

Media Release

'Blazing talent' Kate Mulvany wins top prize for women playwrights

18/9/2020

Hailed by the judges as a 'blazing talent', stage and screen writer/actor Kate Mulvany has won the coveted Mona Brand Award for 2020 — Australia's only prize for women stage and screen writers — the State Library of NSW announced **TONIGHT [18 September 2020]**.

A prolific playwright, screenwriter, poet and novelist, Kate Mulvany OAM was awarded the \$30,000 Mona Brand Award for Women Stage and Screen Writers for her extensive body of work comprising more than 30 plays over a 25-year career.

Kate's acclaimed adaptation of Ruth Park's *The Harp in the South* trilogy (Sydney Theatre Company) is among her recent work. Her original feminist piece *The Mares* played to rave reviews at the Tasmanian Theatre Company in 2019.

The Mona Brand Award is offered biennially thanks to the generous bequest to the NSW State Library Foundation from the trailblazing Australian playwright Mona Brand (who also wrote under the name Alexis Fox).

Senior judge Helen Bowden said: "In this third iteration of the Mona Brand Award, it is exciting to highlight the brilliance of a new generation writer, Kate Mulvany, from a wonderfully diverse and competitive field."

"Kate Mulvany's writing is bright-eyed, candid and generous. Still a young woman, she has produced a huge body of work that is feminist, activist and very entertaining. She is a playwright, an adaptor and a television script writer, and she is speaking to a broad swathe of audiences both in Australia and internationally about the issues of our time."

The \$10,000 Early Career Writer Award went to Anchuli Felicia King for her work *White Pearl* (Royal Court, 2019), described by the judges as "sharp, far-reaching and urgent. It extends and emboldens the representation of Asian women with complexity and resonance."

The State Library administers and supports numerous awards including the NSW Premier's Literary and History Awards, the National Biography Award, the Russell Prize for Humour Writing, and the Ashurst Business Literature Prize. The Library also manages an extensive Fellowships program, which is supported by the State Library Foundation and generous private benefactors.

The Mona Brand Award for Women Stage and Screen Writers

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Background notes

- The biennial Mona Brand Award is presented to an outstanding Australian woman who has written for the stage and/or screen.
- The Award was made possible through a bequest to the State Library of NSW Foundation by the late Mona Alexis Fox nee Brand (1915–2007).
- The main award is valued at \$30,000, with an additional award of \$10,000 presented to an emerging female writer who is in the early stages of her career for her first professionally produced/screened work.
- Mona Brand was a trailblazing Australian poet, author, and a prolific playwright, who wrote nearly 30 plays. Her work often addressed socially relevant and controversial topics, and was widely performed on stage, radio and television in Australia, the UK, Eastern Europe and India.
- In 2002 the Library acquired Mona Brand's papers, which include professional and personal correspondence, diaries, manuscripts, photographs, sound and video recordings, as well as many other records of her remarkable life and career.

The judges for the 2020 Mona Brand Award for Women Stage and Screen Writers are:

- Helen Bowden, film and television producer, Lingo Pictures
- Louise Gough, Head of Development at Arenamedia; Head of New Work at Belvoir
- Annette Shun Wah, Executive Producer, Contemporary Asian Australian Performance

For more information about the Award please contact: Senior Project Officer, Awards, State Library of NSW (02) 9273 1582 or awards@sl.nsw.gov.au

MEDIA CONTACT:

Vanessa Bond, Media & Communications Manager, State Library of NSW
(02) 9273 1566, 0411 259 898, vanessa.bond@sl.nsw.gov.au