

Taking home annual art prize shores up 'an extra boost' for artist putting the coast to print

6 October 2024 | [Claire Sams](#)



Canberra-based artist Annika Romeyn (right) was "thrilled and honoured" to win an annual art prize. Photo: River of Art.

A Canberra-based artist has taken home an annual art award for a piece of work that was years in the making. Annika Romeyn told *Region* she was "thrilled and honoured" to recently win the River of Art Prize for her work *Passing Through*. The watercolour monotype print showcases Guerilla Bay in Eurobodalla Shire in vibrant shades of blue. "It was special to exhibit the work of Guerilla Bay at the site of inspiration and with the community that knows it the best," Ms Romeyn told *Region*.

Work on her print started years ago. "In 2016, it was the last summer of my mother's life and we spent a really meaningful time staying nearby in Mossy Point," she said. "We came to appreciate and love Guerilla Bay together, so that was what got me started on revisiting it over the following years."

Ms Romeyn starts by sketching the landscape before her. "I don't replicate the sketches that I do, I just use that as a process of absorbing, taking it in," she said. "You have a heightened attention and heightened senses if you're sitting there drawing directly in a sketchbook." Once she is back at the studio, Ms Romeyn uses watercolours to paint several layers of the scene before transferring it to paper through a printing press. "I like it because it's borderline between drawing, painting, printmaking, and it has these fluid effects that fit really well with the fluidity of the ocean and the rain and the subject matter that I'm working with," she said. Using this method, each artwork Ms Romeyn creates is unique, though the focus remains on the region's coastline. "You just get this sense of the span of geologic time and the ever-changing environment, how place holds memory and develops personal significance when there's particularly concentrated experiences or memories," she said.

The River of Art Prize judges also named Cathy Laudenbach's composite photograph *What Remains, Remains* as the runner-up, and Katherine Boland's image *Burnt Orange No. 1* was awarded highly commended. "There was quite a bit of variety within the exhibition in terms of themes and mediums," Ms Romeyn said. "But there were strong threads that were running through [the entries]. There were quite a few responses to the South Coast landscape and some powerful responses to the bushfires as well. "For me, it was an opportunity to do something that was relevant to the region, and to be able to share that and get responses from the local community who know the place best." Taking home the prize was "an extra boost of energy and validation" for Ms Romeyn. "It's always really validating when people who know the place really well can see a sense of place coming through in my work," she said. "It's nice when people who know the specific place resonate with it." *The River of Art Festival will continue until 7 October, with events being held from Durras in the north to Bermagui in the south. The [River of Art Prize](#) is being hosted at Narooma Gallery at 92a Campbell Street in Narooma.*