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South Australians have their say on favourite SACE Art Show works for first time

The inaugural SACE Art Show Community Award winners were announced today at a ceremony at Light Square Gallery.

For the first time in the Show's 33-year history, the SACE Board invited visitors to the Show to vote for their favourite pieces of work.

Sponsored by Credit Union SA, the Community Awards were designed to more closely engage the public in the creative efforts of the State's young up-and-coming artists and designers.

SACE Board Chief Executive, Dr Neil McGoran, said: "During the past six weeks, we have had students, teachers, families and members of the broader community vote, and it has been fantastic to see the South Australian public engage with the diversity of work being exhibited at the Show.

"At the close of counting, we received more than 1600 votes and the range of preferences matched the diversity of works that were on display this year. In short, it was extremely close."

The inaugural winners for the Credit Union SA Community Award are:

- Ella Michele (overall winner) – for her giant oil on canvas entitled 'The Lacking'. Ella says her work was inspired by her Year 12 experiences, in particular the challenges and sacrifices she and her peers undertook to complete their SACE qualification. She receives \$500 in prize money.
- Paige Mahlburg (runner-up) - for her sculpture 'Manufactured Distinction'. Paige says she decided to focus on a piece that would draw attention to prosthetics and physical disorders after breaking her finger and realising her reliance on her limbs. She chose cutlery as a medium because of its "intrinsic relationship to hands". She receives \$250 in prize money.

Credit Union SA Chief Executive Officer, Grant Strawbridge said all of the participating artists deserved recognition for their amazing talents, and offered his congratulations to the overall winner and runner-up artists.

"This has given young people a platform to showcase their art, and provide the community with an opportunity to share their views – and while opinions have been divided I think that all of these students should be regarded as emerging artists to watch," Mr Strawbridge said.

"The fact that people have come together to admire and consider the works of these young artists as part of a united community underpins why Credit Union SA has been proud to be a sponsor of this Show; and I hope that this ultimately encourages other students to unlock their inner artist and consider this as a potential career or study pathway," he said.

Dr McGoran said the SACE Art Show attracted about 5500 visitors this year.

"Thousands of students have visited the Show during the past six weeks from across the State to ponder, be stimulated, and to gain inspiration for their own work. Members of the public have also been dazzled by the creative talents of our young emerging artists and designers," he said.

“The Show has also been successful in raising awareness about how SACE art and design subjects can be used as stepping stones to higher education and career pathways,” Dr McGoran said.

“Indeed, many of the young artists and designers featured at the Show have moved towards careers in fashion, architecture, animation, graphic design, and other creative industries,” he added.