

## Media Release

December 2020

### Artist submissions for 2021 HIDDEN Rookwood Sculptures now open

#### New award celebrates Australian First Nations artists

Some good news for the Western Sydney arts scene: Rookwood General Cemetery's outdoor art exhibition, HIDDEN Rookwood Sculptures, returns in 2021, bigger than ever with 12 awards, including the Muru Award for First Nations Artists. 'Muru' is the Dharug word for pathways, so this new First Nations Artist Award acknowledges that Rookwood is located on Dharug land and supports ongoing connection to Country, community creativity and culture.

The iconic sculpture walk, which began in 2009, is a unique opportunity to engage the community with Rookwood's rich and diverse cultural landscape through the beauty of art. Today HIDDEN includes categories of Sculptures, Films and Students, providing the opportunity for an even wider range of artists to get involved.

In 2021, approximately 60 artworks will be selected including sculptures, short films and community submissions featuring a range of artistic approaches, materials and forms, including kinetic elements, performance and participatory engagements.

Submissions should respond to the cemetery and engage with HIDDEN's themes of history, culture, remembrance, diversity, love, mourning, spirituality, cycles of life and the passage of time. In 2021, Rookwood is looking to incorporate a broad span of works ranging from celebratory pieces that are big, bright and colourful, engaging interactive installations, through to contemplative, intimate and thought-provoking works.

Exhibition curator Dr Kath Fries encourages emerging, mid-career and established artists, filmmakers, student and community groups to submit their creative concepts for consideration. Fries is a Sydney-based curator, artist, researcher and writer, who works extensively in Western Sydney on site-responsive projects. She is committed to nurturing creative opportunities for emerging local artists, students and community groups.

"2020 was a very difficult year for our arts communities," said Fries, "I'm excited to again be curating this expansive exhibition which will allow visitors to engage with creative arts in this unique place so integral to Australian history."

"Rookwood Cemetery is an ideal setting for artists to present works with layered narratives while honouring the site's diverse cultural history. I'm interested in talking to artists about their ideas for works spanning all types of creative responses to the cemetery, from sensory engagements with tactile, audio and kinetic elements, to ritualised remembrances, reflections on beliefs and values, as well as personal stories of memory and loss," said Fries.

In addition to the major \$10,000 Rookwood Sculpture Award, there will be three new awards on offer including the Cumberland Council Professional Development Award, the Muru Award for First Nations Artists and the Nerine Martini Memorial Award, commemorating Nerine Martini's vibrant life (1968–2019), her socially engaged creative work and participation in HIDDEN Rookwood Sculptures.

This year's HIDDEN Rookwood Sculptures judging panel will consist of Elyse Goldfinch, Assistant Curator at Artspace Sydney, and Tim Silver, a well-known Sydney-based artist. Wendy Ramsay,

Director of Professional Learning, Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA NSW) is judging the student category, and independent curator/artist Talia Smith, judging the short film category.

For more information or to apply, visit [www.hiddeninrookwood.com.au](http://www.hiddeninrookwood.com.au).

HIDDEN Rookwood Sculptures will run from 4 September to 4 October 2021.

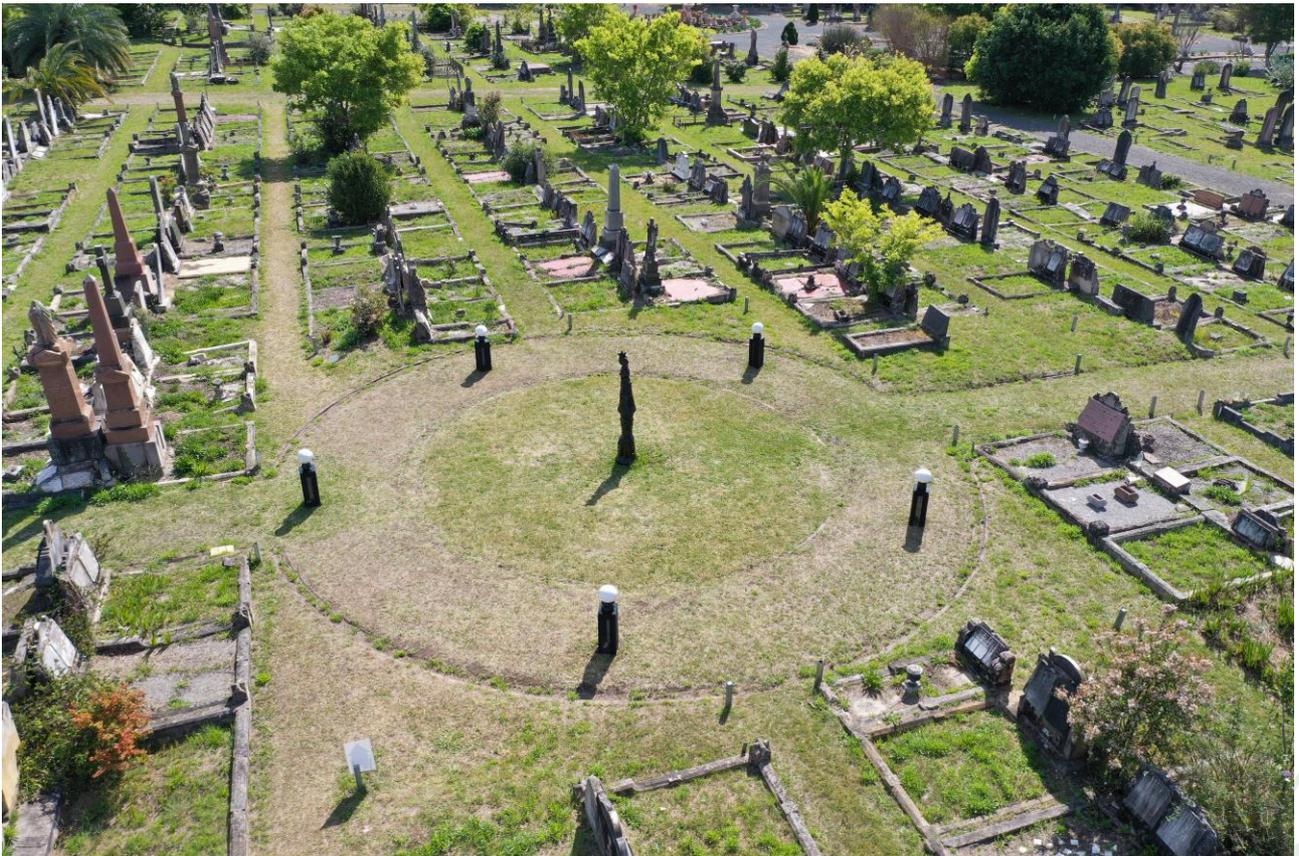


Image: Cybele Cox, *Constellation* (2019)

*Rookwood General Cemetery is responsible for the management and longevity of Rookwood Cemetery. We maintain 430 unique interment grounds, historic and modern memorial areas, culturally specific gardens, three beautiful chapels and a state-of-the-art function centre. To further meet needs of families, we customise interment practices to respect different religious and cultural beliefs.*

*Rookwood is also one of the largest green spaces in Greater Sydney; making it the ideal setting to explore. HIDDEN, along with events such as tours, workshops, and open days; provide unique opportunities for the community to engage with the historic site.*

**Media enquiries, interviews, and high-res photos:**

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