

15/10/2024

Bundaberg Regional Galleries

Finalist at State Awards

The Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists of the **2024 Gallery and Museum Achievement Awards** (GAMAA) were proudly announced by Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) on Tuesday 8 October, at a special awards presentation hosted by the Queensland Museum Cobb+Co, Toowoomba.

Bundaberg Regional Galleries was recognised as a **Finalist** in the **category of Engagement: Organisations with Paid Staff** for its remarkable exhibition ***Phantom: Off the Drawing Board***.

Phantom: Off the Drawing Board was an incredible multi-exhibition takeover at Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery that celebrated the world of Lee Falk's iconic creation 'The Phantom'. The exhibition featured four separately-themed exhibitions across all four gallery spaces. Gallery One showcased the main exhibition *Phantom: Off the Drawing Board*, curated by Director Rebecca McDuff, in consultation with Frew Publications. This exhibition acknowledged the internationally acclaimed work of Shane Foley, a Bundaberg-based illustrator for *The Phantom* series and featured original cover artworks, a recreation of his home-based studio, and original drawings and illustrations by renowned Phantom artists. The exhibition also included rare first editions of *The Phantom* published in Australia, collectibles, and a rare *Condoman* poster.

Gallery Two presented *The Phantom Response*, which showcased the works of artists Leah Emery, Shane Foley, Todd Fuller, Malki Studio, Jennifer McDuff, Reg Mombassa, Brian Robinson, Dylan Sarra and Cate Verney. Each of the artists were selected for their connection to *The Phantom* and were invited to reinterpret *The Phantom's* persona through their own, creative lens.

The Gallery's Vault space was recreated as a theatrette, screening *The Phantom Serial* (1943), and the Imaginarts space featured an interactive exhibition to introduce *The Phantom* to a new generation of readers. The project also included extensive public programming and merchandising, with a highly successful opening weekend that welcomed visitors from across Australia and included comic book signings and a pop-up Comic Festival.

Through Bundaberg Regional Galleries' incredible efforts and research, they established important connections with national and international Phantom groups and collectors, which led to veteran Phantom illustrator, Sy Barry, loaning never-before-seen works from his private collection for the exhibition.

The judges commended this wonderfully off-beat, thoughtful, engaging and accessible exhibition project, acknowledging that it was a major undertaking for the Gallery that targeted national and international audiences for the first time. Significantly, the Gallery recorded a 40% increase in male visitation during the exhibition's display, which has been sustained at 20% following its conclusion, which is impressive!

Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler said, "Our congratulations to Bundaberg Regional Galleries for *Phantom: Off the Drawing Board*. A worthy Finalist in this category, we commend their ambition, vision and delivery of this multi-exhibition project that has resulted in significant outcomes including the acquisition of Brian Robinson's artwork 'A League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Curse of Cortez' for the Bundaberg Regional Galleries Collection."

Ms Butler continued, "The 2024 Winners, Highly Commended and Finalists were selected from a strong field of nominations received from organisations, large and small, across Queensland. It is an honour to be shining a spotlight on the outstanding work of so many worthy individuals and organisations."

Now in its twentieth year, the GAMAA were established by Museums & Galleries Queensland to honour the achievements of our State's individuals and organisations in striving towards excellence.

The 2024 Winners received an exquisite trophy by far north Queensland artist, **Monique Burkhead**. Monique is of Polynesian, Maori and Australian heritage and lives in Cairns. She is passionate about conserving our natural environment and, through her art, hopes to raise awareness of its fragility and the impacts of climate change.

M&G QLD's 2024 GAMAA trophies are generously supported by Brian Tucker.

The 2024 GAMAA are proudly supported by **Queensland Museum** and sponsored by **Public Galleries Queensland** and **Australian Museums and Galleries Association Queensland**.

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