



Wednesday 12 November



Credit (L-R): Yuriyal Bridgeman, photo: Mick Richards; EJ Son, photo courtesy the Artist; and Teresa Busuttill, photo: Leo Chircop.

Announcing the 2026 Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarships

Yuriyal Bridgeman (PNG/QLD), Teresa Busuttill (SA) and EJ Son (NSW) have been selected as recipients of the [Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship](#) for 2026.

Each artist will receive a scholarship that provides institutional fees for one academic year, a tax-free allowance of \$75,000, and travel expenses to a leading international art program of their choice.

Administered by University of South Australia's [Samstag Museum of Art](#), the program supports Australian-based artists to undertake study at an international destination of their choice, deepening their practice and building global creative connections.

Director of Samstag, Erica Green, congratulates the 2026 scholars on their achievement.

"The Class of 2026 exemplifies the breadth and ambition of contemporary Australian practice, spanning photography, moving image, performance, new media, sculpture, installation, ceramics, drawing and painting," Green says.

"The Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It gives artists time, resources and international immersion to test ideas, build networks and return with renewed purpose and momentum."

This year's selection panel featured Green, along with contemporary artist Nell, and Stephen Atkinson, Program Director: Contemporary Art, UniSA. The panel noted the clarity of purpose expressed by the recipients and are excited to see how this opportunity will shape their practices.

“All three artists demonstrated a strong understanding of where their practice was currently situated, the direction they hoped to take, and how their proposed program of study would assist the development of their practice.”

Nell added that they feel the scholarship will be transformative for the recipients.

“This will be a turning point for each of the artists – the consolidation of their practice to date and the beginning of a new chapter,” they say.

Bridgeman’s practice draws on his dual Papua New Guinean and Australian heritage and his deep ties to his maternal people, the Yuri tribe of the southern Simbu Province, PNG. Study in Germany will provide access to some of the largest collections of PNG artefacts held outside Papua New Guinea, enabling him to bring these histories into new, critical dialogues through a practice centred on traditional and contemporary forms of cultural storytelling.

An Australian artist of Maltese heritage, Busuttill’s practice uses Mediterranean and maritime motifs to explore the dualities of emotional and cultural inheritance. A study program in Portugal will allow Busuttill to encounter Mediterranean history and culture from a different vantage, broadening perspective and enriching her exploration of identity, memory and belonging.

Son’s conceptually driven practice employs a wide range of media and methods to create experiences that transform spectacle into quiet introspection. The Master of Fine Arts: New Genres at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) will foster Son’s experimental practice and help them discover new ways of engaging audiences in challenging conversations about the power structures that define contemporary existence.

In response to the announcement, Samstag has commissioned Patrice Sharkey to introduce the artists in texts that distil their practices. The essays are available on the [Samstag website](#).

The competitive national scholarship program, established in 1992, is open to art school students and graduates, and has awarded 152 scholarships to date.

The 2025 Scholars, Hannah Gartside, Henry Jock Walker and Helen Grogan, commenced their study programs earlier this year.

Previous Scholars have gone on to show at prestigious exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, Biennale of Sydney, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, and The National, including Archie Moore, Deborah Paauwe, Nicholas Folland, Julie Gough, Nike Savvas, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, Shaun Gladwell, Madison Bycroft, James Nguyen, Mikala Dwyer, Yasmin Smith and Linda Marrinon.

For the full list, see unisa.edu.au/samstag

The Samstag Scholarships are awarded by UniSA and administered by the Samstag Museum of Art on behalf of the Trustee of the estate of Gordon Samstag, the celebrated American artist who taught at the South Australian School of Art in the 1960s.

Photo (L-R): Yuriyal Bridgeman, courtesy of Mick Richards; EJ Son, courtesy of the artist; and Teresa Busuttill, courtesy of Leo Chircop.

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