

# 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.

## 2025 Mentorship Award Timeline

- Award Winner is announced 12 September 2025
- Mentorship commences October 2025
- Mentorship Report due February 2026

## Previous Winners

2024 Mentorship Award Winner Anne Farrell, Mentor Kevin Robertson

2023 Mentorship Award Winner Sonali Fernando, Mentor Jo Darbyshire

2022 Mentorship Award Winner Sky Edwards, Mentor Christophe Canato



Image 1: 2024 Mentorship Prize winner Anne Farrell with mentor, professional West Australian Artist Kevin Robertson

## Mentorship Guidelines

The role of the mentor in this program is to:

- Encourage creative exploration and risk-taking in artistic practice
- Provide appropriate and timely career advice
- Link the mentee with peers, and with career and learning opportunities
- Provide care for the mentees career development and call out any bias that may be affecting their mentee
- Organise and conduct regular one-on-one sessions with the mentee

The role of the mentee in this program is to:

- Actively listen, pay attention to the mentor, respond and reflect on what is being said, and ask questions
- Engage, follow-up on feedback and opportunities provided, and refer back to what was spoken about in earlier sessions
- Apply what has been learned in their practice and career development

### Mentee Self-Reflection to be Set to Mentor

- 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 2024 Mentorship Award Winner Anne Farrell**

After graduating from art school 20 years ago, I put my artistic practice on hold to pursue a career as an art teacher. However, in 2024, after stepping away from teaching, I made the decision to dedicate time to rediscovering my own art practice. As a way to reignite my creativity, I began entering paintings into local art competitions and was thrilled to win the Mentorship Award at the 2024 Belmont Art Awards.

I nominated myself for this award after noting that the mentorship would be with Kevin Robertson—an artist I had long admired. The opportunity to work with him was incredibly exciting and felt like the perfect motivation for my practice going forward. The mentorship consisted of 24 hours with Kevin, structured in a way that best suited our collaboration. Our first meeting took place in my studio, where he viewed my work and we discussed my artistic goals. From there, we aimed to meet weekly, with Kevin typically visiting my studio for two-hour sessions.

Kevin quickly recognized that drawing was a particular strength of mine, and our sessions often involved drawing together, which helped put me at ease. Each meeting usually began with a discussion of any new work or ideas I had explored throughout the week.

We would then sit for one another and create portrait drawings while discussing my artistic practice.

On one occasion, we hired a life model, allowing me to observe Kevin's approach while painting alongside him—a truly invaluable experience.

Beyond studio work, we also used some sessions to visit relevant exhibitions, galleries, and exhibition spaces, where Kevin was often able to introduce me to gallery owners. One of the most inspiring moments of the mentorship was the opportunity to visit Kevin's own studio. Seeing his workspace and gaining insight into his process and materials was a real highlight for me.

I feel that a significant part of this experience was rebuilding my confidence as an artist. Kevin created an environment where I felt supported and encouraged. I always came away from our sessions with a renewed sense of possibility, feeling inspired to explore new ideas and directions in my work.

Throughout the mentorship, Kevin provided invaluable guidance, sharing both local and international artists for me to research, as well as practical strategies he has used in his own practice and teaching to stay on track. He also passed on useful artist tips—(e.g. regarding materials) —that had been missing from my practice.

Overall, having the opportunity to receive feedback and mentoring from such a reputable artist was an incredible experience. The mentorship not only helped me refine my artistic direction but also reignited my passion for creating. I am now motivated to work toward a solo exhibition of my work and I am immensely grateful for this opportunity and the impact it has had on my practice.

# Testimonial from 2022 Mentorship Award Winner Sky Edwards



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

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 profession 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.

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.