

MEDIA RELEASE

SHEILA FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL MICHELA AND ADRIAN FINI ARTIST FELLOWSHIP

14 October 2020

Perth, Australia: Sheila – A Foundation for Women in Visual Art has announced the inaugural Michela and Adrian Fini Artist Fellowship valued at \$20,000.

Sydney-based artist Salote Tawale has been awarded the inaugural fellowship, an opportunity that will allow her to create a body of new work for her forthcoming solo exhibition *I don't see colour* at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) in July 2021.

Sheila Foundation board director Michela Fini and her husband Adrian have pledged a donation to create this unique fellowship, which will be awarded annually over three years, and will support women artists and contemporary arts institutions.

Michela said she and Adrian felt it was particularly important to launch the fellowship at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic had made supporting female artists, and spaces for them to show in, even more crucial.

"It was important to Adrian and I that we create something significant, that provides a much-needed opportunity in the Australian arts sector. The Fellowship is designed to make a practical difference to both artists and contemporary art spaces," said Michela.

The fellowship is unique in that it will support the development of new work by contemporary women artists at a critical juncture of their career, whether they be emerging, mid-career or senior artists, and assist in the presentation and documentation of the work at a Contemporary Art Organisations Australia (CAOA) contemporary art space.

Fellowship recipient Salote Tawale said that being able to develop the project with PICA was an important part of the opportunity.

"A huge thank you to the Sheila Foundation for supporting this exhibition and allowing me as an artist to develop this project with PICA beyond my original expectations."

Chair of CAOAs, Alexie Glass-Kantor said the organisation recognised the vision of Sheila as pioneering equity and representation in the arts through the commissioning and development of new work.

"This inaugural fellowship is a unique and extraordinary opportunity for women artists to produce new work at a pivotal point in their career. It's particularly important at this time to support artists to create and expand upon ambitious work, and invite audiences to encounter new ways of thinking about artistic creative practice. CAOAs look forward to collaborating with Sheila by supporting women artists across our organisations through the Michela and Adrian Fini Artist Fellowship."

PICA will be the first CAOAs partner to host the fellowship and its director Amy Barrett-Lennard commented that the COVID pandemic has highlighted the stark inequities across society and in particular the precarious financial circumstances that artists have been coping with for decades.

“It is now more important than ever for women artists to receive this kind of support. We are thrilled to be working with Salote Tawale on this significant solo exhibition and commend the foresight of Sheila Foundation and Michela and Adrian Fini in embarking on this exciting new fellowship.

“Salote Tawale is one of Australia’s most exciting artistic voices and this fellowship will allow us to commission, contextualise and present bold new work by her as she enters a significant point of her career.”

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ABOUT SALOTE TAWALE

From the perspective of her translocated Indigenous Fijian and Anglo-Australian heritage, Tawale explores the identity of the individual within collective systems. Examining through self-performance, Tawale draws on personal experiences of race, class, ethnicity and gender formed by growing up in suburban Australia.

<http://salotetawale.com/About-Salote-Tawale>

ABOUT SHEILA FOUNDATION

<https://sheila.org.au/>

Sheila is a national philanthropic foundation with a mission to overturn decades of gender bias by writing Australian women artists back into our art history and ensuring equality for today’s women artists.

Sheila will have succeeded when a visit to a state or national gallery shows equally the art, lives, stories and ideas of women and men, when students learn about our great women artists in equal measure to the great male artists, and

when the women graduates from our art schools are equally represented in the art community.

Sheila has three strategic focus areas:

- *Contemporary Women* – Providing opportunities and support for contemporary Australian women artists.
- *Into the Light* – Painting women back into Australia’s art history.
- *Going Global* – Supporting the unique Cruthers Collection of Women’s Art, the largest stand-alone collection of Australian women’s art.

The foundation is named after Lady Sheila Cruthers, a trailblazer in supporting and collecting Australian women artists. Sheila Foundation honours Lady Sheila in name, and in mission.