



## Hoda Afshar wins \$15,000 Ramsay Art Prize 2021 People's Choice

**Adelaide Australia:** Tehran-born, Melbourne-based artist Hoda Afshar has won the People's Choice for this year's Ramsay Art Prize 2021 with her work *Agonistes*, an installation comprised of a video and a series of nine photographic portraits that explores the experiences of whistleblowers.

In her winning work, Afshar photographs 3D printed busts that resemble classical statuary, heroicising individuals who have spoken out and endured an inner struggle as a result. Whether whistleblowing on matters to do with the military, intelligence services, immigration detention, youth detention, or aged and disability care, Afshar's subjects have spoken out for those whose voices are not heard.

Afshar says, 'Being a finalist in the Ramsay Art Prize and winning the People's Choice with my series *Agonistes* is a humbling and beautiful moment in my career. But, even more so, it's a testament to the ability of the arts to engage people with the most urgent issues affecting our human society. I have always believed in the potential of art to bring to light what's at stake, and I hope that winning this prize will contribute to highlighting that what is at stake today is our fragile democracy and our right to dissent.'

AGSA Director, Rhana Devenport ONZM says, 'The selection of this work as the winner of the People's Choice reflects the level of thoughtfulness and engagement of our visitors. To win a people's choice prize is an achievement of utmost praise to the artist. We are thrilled to witness our visitors connect so strongly with Afshar's emotive work.'

Supported by specialist legal practice LK, the People's Choice is a \$15,000 prize, with one winner selected by public vote from the 24 Ramsay Art Prize finalists.

As committed supporters of contemporary Australian art, LK's Chief Operating Officer, Mary-Louise Rahaley says, 'Congratulations to Hoda Afshar for winning the People's Choice for her remarkable work *Agonistes*. We were once again thrilled to play a part in the Ramsay Art Prize, to experience such an array of incredible work and to see at the end of it all which work resonated most with the audience. Thank you to all of the artists for captivating and challenging us, and the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation for making this experience possible.'

Not only was *Agonistes* selected as the winner of the People's Choice, but three photographs from the series will be acquired into AGSA's collection thanks to the Contemporary Collectors, a philanthropic group dedicated to growing AGSA's collection of contemporary art.

The Ramsay Art Prize 2021 exhibition runs until 22 August at the Art Gallery of South Australia. Admission is free.

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**Images** [https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/MEDIA/2021/Hoda\\_Afshar.zip](https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/MEDIA/2021/Hoda_Afshar.zip)

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#### **About the Ramsay Art Prize**

Established in the name of South Australia's leading cultural philanthropists James and Diana Ramsay, the Ramsay Art Prize is an acquisitive art prize for contemporary Australian artists. Presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia and supported in perpetuity by the James & Diana Ramsay Foundation, the Ramsay Art Prize is held every two years with the winning work being acquired into AGSA's collection.