

Sunland sculptures



OUTLET: Cristina Metelli and some of her sea creature sculptures for the Brighton exhibition.

Picture: TAIT SCHMAAL

LOUISE NUNN

THE seaside suburb of Brighton is making waves in the arts world with a sculpture exhibition that keeps getting bigger every year.

Entries for the 2012 Brighton Jetty Classic Sculptures exhibition, on the Brighton foreshore from January 25 to February 5, close on November 1.

The best outdoor sculpture will receive \$5000, up from \$3000 last year, while the prize for the best indoor sculpture has doubled to \$3000.

The exhibition is also offering cash prizes in categories including the best youth work (15 to 26 years), environmental awareness, emerging artist and people's choice.

Committee chairwoman Karen Donaldson said the 12-day event has been immensely popular, a spur for business – including naming rights sponsor Adelaide Airport – to jump on board.

“We’ve been growing at a rapid rate since we started in 2008,” she said.

“The first year we had 34 entries and no money to speak of.

“This year we had 83 entries, and we hope to crack the magical 100 next year.”

The grassroots community event was established by Brighton Surf Life Saving Club to accompany its large, open water swim held on the first Sunday of February each year.

A club member brought the idea for a sculpture show back from Perth after attending a similar event at Cottesloe Beach, itself based on Sydney's highly successful Sculptures by the Sea.

“It’s refreshing to see sculpture being encouraged in this way

– CRISTINA METELLI

Brighton’s event has already attracted high-profile SA sculptors, including Greg Johns and Stephen Skillitzi, and more are applying from interstate.

It has also been a hit with the public. This year about 4000 people attended in the lead-up to the swim on the closing weekend, and thousands attended on the day of the event.

Happy Valley artist Cristina Metelli is preparing to enter for the fourth consecutive year with her distinctive sea creatures sculpted from wire.

“It’s refreshing to see sculpture being encouraged in this way,” she said.

Entries typically arrive at the eleventh hour but Ms Donaldson said numbers are already up on last year, particularly in the outdoor category, which the committee is keen to encourage.

The outdoor sculptures are installed along the esplanade and in Bindarra Reserve adjacent the surf lifesaving club, with indoor sculptures inside the club and a nearby Santos marquee.

Most of the work is for sale.

Ms Donaldson said the organising committee was acquiring more and more experience in business and the arts, and the 2012 judging panel comprises Art Gallery of SA curator Julie Robinson, Arts SA’s public art manager Trish Hansen, Adelaide Centre for the Arts visual arts lecturer Maureen Prichard and SASA Gallery director Mary Knights.

To enter and for more information go to www.brightonjettyclassicsculptures.com.