

Embargoed until 29 November 2023

Behind the Lines 2023: All Fun and Games

Political antics in the spotlight as Australia's best political cartoonists reflect on 2023

2023 was a turbulent year. Australians weathered challenging times – everything from soaring inflation and climate change to the Voice referendum and international conflicts.

Helping us navigate these complex issues and see beyond the political game-playing were Australia's political cartoonists. Sometimes heroes wield a pen – or a stylus!

Don't miss the latest retrospective on the political issues and current affairs of the year through the lens of the Australia's political cartooning community in *Behind the Lines 2023: All Fun and Games*, opening at the Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) at Old Parliament House, Canberra from 30 November.

Showcasing the work of 46 artists from across Australia, the exhibition explores the key political issues and current affairs from Australia and abroad.

The Minister for the Arts, Tony Burke, last night announced Fiona Katauskas, a cartoonist for *The Guardian*, as the 2023 Political Cartoonist of the Year.

Taking out the honour for the first time, judges acknowledged Katauskas' work for its heart, humour and diversity.

"Australia's political cartoonists are great thinkers, it's in the layers of analysis that invites us to be able to see something with visual clarity that words often can't do."

Barrie Cassidy, former journalist and Chair of the Board of Old Parliament House, said the unique cultural institution – established in 2009 to share the story of Australia's democracy and housed in the iconic former home of Australia's first permanent national parliament – was a natural home for the annual exhibition.

"The world we live in shows us that democracy is an increasingly fragile concept – internationally, but even in Australia," he said. "We want to connect people to democracy and inspire them to explore, understand and take part in our democratic system."

MoAD Director Stephanie Bull said MoAD was proud of the role it played capturing the art of political cartooning. "Political cartoons are an important part of our democracy – they encourage debate and understanding."

"Behind the Lines is a highlight on the MoAD calendar, it allows us to celebrate all cartoonists both established and emerging. This exhibition showcases their skills and explores their contributions to our social political discourse and culture," she said.

This year the exhibition has built on the idea of what constitutes a political cartoon with “Out of the Frame”, a section highlighting cartoons using new and creative formats. It includes a sculpture and painting by Van Nishing, animated GIFs by Glen Le Lievre, a satirical T-shirt by Nordacious and puppets from a First Dog on the Moon play.

Exhibition Curator Alex Walton said cartoonists were embracing new ways to express their ideas, helping the artform reach new people.

“These new formats give them the opportunity to reach new audiences beyond traditional newspaper readers.”

This year’s ‘In Focus’ section has been guest curated by respected economic journalist Ross Gittins. His selection of works features cartoons on Australian interest rates and their impact on the cost of living over four decades, bringing an insightful perspective to how history has a way of repeating itself.

Audiences around the country will also have the opportunity to see a selection of works from *Behind the Lines 2023*, which will tour to six venues from February 2024. The national tour has been generously supported by the Federal Government through a grant from the National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program (NCITO).

Behind the Lines 2023 will open at Old Parliament House, Canberra on November 30, 2023 and be on display for a year. Entry is free from 9am to 5pm daily (except Christmas Day).

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**For enquiries, high-res images, videos or interviews please contact
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**FREE
EXHIBITION
NOW OPEN**

BEHIND THE LINES
the year in political cartoons 2023

MOAD
Museum of Australian Democracy
at Old Parliament House

**Caption: Political Cartoonist of the Year Fiona Katauskas, No Hollywood Ending,
The Echidna, 15 March 2023**



Caption: Political Cartoonist of the Year, Fiona Katauskas, *Horses for Courses*, The Guardian, 3 June 2023