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## **Ipswich Art Gallery 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.

**Ipswich Art Gallery** was recognised as a **Finalist** in the category of **Projects: Organisations with Paid Staff** for its inspired ***Junior Curators: Mysterious Realms*** exhibition.

*Mysterious Realms*, an exhibition curated entirely by young minds, drew on the Ipswich Art Gallery Collection to create a new and vibrant reimagining of how art can impact community.

Through the Junior Curators program, the Ipswich Art Gallery offered a unique 6-month behind-the-scenes exhibition development opportunity for 8–14-year-olds, which was successfully overseen by Gallery staff and external Australian museum professionals. This initiative empowered local young people and provided them with the opportunity to plan, design, and curate an exhibition entirely from the Gallery's rich collection.

The novel approach of the Junior Curators, showcasing fresh perspectives, has led to the creation of an exhibition that speaks to the depths of their inner worlds, portraying imaginative storytelling realms through various artistic forms. Furthermore, the deliberate inclusion of young voices in the exhibition design process has not only fostered a greater sense of connection to the Gallery, its collection, and programming but it has also served as an inspiring example for other young visitors. The project's impact has extended beyond the exhibition itself, as evidenced by increased audience interest, outreach from local schools, and interest from peer organisations seeking to initiate similar youth-focused programming.

Ipswich Art Gallery impressed the judges with this thoughtful project that transported audiences into imaginative realms. The Junior Curator's unique and imaginative perspectives were spread across three programming areas of the Gallery, offering a truly immersive art journey. This exhibition embodies Ipswich Art Gallery's commitment to fostering collaborative and co-created content and programming with young people.

**Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) Executive Director, Rebekah Butler** said, "The success of the *Mysterious Realms* exhibition is a testament to Ipswich Art Gallery's commitment to celebrating and nurturing young people in their community. It was a well-planned, empowering project that has fostered creativity, built confidence and achieved valuable learnings and community connections through art."

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 (M&G QLD) to honour the achievements of our State's individuals and organisations in striving towards excellence.

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

The 2024 GAMAA trophies are generously supported by Brian Tucker.

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

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