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Embargoed until Friday 9 September, 7pm— **Kate Beynon winner of the \$30,000 2016 Geelong contemporary art prize**

On display at Geelong Gallery

10 September to 13 November 2016

Geelong Gallery

Free entry—Open daily 10am to 5pm

A narrative-rich, skilfully executed painting by Melbourne artist **Kate Beynon** is the winner of the *2016 Geelong contemporary art prize*, Geelong Gallery's acquisitive award for contemporary painting.

Kate Beynon's *Graveyard scene/the beauty and sadness of bones* 2014–15 is based on a scene from *An-Li: a Chinese ghost tale*, the artist's re-telling of a supernatural story of two young spirits who traverse opposing worlds: one aquatic, the other earthly. The painting reveals an interest in connections between mother and child, ancestral spirits, and the cycle of life and death.

This prize-winning work—the first by **Beynon** to be acquired by Geelong Gallery—is highly representative of the artist's practice in which she merges diverse pictorial traditions with personal histories to address issues of hybridity, cultural identity and feminism.

In *Graveyard scene/the beauty and sadness of bones*, **Beynon** depicts the spectral form of An-Li as he makes a nocturnal visit to his grieving mother. Gravestones include inscriptions for 'heart'—combining characters for 'spirit' and 'gate'—and 'river-spirit', symbolising An-Li's fatal fall into the river. Additional imagery such as the broom and surrounding hybrid animal/human skeletal figures—one of which seeks to comfort the woman—emphasises the cycle of life and death. While the hand emerging from the lotus refers to Kwan Yin/Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, who reaches out to those suffering in the world and oversees their path to healing.

As the artist states, 'Personal references include a bowl from my late maternal Chinese grandmother, with phoenix as auspicious sign of transformation. The lion-dogs—protective guardian animals—relate to my Chinese zodiac year, while oranges as offerings reflect Buddhist ancestors.'



**Winner—
2016 Geelong contemporary art prize**
Kate Beynon
Graveyard scene/the beauty and sadness of bones
2014-15
synthetic polymer paint on linen
Courtesy of the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

Beynon continues, 'Although melancholy, there are signs of hope and healing. An-Li holds a heart sprouting like a vegetable, while a lotus flower unexpectedly blooms. Being able to germinate after a thousand years dormant, lotus seeds signify a connection to the earth and possible future beginnings.'

The announcement of the prize-winning work was made by **Peter Dorling**, Administrator for the City of Greater Geelong, at the opening of the exhibition on Friday 9 September, 6.00–8.00pm. The judging panel for this year's prize consisted of **Victoria Lynn**, Director, TarraWarra Museum of Art, **Jason Smith**, Director, Geelong Gallery, and **Lisa Sullivan**, Curator, Geelong Gallery.

Judge and Geelong Gallery Director, **Jason Smith** said 'This work by **Kate Beynon** is highly refined in its pictorial organisation of interrelating forms and striking interactive colour, and quietly but exceptionally powerful in its poignant reflections on death, mourning, earthly life and the spiritual realm. **Kate's** touching interpretation of the Chinese ghost tale of An-Li has an emotional resonance with the images and stories of loss and grieving with which we are surrounded in a contemporary world: one in which conflict, terror and instability are counterpointed by the enduring beauty and resilience of nature and generosity of spirit.'

Geelong Gallery wishes to thank the Dimmick Charitable Trust for generously sponsoring this signature event, which assists with the development of the Gallery's collection while supporting Australian artists and contemporary painting practice in general.

Over 550 entries were received from around the country for consideration for this year's prize, with 33 works shortlisted for exhibition. The *2016 Geelong contemporary art prize* will be on display at Geelong Gallery until Sunday 13 November.

Artist background

Kate Beynon was born in Hong Kong in 1970, arrived in Australia in 1974, and lives and works in Melbourne. She graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1993, and received an Australian Postgraduate Award to undertake her PhD at Monash University in 2013.

Beynon has held over 25 solo exhibitions including *An-Li: a Chinese ghost tale*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2015; *Auspicious charms for transcultural living*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2008; *Mixed blood and migratory paths*, The Physics Room (Christchurch), 2005; and *Kate Beynon 1994–2002*, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, 2002. She has exhibited extensively in local and international group exhibitions including: *The Archibald prize*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2016; *The F word: contemporary feminist art in Australia*, Ararat Regional Art Gallery, 2014; *Mythopoetic: women artists from Australia and India*, Griffith University Art Gallery, 2014; *Re-picturing the feminine: new and hybrid realities in the art worlds*, Open Eyed Dreams Gallery (Cochin, India), 2012; *The naked face: self-portraits*, National Gallery of Victoria, 2011; and *The China project, three decades: the contemporary Chinese collection*, Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art, 2009.

Her work is held in significant public, private and corporate collections including: American University (Washington DC); Art Gallery of South Australia; Curtin University Collection; Monash University Collection; Museum of Contemporary Art; Museum of Modern Art (MMK, Frankfurt); National Gallery of Australia; National Gallery of Victoria; Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art; University of Queensland Art Museum; BHP Billiton Collection; Michael & Janet Buxton Collection; Goldman Sachs/JB Were; and the Vizard Foundation Art Collection of the 1990s.

Kate Beynon is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne, and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Exhibition sponsor

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Geelong Gallery is supported
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2 of 2

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Little Malop Street Geelong VIC 3220 | T: 03 5229 3645 | **Free entry** Open daily 10am–5pm

www.geelonggallery.org.au

**Geelong
Gallery**