

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Sheather a finalist in art award

Kathy Forsyth
Arts reporter

WHAKATANE artist Lea-Anne Sheather has been selected as a finalist in the 2020 Parkin Drawing Prize, which attracts a major prize of \$25,000.

Sheather, a teacher at St Joseph's Catholic School in Whakatane, said she was pleased to be a finalist in the art award.

"Parkin Prize has a pretty big name, so it is nice to get into an award like that, to be selected and to have a work in a public space."

The competition received 482 entries, of which 76 have been selected for the short list.

The national drawing competition was launched by philanthropist and arts patron Chris Parkin eight years ago.

Ten highly commended prizes worth \$500 each will also be awarded.

The works will be showcased at the Parkin Drawing Prize exhibition at the NZ Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington in August.

Sheather's piece that made it into the finals is titled *Breathe* and is a work in her ongoing *Island of Woo* series, she said.

Breathe depicts a monkey-like creature with flora above its head and a pink bubble emerging from its mouth in a fantastical world, representing an "interruption of nature, or the duality of nature and what we do".

"It is one of the Shaman-like creatures that I create in an imaginary world of the *Island of Woo*."

"I have been working on these monkey-and dog-like portraits for a few years now so I am just slowly amassing these characters and I have a long-term goal."

Sheather said this goal was a



SELECTED: Lea-Anne Sheather at work in her home studio. The artist's piece, *Breathe*, pictured right, is a finalist in the Parkin Prize art award.

Photo Troy Baker E0020-010

work in progress and would be kept under wraps for now.

The artist has entered the arts award about four times and been selected as finalist in three awards.

"I really like it because it is just drawing, my favourite medium. It is nice to have something that celebrates drawing."

Sheather received the Arts Whakatane Highly Commended award at last year's Molly Morpeth Canaday Award, and

had won the local prize award twice before in that prestigious competition.

The winning submission for the Parkin Prize will be selected and announced by Charlotte Davy, head of art at Te Papa Tongarewa at the gala announcement of the Parkin Drawing Prize exhibition on August 3.

All the artworks will be for sale.



Arts residency work in finals

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Arts reporter

WORK spawned by an arts residency in Whakatane has also seen two Christchurch-based artists make it into the finals for the Parkin Prize.

Victoria Edwards and Ina Johann, who collaborate as Edwards & Johann, said they were thrilled to be selected.

"Our works *Concretions - acid and Concretions - pink 2020* are both in the exhibition."

The contemporary art duo said their selected work was inspired by new research and their art residencies in Whakatane. They also held an exhibition in Whakatane, *The Edge of Spaces*.

"In 2018, we were the inaugural artists for the Volcanic Artist Residency in Whakatane, a newly established residency project.

"Visiting Whakaari/White Island twice during our residency has been a pivotal experience to our practice – a place so close and yet so unreachable."

They describe the island as "a looming, active and dangerous piece of land; an uninhabitable space that provokes humans' deepest and most ancient desire to understand, control and inhabit".

The pair said geomorphic conversations evolved in a lab-like experimental modus to produce the works.

"These works might reflect these notions of change, chance, vulnerability and the precariousness of life."

"*Concretions - acid and Concretions - pink 2020* is part of a series of works looking at dichotomies inherent in life. They mirror those in human nature; volatility and stability, vulnerability and resistance, weakness and strength, transience and permanence, curiosity and fear."

FINALISTS: Victoria Edwards and Ina Johann's *Concretions - acid 2020* and *Concretions - pink 2020* was inspired by their Volcanic Arts Residency in Whakatane.

Photo supplied

