

Mentorship Award

The Mentorship Award sees an established, WA based professional artist (the Mentor) provide mentorship to the Art Awards Mentorship Award winner (the Mentee). The Mentorship Award includes 24 hours of mentorship, spread out over several meetings, coordinated by the Mentor and the Award winner.

The Mentorship Award is designed to aid the development of the award winner through feedback, advice and assistance from the Mentor. Areas of development may include:

Creativity – feedback on existing artworks, artworks in progress, methods, materials, and approaches.

Education – discussion of art history and contextualisation of practice in relation to historical artists, concepts and styles.

Professionalism – career advice, information on industry standards and how to pursue exhibition opportunities.

Via the Art Awards application form, applicants can nominate themselves for consideration for the Mentorship Award. The appointed Mentor then assesses these nominations and selects the Award winner. The Mentor's decision is based on the artistic merit of the applicant and their potential for creative and professional development, as evidenced in their application.

2024 Mentorship Award Timeline

- Award Winner is announced 31 August 2024
- Mentorship commences October 2024
- Mentorship Report due February 2024

Previous Winners

2023 Mentorship Award Winner Sonali Fernando, Mentor Jo Darbyshire

2022 Mentorship Award Winner Sky Edwards, Mentor Christophe Canato



Image 1: 2023 Mentorship Prize winner Sonali Fernando with mentor, professional West Australian Artist Jo Darbyshire

Mentorship Guidelines

An ideal mentor is patient, honest, reliable, empathetic, generous, open-minded, consistent, and savvy. The role of the mentor in this program is to:

- Listen attentively and provide feedback, structure, and direction.
- Encourage creative exploration and risk-taking in artistic practice.
- Provide appropriate and timely career advice, sharing their own real-life experiences.
- Link the mentee with peers, and with career and learning opportunities.
- Provide care for the mentees career development and encourage accountability, self-reflection, and ambition.
- Organise and conduct regular one-on-one sessions with the mentee.

The role of the mentee in this program is to:

- Take charge of the direction of the mentorship; develop clear goals and act on them.
- Actively listen, pay attention to the mentor, respond, and reflect on what you've learned, and what you are hoping to learn next.
- Engage, follow-up on feedback and opportunities provided, and refer to what was spoken about in earlier sessions.
- Be flexible, be open to change and to the views, experience, and insight of the mentor.
- Apply what has been learned in their practice and career development.

Boundary management & roles

Those working in a mentoring relationship may develop friendships over time. It is important to have a clear mentoring relationship and not allow personal bias to influence professional actions. Stay mindful of maintaining confidentiality, objectivity, and equal partnership.

Mentee Self-Reflection

- What do you hope to learn from your mentor?
- What are your long-term and short-term creative career goals?
- What are your current areas of artistic development?
- What are your strengths?
- What feedback do you find helpful?

Expectations – First Meeting

- What are you both expecting will happen in the mentorship? How and when will you meet, and what will be discussed?
- How will the mentee's areas of creative development, expectations, and goals be addressed during the mentorship?
- What expectations and hopes does the mentor have?
- Provide details of a rough schedule for meetings between the mentor and mentee. What platform will you use to stay in touch? When will agendas or discussion topics be sent out?
- Create two goals for the mentorship, and one goal for the long-term development of the mentee. Ensure that they are specific, measurable, attainable, time-bound, and include reasoning as to why these goals are important to the mentee.

Reflections – Last Meeting

- What happened during the mentorship? How often did you meet and what did the mentee learn?
- What was the nicest moment of the mentorship?
- How will these learnings be applied to the mentee's future professional practice?

- What have you learned about working with a colleague in a mentoring relationship?
- What aspects of the mentoring would you change?
- What advice do you have for future mentor-mentee pairings?

Testimonial from 2022 Mentorship Award Winner Sky Edwards

I was awarded the mentorship for my artwork '*Harmonia conformis*' from the 2022 Belmont Art Awards, an experience that is a high point of my year and, by its completion, has given me the grounding to call myself a professional artist.

The mentorship was budgeted for 24 hours, in which Christophe and I would work together throughout October 2022. The structure and goals of the mentorship were left to Christophe and I to decide, so we could tailor it to our interests and areas of my practice that needed the most work.

We met and worked together in sessions of 3 or 4 hours. In our first session, I showed Christophe my work and explained my intent, and we talked about my goals and becoming a professional artist. Christophe showed me his work and explained the path that led him to his current practice. Fine art photography, queer art, and to some extent arthropod (insects etc.) photography are part of what drew Christophe to my work. In these intersections of our passions Christophe had a wealth of experience and aesthetic excellence to offer.



Image 2: 2022 Mentorship Award winner Sky Edwards with Mentor, professional West Australian Artist Christophe Canato

We also worked on:

- Professional development: Christophe's guidance on developing an artist's CV was especially helpful. He showed me the process of designing and refining his catalogues as a portfolio. We discussed the role of social media and websites for an artist. We talked about approaching art sellers, grants, galleries, and awards.
- He helped differentiate commercial art vs fine art, and I decided I would like to pursue both avenues.
- Resolving my artistic practice from several distinct techniques and themes into a single cohesive body of work was a major use of our time, and very rewarding.

In our last session, we decided to be more relaxed and reflective, talking about our interests and possibilities of our work. However, being passionate artists, we dove back into intense art discussion. Christophe helped me plan a photography exhibition for the Belmont Hub, especially regarding printing, an important area in which I have little experience. Finally, Christophe showed me some of his working processes in which I was particularly interested.

This mentorship has been extremely enjoyable and a major step forward in my artistic career.