

Clarice Beckett Art Award open for 2015



Clarice painting at
Mount Macedon. Image
supplied by Artists of
the Valley.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] T he hamlet of Casterton is again celebrating its links to one of Australia's most inspiring early women artists, **Clarice Beckett**, with an art prize named in her honour.

The Clarice Beckett Art Award is organised by the small but vibrant arts group, [Artists of the Valley](#), which "stumbled across" the connection between Casterton, west of Hamilton, and Clarice several years ago.

The event is held to coincide with the annual Casterton Kelpie Muster, that draws hundreds of people to the town from across the district and beyond on the Queen's Birthday Long Weekend (5-7 June).

A main prize of \$500 is on offer, with a \$50 prize for all other sections including oils, acrylics, watercolours, mixed media, works on paper, 3D and a youth award (under 18). Artists can enter as many categories as they like, with a fee of \$5 per entry.



The Yarra, Sunset, painting, oil on board, 30.5 x 35.5 cm, by Clarice Beckett. Image: Menzies Art Brands.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] C [/dropcap]larice Beckett was born in Casterton on 21 March, 1887, to a bank manager, Joseph Beckett, and his wife, Elizabeth, both of whom Clarice would spend most of her adult life caring for after they retired to Melbourne.

It appears Clarice spent only her earliest years in Casterton, having been sent to boarding school in Ballarat and, later, moving to Melbourne where she took drawing lessons at the Melbourne Gallery School under the guidance of **Frederick McCubbin** and **Max Meldrum**.

While Clarice held exhibitions with her fellow students at the Melbourne Gallery School, very few of her works sold during her lifetime and it was only many years after her death, at the age of 48, that her work was “rediscovered” and celebrated for its excellence.

Unfortunately, however, by the time her work came to be appreciated, hundreds of her paintings were beyond repair – having been stored in an open-sided barn in rural Victoria for more than 40 years. A further 31 were destroyed in a house fire.

It is this tragedy, and the belief that all budding artists deserve the opportunity of a “fair go”, that inspired the Artists of the Valley to establish a prize in her name in 2012.

[box]Entries for the Clarice Beckett Art Award close on Friday May 22. The exhibition of works opens at the Casterton Bowls Club on Friday June 5. For full details and entry forms, [visit the Artists of the Valley website here](#).[/box]

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