The Urbach: 2027 Guidelines

The Theodore Urbach Landscape Prize and Studio Scholarship ("The Urbach") is a prize and scholarship offered at Shepparton Art Museum (SAM). The Urbach is designed to encourage continued exploration of Australian landscape painting by contemporary artists.

The Urbach is proudly supported by the **Theodore Urbach Landscape Painting Scholarship and Prize Charitable Trust managed by Equity Trustees.**

The program provides the recipient with a dedicated studio space at SAM to undertake creative exploration and professional development. The applicant must be working with the subject of Australian landscape painting in oils, watercolours, tempera, or any other conventional medium. The term 'painting' is to be understood broadly. Work can incorporate photography, collage, printmaking, textile, or even sculptural elements but must explore the practice of painting. Installation or new media work is ineligible for this opportunity.

Key dates

Applications open: 1 November 2026
Applications close: 1 February 2027
Shortlisted applicants announced: by 1 March 2027
Shortlisted applicant one-on-ones: 8 March – 8 April 2027
Judging panel: 12 – 16 April 2027 *(Date TBC)*
Winner and runners-up notified: by 21 April 2027
The Urbach program starts: 1 June 2027
The Urbach program ends: 31 August 2027

Application fee $0.00

It is free to apply to The Urbach.

Prizes

The Urbach First Prize

- $5,000 cash prize
- $7,000 scholarship stipend
- 3-month access to the SAM Artist Studio
- Tailored professional development opportunities including having an article about their work published in VAULT Magazine.

The Urbach Second Prizes

- $2,500 cash prize for two runners up in recognition of their time and commitment to developing their applications and presenting to the panel.

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Eligibility

- The applicant must be working with the subject of Australian landscape painting in oils, watercolours, tempera, or any other conventional medium. The term 'painting' is to be understood broadly. Work can incorporate drawing, photography, collage, printmaking, textile, or even sculptural elements but must explore the practice of painting. Installation or new media work is ineligible for this opportunity.
- Applicants must have studied visual arts at one of the universities in Victoria, the Victorian College of Arts (VCA), or any similar establishment in Victoria including any painting school, as well as art classes conducted by the NGV. Students currently undertaking study at an institution outlined above may apply.
- Applicants must be 18 years or older at the time of entering.
- Applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents and residents of the state of Victoria.
- Applicants cannot be full-time employees of Shepparton Art Museum, SAM Ltd Board, and SAM Foundation Boards and their advisory committees.
- Must be available during the program period (June – August 2027)

Shortlisted applicants will need to provide the following for the judging panel the week beginning 24 March 2025 to be eligible. Applicants may choose to work on securing these prior to being shortlisted:

- Statement of Public Liability Insurance
- Have a valid Working with Children Check
- Professional Reference / Letter of Support
- Have a valid Driver's Licence*

**Applicants are expected to have access to a vehicle during the program and/ or manage their own transportation to and from the space. If they do not drive but can show evidence of their ability to self-manage their transportation, that will be sufficient.*

Application process

- All applications to The Urbach must be submitted online via Formsite.
- Once the application period has closed, all applications will be reviewed by the SAM Exhibitions and Collections team to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria. A shortlist of eligible applications will then be assembled for the judging panel.

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- Shortlisted candidates will be notified and provided with feedback from their initial applications to aid them in strengthening their application through one-on-one consultations with SAM Curator – Exhibitions & Collections to prepare their presentation for the judging panel.
- Shortlisted applicants will present their work and program intentions to a judging panel on a day between 12 – 16 April 2027, with an exact date to be confirmed. The presentations and applications will be assessed by a judging panel, chaired by SAM's Artistic Director.
- The judging panel will select one winner and two runners-up. SAM will contact the winning applicant to offer them the opportunity. Acceptance of the offer to exhibit must be made in writing within 3 days. After this time, SAM will approach the first runner-up.

The program

The Theodore Urbach Landscape Prize and Studio Scholarship ("The Urbach") is a 3-month creative residency opportunity for an artist to immerse themselves and pursue self-directed study of their practice and the landscape of the Goulburn Valley and Hume regions. The program will run from 1 June – 31 August 2027, during which time the awarded artist will have exclusive access to the on-site SAM Artist Studio – a workspace attached to the art museum that offers a unique opportunity to engage with SAM and access its collection.

The awarded artist will use the SAM Artist Studio solely as an art studio/workspace. The studio space is not a residential accommodation. The space has its own private bathroom and kitchenette and will be accessible to the awarded artist from 8am – 6pm daily, 7 days a week for the three-month period.

There is no set deliverable outcome for this opportunity. Rather, the program emphasises professional development and engagement. Winners will be expected to engage in an artist interview with SAM staff at the commencement, an interview with an arts writer for a piece to be written in a national art publication, and participate in an artist talk at the completion of their 3-month period of using the space. Additional professional development opportunities such as visits from curators and directors form other art institutions, will be tailored to their needs to further their practice.

Use of the SAM Artist Studio

The awarded artist will use the SAM Artist Studio solely as an art studio/workspace. The studio space is not a residential accommodation. The space has its own private bathroom and kitchenette and will be accessible to the awarded artist from 8am – 6pm daily, 7 days a week for the three-month

period. The purpose-built studio is located on the ground level of the SAM Building. Special arrangements for accessibility, including for audio/visual impairments, can be made with advance notice.

Due to the location and the design of the space, there are limitations on what materials can be used and activities undertaken within the space. Please review the following restrictions before preparing an application to The Urbach.

Materials containing lead, mercury, or asbestos CANNOT be brought on site for any reason.

- All flammable or hazardous materials need to be pre-approved before being brought on site including solvents, dyes and pigments containing heavy metals.
- No more than 4 litres of flammable liquid, 1 litre of each; are to be stored at the SAM Artist Studio at any one time. Flammable chemicals are to be stored in the safety cabinet for flammable liquids, and soiled rags that could contain residue of flammable chemicals should also be stored in the cabinet when not in use.
- A full list of materials brought on site and their relevant Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be stored within the space and a copy filed with SAM.
- In general, chemicals should remain in their manufacturer / original containers, but where it is safer and more reasonable to handle a small amount (like medium for painting) any container used needs to be clearly labelled and correctly stored.
- Solvents are not to be dumped down either sink.
- At the cessation of the residency all materials must be taken with the artist, nothing is to remain onsite. Disposal of any unwanted materials are the artist's responsibility.
- Follow the SAM Art Studio Procedure for bringing materials on site.

Activities that CANNOT take place in the SAM Artist Studio include, but are not limited to:

- Ceramics or glasswork
- Setting up of a photographic darkroom or use of photo chemicals
- Spray painting, airbrushing, or use of aerosols
- Welding or metalworking
- Pyrography or any process involving an open flame
- Unapproved gatherings, parties, or any activities involving external people, parties or organisations. All guests need to be pre-approved by SAM staff a minimum of 48hrs before entering the space.

Activities that can take place, but for which scope will be limited:

- Printmaking – no acid or chemical etching processes
- Woodworking – forms of woodworking or woodcarving will be considered based on appropriateness for the level of ventilation and particle extraction available.

- Stone carving – need to ensure stone brought onsite is asbestos-free and that activities will be appropriate for the level of ventilation and particle extraction available.
- Leatherworking and other work involving animal products such as feathers, shells, and bones – limitation will be determined by what chemicals can be on site due to ventilation concerns and need to ensure that there will be no introduction of pests or threats to the SAM Collection.
- Wax or encaustic processes – Open flames are strictly prohibited and there will need to be a clearly laid out process for how wax will be melted that mitigates the possibility of combustion.
- Using plaster – small uses maybe considered, but in general there is insufficient ventilation and particle extraction in the space to support this.
- Fibre arts– those that involve a lot of dyeing of material onsite will not be possible due to insufficient ventilation. If a sewing machine is to be used it must be tested and tagged prior to arriving onsite.

A detailed overview and induction will be conducted with the awarded artist. If you have any questions on what is appropriate for the SAM Studio space, please contact SAM Curator – Exhibitions & Collections Caroline Esbenshade at forartists@sheppartonartmuseum.com.au