The Ian Potter Museum of Art
The University of Melbourne

Media Release
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Leading artists confront sporting themes
in $100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize 4

The worlds of art and sport collide as sixteen leading Australian artists finalise their works for submission in the 4th biennial $100,000 Basil Sellers Art Prize. The works, which confront issues and themes in sport, will be exhibited at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, from 22 July.

Seven of the sixteen finalists are using video mediums, several are exploring boxing and surfing, some will explore racism and fandom in sport and a couple are investigating outrageous media-attention-grabbing sporting events.

The $100,000 Prize is one of the most significant opportunities available to contemporary Australian artists and allows artists the freedom to explore sport as subject matter, from literal interpretations and celebrations of particular sporting passions to exploring complex social issues.

Shaun Gladwell’s film is based upon two characters from recent Australian literature, ‘Jack in the Box’ Leaper from Tim Winton’s The turning and the character Danny ‘Barracuda’ Kelly from Christos Tsaikos's Barracuda, while Richard Lewer’s documentary film explores boxing training as analogous to life experience.

Khaled Sabsabi’s films, Tawla (2012) is based on the game of backgammon, an integral part of certain Arab and Mediterranean societies and Wonderland, explores fanaticism in sport featuring the Red and Black Bloc, the main supporter groups of the Western Sydney Wanderers soccer team.

Tony Albert looks at racism in sport, and attempts that have been made in recent years to eradicate it. His work reflects on actions such as the Nicky Winmar gesture to an AFL crowd raising his St Kilda guernsey and pointing to his bare brown skin, and to the racial vilification of Sydney Swans footballer Adam Goodes in 2013.

Zoe Croggon’s film documents two Chinese martial arts students training ‘Barehanded wushu’ routine, exploring the successes and failures in life through martial art.

Gabrielle de Vietri’s film, Three teams, documents the invention of a game of football based on Australian Rules involving three teams and three sets of goals. This inventive game was played at Taylors Lake Football & Netball Club oval in October 2013 between the Horsham RSL Diggers, Noradjuha-Quantong and Taylors Lake teams.

Other finalists include, Narelle Autio, Ivan Durrant, William Mackinnon, Rob McHaffie, Noel McKenna, Rob McLeish, Fiona McMonagle, Raquel Ormella, Jenny Watson, and Gerry Wedd.
The Director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Kelly Gellatly, says “The responses of the 16 artist finalists in the Basil Sellers Art Prize keep pushing the boundaries of how sport and art relate.

“The theme of sport allows for the exploration of endless issues and artistic possibilities and provides numerous opportunities to challenge existing preconceptions about both sport and art.

“We are expecting this 4th Basil Sellers Art Prize and exhibition will surprise, delight, perplex and entertain and that it will encourage us all to think differently about our national obsession and its connections to and relationship with the arts”, Ms Gellatly said.

The Basil Sellers Art Prize exhibition will open at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 22 July 2014 until 26 October 2014, with the winner announced on Friday 25 July, 2014.

Judges include Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Kelly Gellatly, Director of the Ian Potter Museum of Art; Robert Cook, curator of modern and contemporary photography and design at the Art Gallery of Western Australia; Michael Hawker AM, distinguished businessman and a veteran of 25 Australian rugby test matches and now Chairman of Australian Rugby Union; Dr Chris McAuliffe, consultant for the Basil Sellers Group; and Basil Sellers AM.

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Background Basil Sellers AM

The Basil Sellers Art Prize encourages artists to take on the theme of sporting culture and interpret it through their chosen practice. The prize is supported by Basil Sellers AM, a businessman and philanthropist. Basil is a well known collector of art and a sports enthusiast who spends his time between Australia and Europe. The Basil Sellers Art Prize aims to encourage artists to engage with sporting culture and to develop their practice through reflection on sport and culture in Australia.

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For further information: http://www.sellersartprize.com.au

The Ian Potter Museum of Art The University of Melbourne, Swanston Street (between Elgin and Faraday streets), Parkville, 3010.
Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am - 5pm: Saturday and Sunday 12 - 5pm, Admission free.