum on a global scale, with more than 1200 artists from all over the world entering the coveted exhibition since its inception. The exhibition is also recognised as a major regional tourism event under Destination NSW’s Flagship Event Fund.

A total of 25 artworks will be exhibited in the ancient rainforest at Scenic World in the Blue Mountains from April 12 to May 12. Entry is free with a Scenic World ticket and includes unlimited all day access to Scenic World and Sculpture Otherwise at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre.

For more information about Sculpture at Scenic World visit sculptureatscenicworld.com.au.

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