

The Helen Lempriere Scholarships



About the The Helen Lempriere Scholarships

Named after the late Australian artist Helen Lempriere, the three Helen Lempriere Scholarships combine to be one of the richest scholarship programs for sculptors in Australia. Each scholarship bestows \$30,000 cash to the awarded artists, to assist with the advancement of their careers through study or research.

In 2010, each Australian sculptor who applies to be in *Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi* will be considered, with the three recipients to be chosen by the exhibition's curatorial panel. It is envisaged the scholarships will be awarded to emerging, mid-career and senior Australian sculptors who, once short-listed, will be asked to provide information on how they propose to use the scholarship funds to advance their careers.

Launched in 2000 as the Helen Lempriere Award, and in 2010 devised into three separate scholarships, The Helen Lempriere Scholarships are the realisation of a bequest by the late Keith Wood, honouring his wife, Helen Lempriere. Helen Lempriere was one of Australia's leading female artists in the mid 20th Century, attracting national and international acclaim for her painting, printmaking and sculpture.

Developed with the advice of Perpetual, managers of the Helen Lempriere Bequest, the scholarships fulfil Keith Wood's aims of making a significant philanthropic contribution to the arts whilst commemorating Helen Lempriere, a leading figure in the development of a unique Australian aesthetic.

The Helen Lempriere Story

Helen Lempriere (1907–1991) was a leading Australian painter, who was most prolific between the 1930s and the 1970s. Lempriere was born into a wealthy and cultivated Melbourne family and was related both to the Tasmanian portraitist Thomas Lempriere and to Dame Nellie Melba.

She studied initially with Archibald (A. D.) Colquhoun and in 1930 with Justus Jorgensen, subsequently playing an active role in the building of the first stage of Jorgensen's artists' colony, Montsalvat, with which she was closely associated for ten years. During that period, apart from painting, she made a number of sculptures, including a female torso that was to be located in a fountain, a gargoyle, and two stone cherubs on the Montsalvat Great Hall.

Over the next forty years Lempriere's paintings and works on paper were acquired not only by the National Gallery of Australia but also by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Queensland Art Gallery and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, not to mention many

private collectors in England, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Australia. Lempriere is one of the few Australian painters to establish an international reputation in the 1950s and 1960s. Even so, the relatively limited acceptance of women artists in this country in the years following World War II saw her paintings rarely exhibited in Australia during this period, though she mounted more than twenty solo exhibitions in Europe, England and the United States.

Lempriere produced a considerable body of paintings during the extended periods she spent overseas. Many of these pictures addressed issues of Australian national identity, through references to Aboriginal themes and narratives. Lempriere was particularly interested in the relationships between the protagonists in these narratives and the land. The unsigned preface to the catalogue for a 1963 exhibition of Lempriere's work, at Galerie Furstenberg, Paris, reads:

'It is most important to note that she does not attempt to illustrate [Aboriginal] cults or legends ... She seeks to emphasise their mystic qualities and to translate them into [European] visual experiences'.

In 1966, after many years of travel and working abroad, Lempriere and Keith Wood settled permanently in Sydney. Lempriere continued to paint and exhibit, in 1976 mounting an extensive exhibition of energetic and intensely coloured marine abstractions at David Jones's Art Gallery, their subject matter drawn from Heron and Green Islands on the Great Barrier Reef.

After several years of serious illness, Helen Lempriere died on 25 November 1991. The Helen Lempriere Bequest, established five years later from the estate of Keith Wood, has made possible The Helen Lempriere Scholarships, which in partnership with Sculpture by the Sea, are dedicated to the advancement of Australian sculptors.

Previous Recipients of a Lempriere award

Bob Jenyns, *Pont de L'Archêveché*, 2008

Julia Davis, *Meniscii*, 2007

Alexander Knox, *DEATH OF A WHITE GOOD*, 2006

William Eicholtz, *The Comrade's Reward*, 2005

Richard Goodwin, *Prosthetic Apartment B*, 2004

Gary Wilson, *Untitled*, 2003

Nigel Helyer, *Meta-Diva*, 2002

Karen Ward, *Hut*, 2001

NB: No recipients were named in 2009

For more information or application forms contact:

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