

2017 ARCHIBALD PRIZE REGIONAL TOUR

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ART
GALLERY
NSW

THE ARCHIBALD PRIZE

FOR PORTRAIT PAINTING

Geelong-born Jules François Archibald (1856–1919) was the founding editor of *The Bulletin* magazine and made a significant contribution to the development of a distinctly Australian style of literature and graphic newspaper art. His 1919 bequest funded the creation of a major portrait painting competition, aiming to foster portraiture, support artists and perpetuate the memory of great Australians.

Each year, in accordance with the bequest, resident Australian artists are invited to submit portraits painted from life of men or women, preferentially 'distinguished in Art, Letters, Science or Politics'. The trustees of the Gallery judge the entries and the winner receives \$100 000, courtesy of ANZ. This is a non-acquisitive competition. In addition to the main prize, the People's Choice is awarded to the painting voted most popular with visitors to the exhibition, and the Packing Room Prize is awarded by Gallery staff who unpack the entries.

Taking a variety of forms, a portrait can be simply a visual record for posterity, a personal tribute, a remembrance or token of friendship, a celebration of a person's status or an indicator of fashion. The finest portraits involve an examination of the subject's character as well as external appearance, and, at the same time, address questions of painterly aesthetics. It is a condition that the portrait has been entered with the consent of the subject.

The Archibald was first awarded in 1921, and over the years some of Australia's most prominent artists have won, including George Lambert (1927), William Dobell (1943, 1948 and 1959) and Brett Whiteley (1976 and 1978). The subjects of Archibald winners have been equally celebrated in their fields, including such luminaries as 'Banjo' Patterson, Margaret Olley, Patrick White and Paul Keating.

Self-portrait (ash on me)

acrylic on linen

Tony Albert was a finalist in last year's Archibald Prize with a self-portrait featuring himself with Tinka, the fictional Aboriginal 'piccaninny' illustrated by Brownie Downing. The work was a comment on the influence of 'Aboriginalia' in the construction of identity.

Aboriginalia is a term Albert coined to describe depictions of Westernised stereotypes of Aboriginal culture – something he has collected since he was a child.

In this self-portrait, Albert inserts himself into an assemblage of ashtrays from his collection to personify what is often a generalised depiction of Aboriginal culture. In the painting, he examines what it means to stub out a cigarette on Aboriginal iconography, and the metaphoric symbolism attached to these items.

Born in Townsville, Queensland in 1981, Albert has a degree in Visual Arts from Griffith University. In his art practice, he regularly interrogates contemporary legacies of colonialism. In 2014, he won the Basil Sellers Art Prize and the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. His work has been exhibited at many international venues and is well represented in Australia's major public collections including the National Gallery of Australia and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Self-portrait as a clown

oil on board

Jessica Ashton painted this self-portrait after discovering that she was pregnant with her second child.

‘It was painted with mixed emotions, which I hoped to somehow capture,’ she says. ‘I wear my daughter’s tutu around my neck and feel like a clown. I am amused at myself and the chaos of life, juggling an artistic career, motherhood, teaching and everything else in between. There are so many parts to play, so many different costumes one must wear, but I love the path I have chosen.’

Born in Sydney in 1976, Ashton studied fine art at the Julian Ashton Art School, where she now teaches drawing and painting. She also teaches illustration at the University of Technology Sydney and human anatomy at Production Art Department. She has been a finalist in many art prizes including the Mosman Art Prize and the AME Bale Travelling Scholarship. This is her first time in the Archibald Prize.

With amulets and their shadows

acrylic on wood

Kate Beynon's practice often includes self-portraiture, informed by her interest in mixed cultural identity and auspicious imagery. In this work, the pose and direct gaze were influenced by Frida Kahlo's self-portraits.

The title relates to the symbols in Beynon's work. They include an eye and hand of Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, denoting compassion. 'The smiling skull refers to the cycle of life and death, and reminded me of Fulang-Chang, one of Frida's beloved spider monkeys, while the sprouting, almost botanical heart is a sign of hope,' says Beynon.

Reflecting in the studio after an intense time working on several major projects, Beynon enjoyed painting in this smaller scale on wood. She wears a favourite silk jacket from her fashion collaboration with The Social Studio, Melbourne; the dragon heads acting as protective emblems.

Born in Hong Kong, Beynon arrived in Australia in 1974. She has a Bachelor of Fine Art from the Victorian College of the Arts and is completing her PhD through Monash University. Beynon has participated in over 130 exhibitions and has been a finalist in the Sulman Prize, Portia Geach Memorial Award and Moran Portrait Prize and won the 2016 Geelong Contemporary Art Prize. A seven-time Archibald finalist, she was highly commended in 2010.

Portrait of Ayako Saito

oil on linen

Ayako Saito is a sculptor whose works are inspired by the sensuality of the figure. Her large outdoor sculptures have been exhibited in Sculpture by the Sea at Bondi on four occasions.

Andrew Bonneau met Saito 18 months ago in Sydney. 'We spoke about many things while I painted her portrait, including the challenges of art-making. She has an incisive mind, and her observations of Australian culture from a Japanese perspective were fascinating,' he says.

The portrait was painted from life in ten four-hour sittings over a couple of months, while the landscape background comes from a combination of imagination and previous plein-air studies.

'My influences in making this painting include the Italian Renaissance and German Romanticism, but my underlying motivation was to capture something of Ayako's presence through direct and patient observation,' says Bonneau.

Born in Tasmania in 1981, Bonneau graduated from the National Art School in 2003 and subsequently studied with artist Charlie Sheard, and at the Grand Central Academy, New York. He has been a finalist in many art prizes including the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize. He is the resident artist at Sydney Grammar School for 2017. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

Boys of Sydney Grammar Edgecliff Preparatory School

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Goodbye, Sir!

acrylic on wood

The subject of this portrait is Dr John Vallance, who retired in April after nearly 18 years as headmaster of Sydney Grammar's three campuses. Known for his sense of humour, commitment to a liberal arts education, and open-door policy, he was popular with the students. The portrait, consisting of 11 000 blocks, was painted by 301 boys, aged five to 12.

'This is actually a second portrait of Dr Vallance. The boys presented the first one at Dr Vallance's farewell assembly – and then some of the Art Club boys thought they could do better,' says Janna Adams Tess, the boys' art teacher.

'Their intention was to reverse technology – to make a painting that looked like a pixelated image on a computer screen. They started with a photograph and sketches, then drew an 11 000 square grid on a wooden board, plotted the 20 colours, sanded and painted the blocks and glued them on. Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 worked mainly on the simple blue background, Year 3 and 4 did the suit and tie, while Year 5 and 6 were responsible for the intricate work on the face. Although the process was simple in theory, it wasn't easy fitting the last blocks in!'

Bare Tarragh

oil on canvas

Keith Burt's subject, Tarragh Cunningham, has worked in arts administration for more than 20 years and is currently assistant director at Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art.

'As a lover of portraits, I'm always searching for the moment when a painting says more than the artist intended. I have painted my partner Tarragh many times but this picture captures a connection I could never put into words. With a defiantly shaved head, Tarragh is at once glamorous, strong and void of affectation – in other words "bare",' says Burt.

Born in Sydney in 1969 and raised in Melbourne, Burt lives and works in Brisbane. After a career in animation and freelance illustration, he has been painting full-time since 2011, and has had regular solo shows featuring landscape paintings, still life and portraiture. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

Agatha Gothe-Snape

oil on linen

Agatha Gothe-Snape is an artist whose work addresses the slippery nature of how we read and understand contemporary art and culture. It is perhaps best characterised by her rigorous conceptual enquiry and openness of form. She has achieved significant recognition both in Australia and internationally. Her work was recently seen in the 20th Biennale of Sydney and *The National: new Australian art*. Earlier this year, she had a solo exhibition at the prestigious Mori Art Museum in Tokyo – a first for an Australian artist.

‘In this painting, Agatha is both an active subject and a recalcitrant muse embracing and resisting simultaneously any idea of what it is to be fixed. Ultimately this is what is most attractive about Agatha. She embodies an uncompromising agency whilst having the grace to accept the ready complications inherent within our life as artists,’ says Mitch Cairns.

‘I composed this portrait with love in the full knowledge of its inevitable and palpable quake.’

Born in Camden, NSW in 1984, Cairns is a graduate of the National Art School and was the recipient of the 2012 Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship. This is his fourth time in the Archibald Prize.

Two sunny boys (Peter and Jeremy Oxley)

enamel paint on plywood

Brothers Peter and Jeremy Oxley play in the Sunnyboys, one of Jon Campbell's all-time favourite Australian bands.

'I met Peter around 2002 at the Darren Knight Gallery in Sydney. I had made a Sunnyboys "setlist" painting, which was hanging in Darren's office. Peter came in a few times to check out the painting, which he later purchased, and got to know Darren. I met him soon after and we have remained friends,' says Campbell.

The band reformed in late 2012 and Campbell attended their first gig in Melbourne. In 2013, a documentary called *The Sunnyboy* was released, which followed Jeremy's journey as he emerged from a 30-year battle with schizophrenia.

'The film was very emotional and set the story straight about Jeremy's illness and why the Sunnyboys disbanded in 1984,' says Campbell.

'The movie made me appreciate the closeness and love between them, which helped them through many trying and dark times. I tried to present this by literally painting them with their noses almost touching.'

Born in Northern Ireland in 1961, Campbell arrived in Australia in 1964. Now based in Melbourne, he taught painting at the Victorian College of the Arts from 1999 to earlier this year. He was also an Archibald finalist in 2005.

Ray Hughes

oil on canvas

This is the second time that Jun Chen has been represented in the Archibald Prize with a portrait of Ray Hughes, after another of his paintings of the former gallery owner was selected as a finalist in 2009.

‘Ray was my first dealer and worked with me for ten years. He retired last year,’ says Chen. ‘Last year, I attended his 70th birthday party. Although he wasn’t terribly well and had to sit in a wheelchair, he was still very enthusiastic about life, which touched me and I decided to paint another portrait of him.’

‘I’ve known Ray for quite a long time and understand his positive attitude to life and his passion for art. In this portrait, I emphasised his expression and used lots of black to make the painting very strong and powerful.’

Born in China in 1960, Chen now lives in Brisbane. He graduated from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in China and also has a Master of Fine Art from the Queensland University of Technology. He has been a finalist in the Sulman Prize on five occasions and in the Wynne Prize three times. This is the fifth time his work has been hung in the Archibald Prize.

Professor Gillian Triggs

oil on linen

Emeritus Professor Gillian Triggs has combined an academic career with an international legal practice, advising governments and organisations on human rights law. Her five-year term as the president of the Australian Human Rights Commission ends in July 2017.

‘I first became aware of her name listening to the news in my studio in 2015,’ says Yvette Coppersmith. ‘I admired her dignified strength in the face of the Government’s attacks on her position. I met Gillian last year at the National Gallery of Victoria after she took part in a panel discussion on women in leadership.’

‘I approached the portrait with a modernist sensibility, drawing on the style of Rah Fizelle and exploring the visual language of my recent work. It has been a privilege to become personally acquainted with Gillian and to feel her trust throughout the creative process,’ says Coppersmith.

Born in Melbourne in 1980, Coppersmith has a fine arts degree from the Victorian College of the Arts. She has exhibited around Australia and in Europe. She was the inaugural winner of the Metro 5 Art Prize in 2003 and is a four-time finalist in the Portia Geach Memorial Award. This is her fourth time in the Archibald Prize.

Simon Chan

oil on canvas

Simon Chan is the director of Art Atrium, a Sydney gallery that he founded in 2009. He is also a practising architect and an art collector of more than 30 years standing. He is currently chair of the board of the Aboriginal Benefits Foundation and a director on the board of VisAsia at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In 2013, he received the inaugural NSW Premier's Multicultural Award for Arts and Culture.

Chan is Tony Costa's art dealer. They first met in 2014. 'I was immediately struck by his enthusiasm, humility and generosity. Simon has a particular way of standing and I wanted him to appear as I saw him – enjoying himself, in command, confident and relaxed. I hope all those qualities are conveyed in the portrait,' says Costa.

Born in Sydney in 1955, Costa completed postgraduate studies at the City Art Institute Sydney. In 1988, he was selected to participate in the Triangle Artists' Workshop in New York. He was an Archibald finalist in 2015 and has also been a finalist in the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, Fleurieu Biennale, Dobell Prize for Drawing, Sulman Prize and Wynne Prize. He won the 2014 Paddington Art Prize for landscape.

Finished packing

oil on canvas

After 34 years working at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Steve Peters, the legendary head of the packing room, retired in March. However, he returned to oversee the 2017 Archibald Prize and adjudicate his 26th and final Packing Room Prize.

‘A mutual friend suggested I paint Steve Peters. He and I had a great chat on the phone. He was happy to travel to Bibbenluke in NSW, where I live and work, and sit for me,’ says Lucy Culliton.

‘We both like pink so Steve brought six polo shirts – all different shades of pink. I enjoyed our conversation while I was painting. Steve talked about his job as head storeman at the Gallery, which was an insight. I think it was good for Steve to see the process of making a painting too.’

Born in Sydney in 1966, Culliton is a graduate of the National Art School. Her work is held in the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Macquarie Bank and Parliament House collections. She won the 2006 Portia Geach Memorial Award and is a regular finalist in the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes. This year she is also a finalist in the Wynne.

Lottie and James

oil on linen

Married couple James Drinkwater and Lottie Consalvo are both artists. James is a finalist in this year's Wynne Prize.

'It's impossible not to be completely charmed by them both. There appears a genuine joy in their independent togetherness and a very pleasing asymmetry in James's frenetic energy and Lottie's unruffled calm,' says Jonathan Dalton.

'I sought to capture something of that feeling, but to also introduce an element of theatricality. I subtly shifted the portrait onto a stage, stripping back their living room to a bare set, with their much-loved couch essentially becoming a prop,' he says.

'I brought a sharp focus to the warmth and expression of their faces by contrasting them against a stark background. This also served to leave them a little more exposed and vulnerable, which hopefully makes for a more intimate portrayal. I sincerely believe that as much as a portrait is a picture of someone, a truly beautiful portrait is *about* someone.'

Dalton was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1977, where he got his art degree. In 2009, he won the prestigious portrait award from the Royal Hibernian Academy. He moved to Australia in 2013 from Barcelona, Spain, where he had lived for four years. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

JC

oil on linen with unicorn hologram, dead insects found in garden and other mixed media

Anh Do's subject is actor Jack Charles. 'Jack is a friend who's lived a big life,' says Do.

'The first time I heard of him was in a newspaper article. It introduced him as "esteemed actor, former heroin addict and jailbird, member of the stolen generation, gay man and latter-day Indigenous activist". Jack has shared with me heartbreaking stories of a life filled with sadness and loss, never with self-pity but with humour and grace. In the end, Jack triumphed, becoming a role model and much-loved community leader.'

'Jack's face is full of character. I wanted the painting to capture his gravitas but also the loneliness that has been his constant companion. I mixed wet and semi-dried paint to create a texture that would evoke mountains and waterfalls, tree bark, fallen leaves, clouds and rain to encapsulate the beauty of the Australian landscape inside this beautiful man's face.'

'The reflection at the bottom reaches out into the space between the portrait and the viewer, an invitation to come closer and connect with a fellow human being.'

Born in Vietnam in 1977, Do is a comedian, author and artist. He was an Archibald finalist in 2014 with a portrait of his father.

Paul (Paul Williams in his studio)

acrylic on canvas

Paul Williams is a Sydney-based artist whose work blurs the lines between painting, drawing and sculpture. He has a Master of Fine Art from the College of Fine Arts in Sydney, where he won the university medal in 2007.

‘Paul is an amazing artist and one of my closest friends,’ says Marc Etherington.

‘His studio is located in an industrial area and used to be a trucking office. The walls are covered in wild plaid wallpaper from another era, which has made its way into many of his works. There are thick shaggy rugs, an abundance of well-cared-for plants, a record player, guitars and a warming light that shines through the windows, illuminating his work.’

‘I wanted to capture Paul amongst the creativity, chaos and energy of his welcoming studio interior, which belies the frustration, uncertainty, anxiety and coffee consumption prevalent in his life as an artist,’ says Etherington.

Born in Sydney in 1973, Etherington is a self-taught artist who works out of his garage in the suburb of Gymea making paintings and wooden sculptures that reference his daily life and popular culture. He was a finalist in the 2016 Sulman Prize. This is his third time in the Archibald Prize.

The meal

oil on linen

The subject of Prudence Flint's portrait, Athena Bellas, currently lectures in Screen Studies at the University of Melbourne. She is about to publish her first book, which explores representations of girlhood on screen.

'We have an intense friendship and share many interests. She has been modelling for my paintings since she was 14, and has been inextricably linked to their evolution,' say Flint.

'The idea for the pose came to me last winter, when I was spending a lot of time at home alone. I wanted to capture the bedroom as the ultimate sanctuary. At first I grappled with the details of the pose, trying to convey an uneasy openness full of intent and possibility. "The meal" refers to reconciling the need for solitude and freedom with the appetite for the outside world.'

Born in 1962, Melbourne-based Flint won the 2016 Len Fox Painting Award, the 2010 Portia Geach Memorial Award and the 2004 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize. She has held solo exhibitions across Australia. This is her fifth time as a finalist in the Archibald Prize.

Janet Dawson at the doorway to her studio

oil on board

Janet Dawson is a pioneer of colour field painting (a form of abstract painting) in Australia. In 1973, she became the third woman to win the Archibald Prize, with a portrait of her husband – the actor and playwright Michael Boddy.

‘After meeting Janet at our gallery in Sydney, Stella Downer Fine Art, I decided to travel to Geelong to paint Janet in her studio,’ says Ashley Frost. ‘I was inspired by her Archibald-winning work, which evokes a wonderfully contemplative feeling through the way she captures Boddy’s gesture and gaze.’

‘I wanted to capture something of this intellectual gaze in my study of Janet. I have used a heavy impasto layering of oil paint to evoke the layered complexity of Janet, whose warm and expressive face is just the outer layer of one of our most accomplished and talented artists,’ says Frost.

Born in Sydney in 1967, Frost graduated from the National Art School. He has travelled widely with exhibitions, research trips and residencies in Melbourne, New York, Texas, Brasilia, Beijing, Hong Kong, Tokyo, the Arctic and Antarctica. He won the Kings Art Prize in 2003 and has been a finalist in various art awards. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

The inner stillness of Eileen Kramer

oil on linen

At 102 years old, Eileen Kramer personifies the idea of creativity as a key to longevity and a full, rich life. Born in Sydney in 1914, she is the world's oldest working dancer/choreographer as well as a poet, artist and costume designer. She joined the avant-garde Bodenwieser Ballet in Sydney in 1939 and travelled internationally with them. She has lived in India, Paris, London and New York, only recently returning to Australia at the tender age of 99.

'In the short time I spent with Eileen, I felt that she exudes a sense of inner stillness and is very much at ease with the world, her life and her craft,' says Andrew Lloyd Greensmith. 'Eileen embodies beauty as that intangible thing which cannot be fixed on the surface nor defeated by the wear and tear of age.'

Greensmith is a plastic surgeon and the recent ex-chief of the Department of Craniofacial Surgery at the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, where he co-headed the team that successfully separated conjoined twins Trishna and Krishna in 2009. As a young boy, he was obsessed with art but has only recently pursued painting seriously. He regards himself as an art student with an interest in realism and surrealism.

Twisting Cain with a brown eye while lacking a constitution for darkness

oil on canvas

David Griggs' self-portrait makes reference to the biblical story of Cain, the firstborn son of Adam and Eve, who murdered his brother Abel.

'I don't believe in the duality of man, I believe in infinite complexities. However, in saying that, we all have a twist of Cain in us. My twist, my footprint, might be larger than others,' says Griggs.

'This painting is a dual self-portrait – not good or evil, more like sanity and that flipside word that needs to be talked about more: madness.'

Griggs says that he decided to create a self-portrait for two reasons. 'The first is the idea that painting one's self, the artist, gives power back to the artist – a small political ideal needed in the public arena. Secondly, I wanted to depict that twist I mention and explore my own darkness while painting with humour, colour and fun.'

Born in Sydney in 1975, Griggs has studios in Sydney and in the Philippine capital of Manila. His first major survey exhibition in Australia will be held at the Campbelltown Arts Centre this year. This is his sixth time as a finalist in the Archibald Prize.

Michael Chaney

oil on canvas

Michael Chaney is a businessman and the current chancellor of the University of Western Australia.

His father, Sir Fred Chaney, was a minister in the Menzies government and his brother, Fred Chaney, is a former deputy Liberal leader. Among other current positions, Chaney is chairman of Woodside Petroleum Limited and chairman of Wesfarmers Limited, where he was managing director from 1992 to 2005.

He was appointed an officer in the Order of Australia in 2004 for service to the business sector, and to the community through his support for a broad range of artistic, cultural and scientific organisations.

Robert Hannaford was commissioned to paint Chaney's portrait by Woodside Petroleum. It was painted in Perth in seven sittings over the course of a week.

'He was a very charming man. We got to know each other quite well. He invited me and my wife Alison to dinner at his house – it was one of the more enjoyable portrait commissions,' says Hannaford.

Born in 1944, Hannaford lives and works near Riverton, South Australia. He has been a finalist in the Wynne and Sulman Prizes and won the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 1990. An Archibald finalist on 19 previous occasions, he has won the People's Choice three times.

Self-portrait

oil on board

‘This self-portrait is a demonstration of self-authorship,’ says Tsering Hannaford.

‘Throughout the history of art, the female form has been represented time and again by male artists as the object of the male gaze. In the case of [the biblical figure] Mary Magdalene her often-eroticised image served to transform a powerful female figure into a controllable representation, becoming a template onto which a society’s attitudes towards women were projected. While centuries have passed, women’s bodies remain a site of discourse for the culture’s attitudes. The pose of my portrait refers to Mary Magdalene paintings for contrast; here I have represented myself as the subject of my own work, and in this way, I claim the freedom of my own representation.’

Born in Adelaide in 1987, Hannaford began painting after finishing a Bachelor in Psychology and a Graduate Diploma in Art History at the University of Adelaide. She is predominantly self-taught but has taken painting intensives in New York and recently in France. She has been a finalist in the Portia Geach Memorial Award four times (highly commended in 2014), and has been hung twice in the Archibald Salon des Refusés. This is her third consecutive year as a finalist in the Archibald Prize.

John Olsen AO, OBE

oil on linen

About 18 years ago, Nicholas Harding faxed Tim Olsen to ask if his father, the great artist John Olsen, might consider sitting for a portrait.

‘John’s irrepressible joie de vivre, in both his personality and work, was something I wanted to paint. This request was politely denied,’ says Harding.

‘Last year, however, after painting Tim for a National Portrait Gallery exhibition, he asked if I’d like to paint John. Then a sitting became impossible with the worsening of John’s wife’s illness. Sadly, just before Christmas, Katherine died.’

‘In January, John had his 89th birthday. He had been involved with his major retrospective at the National Gallery of Victoria, then its imminent opening at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. He was also painting new work for an exhibition in March. It was a time of mortal loss, emotional exhaustion and great achievement. At this profoundly complex moment of his life, with great generosity, John sat for me in his studio.’

Born in England in 1956, Harding came to Australia in 1965.

He won the 2001 Dobell Prize for Drawing and has been a regular finalist in the Wynne and Sulman Prizes. His work also features in this year’s Wynne Prize. This is his 17th time in the Archibald, which he won in 2001.

Untitled (Richard Bell)

oil on board

‘What does white guilt look like? Is there a “hierarchy of oppressions”? Do we live in a nation of roughly equal opportunity? Or do we live in a fantasy land, a cracked cartoon landscape brimming with fairytale myths of freedom and democracy?’ asks Sophia Hewson.

‘The Archibald Prize was named after the founding editor of a magazine [*The Bulletin*] known for its racist editorial declarations; from 1999 until 2005 the prize was sponsored by the Colonial Foundation Trust; and in 96 years “we” have never awarded the prize to a person of colour. It’s a situation for which this work is no remedy,’ says Hewson.

‘What does it mean for us to be participating in a prize that’s never been awarded to a person of colour? For decades, artist and activist Richard Bell has worked to raise these difficult questions and to provocatively, intelligently and playfully challenge our conceptions.’

Born in the UK in 1984, Hewson has exhibited extensively locally and internationally. Last year she released a controversial video work, *Untitled (are you ok bob?)*. This is her third time in the Archibald.

Kungkarangkalpa tjukurpa (Seven Sisters dreaming), a self-portrait

acrylic on linen

‘I hold my father’s story, I hold my mother’s story... [it] doesn’t come out of paper or out of a book. It’s coming out of the ground here,’ said Tjungkara Ken in 2015.

‘When the ancestors painted our tjukurpa (dreaming) on the caves and on their bodies, it was a celebration of our culture, a way of identifying people and places, and a way of continuing our stories. Today, we have new materials and ways but the celebration and commitment to tjukurpa and cultural identity is always the same,’ says Ken.

‘My painting is a self-portrait through Kungkarangkalpa tjukurpa, the Seven Sisters dreaming – a self-portrait of my country. For Anangu, they are one and the same.’

Born in 1969, Ken is the youngest of nine children, to artists Mick Wikilyiri and Paniny Mick from the Amata community in remote South Australia. She has been painting for over 20 years and is an important figure in contemporary Indigenous art from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) region. Her work has been acquired by major institutions and private collections across Australia and the world. She has been a finalist in the Telstra National Aboriginal and Islander Art Awards multiple times. Ken won the 2016 Wynne Prize for a collaborative work with her sisters.

Paul Little

oil on canvas

Paul Little is a well-known Australian businessman and the recently retired chairman of the Essendon Football Club.

‘I met Paul through a mutual friend,’ says Julius Killerby. ‘I have always been an Essendon supporter and jumped at the opportunity to paint his portrait. In the weeks preceding our sitting, I researched Paul’s career and came to respect him for his active work in philanthropy too, most notably through The Little Foundation.’

At the sitting, Killerby took photographs then sketched Little’s face. ‘He seemed to me to possess an unaffected, sincere disposition; the kind of man who would never smile for its own sake,’ says the artist. ‘I attempted to convey this through the application of rigid and impasto brush strokes, underlining his resoluteness. In addition, I cropped the composition tightly and heightened the contrast between the two sides of his face to intensify his gaze.’

Born in 1995, Killerby is a Melbourne-based artist working predominantly with photography and oil paint. His work is often characterised by a sinister psychological intensity. He is in his final year at the Victorian College of the Arts, completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

Heyman

oil on canvas

Kim Leutwyler's subject, Michelle Heyman, is an openly gay athlete who represented Australia at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

'I approached Michelle after we'd both appeared on the *LOTL Magazine* Power List and the *Cosmopolitan* Cosmo Rainbow List, each of which celebrates influential and inspiring LGBTQI+ and allied Australians,' says Leutwyler.

'As a striker for the Matildas and Canberra United, Michelle is one of Australia's most impressive sportswomen. She is passionate about being a role model for kids, and openly speaks out against bullying, encouraging young people to be their authentic selves.'

In her portraits, Leutwyler always tries to incorporate colours that reflect her sitter's personality. 'Michelle is really drawn to greys and bright blues, and likes to wear black and white with little pops of red. I also incorporated a bright cadmium chartreuse, reminiscent of her soccer uniform. I hope this portrait will stimulate a conversation about inclusivity, equality and authenticity,' she says.

Born in the United States in 1984, Leutwyler migrated to Australia in 2012. Based in Sydney, she works in a variety of media. Her current body of work features paintings dealing with images of beauty, gender and queer identity. She was a finalist in the 2015 Archibald Prize.

Liz Laverty

oil on epoxy-coated steel

Elizabeth Laverty and her late husband Colin were among the first art collectors to travel the country and stay in remote Aboriginal communities to visit the art centres and meet the artists of the work they were falling in love with.

Over several decades, they built one of Australia's best collections of Indigenous Australian contemporary art and worked tirelessly to raise money for community health and recreational facilities.

'I didn't know any of this when I first met Liz a year after Colin's death. Prompted by my animation depicting a tragic love story about an elderly couple, we launched into a long conversation about life, love and death. It was easy to feel an instant rapport with Liz, a fellow red-head, because she is a warm, passionate, humble woman,' says Richard Lewer.

'I remember when I asked Liz if I could paint her portrait, her first response was, "Why would you want to paint me, what have I done?"'

Born in New Zealand in 1970, Melbourne-based Lewer was recently included in *The National: new Australian art* and the Dobell Australian Drawing Biennial – *Close to home*. He won the 2016 Basil Sellers Art Award and 2014 Blake Prize. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

Remy QC

acrylic on linen

Remy van de Wiel QC is a renowned Victorian barrister. He successfully represented art restorer Mohamed Aman Siddique, who had been accused of faking Brett Whiteley paintings.

The trial, which took place in Melbourne in 2016, was the longest, most expensive art fraud case in Australia's legal history. In April 2017, Siddique and art dealer Peter Stanley Gant were acquitted.

William H Luke attended the historic, four-week trial and sketched Van de Wiel daily.

'Remy's captivating presence in the courtroom was inspirational. I originally thought I would paint him kitted up in wig and robes, however, as the weeks passed it was his warmth and eccentricity I decided to capture,' says Luke.

'We also sat together in his chambers and I contacted his friends to research his life, discovering a colourful personality outside the depressing, black court environment.'

'During the trial my constant sketching attracted the attention of the judge who confiscated my sketchbook temporarily, with Remy representing me on the courtroom floor to have it returned,' adds Luke.

Born in Melbourne in 1947, Luke has a career in art and design that spans five decades. He has an obsession with making ink and wash portraits in sketchbooks. The courts for him are a smorgasbord of opportunities.

Self-portrait

oil on linen

‘One of the hardest things to paint is a self-portrait,’ says Robert Malherbe. ‘It’s a problem of emotional distance, and understanding that every face has its own unique rhythm. Referring to the study of butterflies, [author Vladimir] Nabokov said it was “the differences that matter”. This is also true of faces; how does my face differ from others?’

Instead of using photographs, Malherbe propped a mirror on a chair and painted directly from life. ‘I didn’t want a “selfie” or an idealised me appealing to an imaginary audience,’ he says. ‘Instead, I wanted a raw image of myself staring back. I wanted to see the face that my sitters see when I paint them.’

Born in Mauritius in 1965, Malherbe immigrated to Australia in 1971. He worked as an animator before travelling and living in Europe for a decade. In 2010, he was awarded the Art Gallery of New South Wales residency at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. He has been a regular finalist in prestigious prizes, including the Wynne Prize, Mosman Art Prize and Paddington Art Prize. In 2016, he won the NSW Parliament Plein Air Painting Prize. This is his second time in the Archibald Prize. He also has a collaborative work in this year’s Sulman Prize.

Aah yeah, that guy

acrylic on canvas

Phil Meatchem's subject, Francis Greenslade, is an actor whose many television credits include *Seachange*, *Winners & losers*, *Blue heelers*, Shaun Micallef's various series, and other comedy sketch shows. He has also appeared in numerous stage productions.

'Francis Greenslade is a household face, not a household name. He's been around for a while but the name won't ring any bells. He's familiar, likeable and I'm a fan,' says Meatchem.

'Francis was quite happy for me to paint his portrait and invited me to his house for a sitting. Tonally, I was inspired by the elegant Oscar-night celebrity portraits by photographer Mark Seliger. I wanted to capture a similar stylish mood in my painting, but with a more humorous edge. Francis lounges "gracefully awkwardly" in his good suit on his favourite sofa. His expression is typical Francis whimsy. My intention was to create an image that makes you smile and matches the character of this talented man.'

Born in Sydney in 1958, Meatchem studied for a year at the Julian Ashton Art School. After a 40-year career as a director of television commercials, he recently took up painting full-time. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

Self-portrait on Friday

acrylic on linen

Vincent Namatjira is a Western Arrernte man from Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and the grandson of legendary artist Albert Namatjira.

‘I’ve painted a picture of me on a Friday at the end of a tough but good week working in my studio at Iwantja Arts,’ he says.

‘Painting is about fighting really; it’s a battle you have every day with the canvas and the paints. You never stop learning, and you always have to be working and thinking as you paint. This painting shows how I feel at the end of the week when I’ve battled hard, and am now ready to spend time with my family,’ says Namatjira.

‘I usually paint world leaders and celebrities who are famous for making decisions that impact on us. So, this artwork is a bit different, it’s more personal – I’m the one that has been making decisions on my canvases about the stories I want to share.’

Namatjira began painting in 2012. Initially he did traditional dot paintings, under the tutelage of his wife Natasha. In 2013, he started painting portraits.

‘I really wanted to find my own way with art-making, the way my grandfather found his way with landscape painting,’ he says.

‘Painting is in my blood, it’s part of our family.’

Portrait of Rupert Myer AO

oil on linen

Rupert Myer is chair of the Australia Council for the Arts and former chair of the National Gallery of Australia, Opera Australia Capital Fund, Kaldor Public Arts Projects and the NGV Foundation. He is also a passionate philanthropist.

‘During our sittings, I encountered a charming, urbane man and enjoyed delightful conversations with him about his life-long passion for the arts. He spoke about Indigenous artist Sally Gabori and the profound effect her work has had on him. The work of hers which I painted, albeit crudely, in the background is one that Rupert had in his Australia Council office,’ says Paul Newton.

‘Rupert used the phrase “the quiet contemplation of the object” to describe his approach to viewing art; a mental space where one allows the artwork time to speak to us. I wanted to make this the theme of my portrait, hoping that his contemplative demeanour might inspire a similar response in others.’

Newton is a well-known, much-commissioned artist. This is his 12th time in the Archibald Prize. In 2001, he won the Packing Room Prize and People’s Choice for his double portrait titled *Roy and HG*. His work appears in institutions such as the National Portrait Gallery and Princeton and Columbia Universities.

John

oil on linen

Renowned actor and director John Bell is chair of the Bouddi Foundation for the Arts, dedicated to supporting and encouraging young artists on the Central Coast of New South Wales. Jordan Richardson met him in 2012 after receiving a grant.

‘John and the Foundation have continued to be supportive so it felt natural to ask to paint him,’ he says.

‘I wanted to paint John lost in thought, something honest that was more than just John Bell the actor. I initially gave him a Rubik’s cube but ended up settling for these little figures that his wife Anna Volska dug up from somewhere. I was amazed at the way a man of such accomplishment took direction from some 24-year-old kid. He was incredibly generous and patient. I hope the portrait captures a glimmer of something beyond the curtain.’

Born in Sydney in 1993, Richardson has a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) from the National Art School. He has been both a finalist and highly commended in the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship. This year he is a finalist in the Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize and the Kilgour Prize. This is his first time in the Archibald Prize.

The mayor of Bondi

oil and acrylic on canvas

In 1958, the sight of a boy knitting was a confronting one.

Today John Macarthur has an international reputation for his unique and colourful knitwear, featured in magazines such as *Vogue* and *Harper's BAZAAR*. In many a discerning woman's closet, from Elle Macpherson's to Miranda Kerr's, is a well-loved John Macarthur knit.

But it was Macarthur's humour and humble disposition that compelled Dee Smart to paint the man fondly known as 'the mayor of Bondi'.

Macarthur's world revolves around colour, his home is a riot of perfectly harmonised, vibrating hues. Smart chose to paint him in monotone to anchor him amongst this joyful riot.

Born in Adelaide in 1966, Smart moved to Melbourne as a teenager to attend the Victorian College of the Arts ballet school. She then studied acting in Sydney and went on to enjoy a successful career in film and television. Homebound with her firstborn daughter 15 years ago, she picked up her first paintbrush. Nights were spent at life drawing classes and days with nappies. Smart's insatiable need to illuminate the human condition has never waned. She describes herself as being 'beyond excited' to be having her first Archibald experience with Macarthur.

Lisa Wilkinson AM

oil on linen

Peter Smeeth's portrait of television presenter and journalist Lisa Wilkinson is a companion piece to his painting of her husband Peter FitzSimons, which was selected for the 2010 Archibald Prize.

'Appearing on television every weekday morning makes Lisa one of the most recognisable people in Australia and an obvious choice for the Archibald Prize. Being such a high achiever and a great role model for women adds to her appeal as a subject,' says Smeeth.

'Television brings its subjects into your living room – and here, I have done that literally as if Lisa is in the viewer's space. Three important things in Lisa's life are her family, television presenting and print journalism so I have placed her between a television and a magazine, while her family members are reflected on the screen. I wanted to convey the idea that when Lisa is not on television, her family is her focus.'

Born in Griffith, NSW in 1949, Smeeth won the 2011 Sulman Prize and has been in the Salon des Refusés five times. This is his fourth time in the Archibald Prize. His 2007 painting of soprano Amelia Farrugia remains the only portrait in the history of the Archibald to incorporate sound.

Elizabeth St over Hyde Park

oil and acrylic on linen

The subject of Gerard Smith's portrait is publisher Helen Littleton, head of non-fiction at HarperCollins Australia.

'Helen and I go back to when we were students together at the University of New England,' says Smith. 'When I first approached her about the Archibald, I met her at the HarperCollins offices, overlooking Hyde Park. The strong morning light streamed in and I was struck by how it played with the human and architectural surfaces in front of me.'

The painting is half acrylic and half oil paint. 'I used acrylic for the office background because manufactured surfaces are flat and unforgiving, and oils for Helen, as I wanted to emphasise the contrast between the architecture of the building and the more layered, biological architecture of a living human form. It was also important to me not to remove her from the environment that has allowed her to be so successful as a publisher,' says Smith.

Born in Sydney, Smith is a self-taught artist. He developed his technique while working in an art supplies shop and testing products. He currently works full-time as a graphic designer. He has taught art classes and in 2008 published *The weekend artist*, a beginner's guide to creating basic artworks.

John Bell at home

oil on canvas

Loribelle Spirovski met distinguished actor and director John Bell earlier this year when he and her partner, classical pianist Simon Tedeschi, were performing *Enoch Arden* (Tennyson's epic poem set to music by Richard Strauss).

'It should come as no surprise that painting a man such as John Bell was a daunting experience. He's renowned for his work with Bell Shakespeare (the company he founded the year I was born) and I was immediately drawn to that powerful, chiselled face with its deep-set features and inscrutable personality,' says Spirovski.

'When he sat on the antique chair in the home he shares with his wife and fellow actor Anna Volska, he occupied the space with a contented regality and it was clear that any costume or prop would be superfluous.'

Spirovski opted for a minimal background 'to draw the viewer to that intense gaze, while the flesh colours are heightened by the distinctive gleam of the Australian sun'.

Born in the Philippine capital of Manila in 1990, Spirovski studied at the College of Fine Arts in Sydney. Known for her portraits, she has been a finalist in the Portia Geach Memorial Art Award and the Black Swan Art Prize. This is her first time in the Archibald Prize.

Self-portrait as new mum

acrylic on wood panel

‘Before and after the birth of my beautiful daughter, I seemingly read every book, blog and web page available to help prepare myself for a newborn. In reality, none of this could capture the all-consuming shock of having a baby, and her incredible beauty,’ says Vanessa Stockard.

‘In response, I completed a series of self-portraits to capture the experience of being a new mum.’

Stockard likes to combine drawn elements with painterly brush strokes, as she has done in this work. Here, she juxtaposes what she describes as ‘the less-controlled pools of transparent shadow against hard planes. In approaching this self-portrait, I used a combination of maintaining control and letting go – a concept I grapple with each day,’ she says.

Born in Sydney in 1975, Stockard graduated from the College of Fine Arts in Sydney in 1999. She works from a studio in the Southern Highlands in New South Wales where she lives with her husband William and their daughter Isobel. She frequently paints the natural world around her and delicate still-life works. This is her first time in the Archibald Prize.

Homage to Peter Powditch

oil and mixed media on board

Noel Thurgate chose Peter Powditch as a subject out of admiration for his achievements as an artist – ‘as well as the undeniable fact that he has a great head’.

‘The assemblage of materials and textures in the painting are a tribute to Peter’s magician-like abilities with masonite, empty cigarette packets and other found objects,’ says Thurgate.

‘Peter is a superb draftsman, especially when it comes to drawing the human figure. He is one of those rare artists able to combine the complexities of the largely unseen inner dynamics of the figure with the visible external contours; and do it with incredible sensitivity and simplicity – just curved lines and straight lines.’

‘As someone who has spent a lifetime drawing from the figure and teaching life drawing, I can confidently say that it is bloody hard! The entire composition of this painting is underscored by a similar interplay of straight and curved lines.’

Born in 1955, Thurgate lives and works in Berrima in the NSW Southern Highlands. He has over 30 years’ experience exhibiting and teaching. This included nine years as head of drawing at the National Art School, Sydney. He was an Archibald finalist for three consecutive years from 1977.

The scent of rain (self-portrait)

oil on copper

‘This self-portrait offered me a means of exploring my own mortality through the immediacy of working from life on the equally ephemeral support of copper,’ says Natasha Walsh.

‘Additionally, it enabled me to explore the relationship between the internal sense of self and the external appearance, which can define us in another’s eyes.’

‘I am struck by the otherness of my appearance, simultaneously familiar and strange, never seen directly but through another lens, such as a camera or a mirror,’ says Walsh.

‘Painting enables me to claim this appearance, as the external is diffused intimately through my internal self into paint.’

‘The imaginary impression of a cloudy sky is even more revealing of my internal self, hinting at layers brewing beneath the surface, like the threat of rain.’

Born in Sydney in 1994, Walsh graduated with a Masters in Fine Art at the National Art School this year. Her work is currently being shown as a selected finalist in the Scottish Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. In 2016, she was highly commended in the Portia Geach Memorial Award and in 2015 she won the Emerging Artist Prize in the Mosman Art Prize. This is her second time in the Archibald Prize.

Robert Forster

oil on linen

I love The Go-Betweens
But Australia is bright
The Go-Betweens didn't wear sunglasses to be cool
They wore them to see
And what did they see?
The Go-Betweens saw everything

Looking at Robert Forster I see
Six-foot-three of absorbency
Electric literary guitar
Red-hot Brisbane bricks
And French ultramarine stovepipes
Shaping rhythmic legs

Blue shoes aboard
Yellow paving the way
The poet walks
Towards Oz art rock sunshine
The genre he invented and perfected
Simultaneously

what studied at the National Art School. He has held 20 solo exhibitions nationally and internationally, including a survey exhibition at the National Art School Gallery. He is represented in numerous public collections, including the National Gallery of Australia. The recipient of various prizes and residencies, he has been a finalist in the Wynne Prize, the Sulman Prize and the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize.

Protagonist, antagonist (Thomas M Wright)

oil on canvas

Thomas M Wright is an award-winning director, writer, actor and producer. He founded the acclaimed theatre company Black Lung. His acting credits include Jane Campion's *Top of the lake* and the films *Everest*, *Balibo*, *HHhH* and Warwick Thornton's upcoming *Sweet country*.

Marcus Wills met Wright through a mutual friend and thought he'd make a great subject for a painting he had been contemplating. The sitting took place at Wills' studio where he set up a scene reminiscent of a crime drama, with Wright as the protagonist.

'I hoped to load the painting with things which seemed to be symbolic or important – some things are, whereas others are not,' says Wills. 'I thought to show Tom as if he's not dressed for anything, in a living space and in the middle of something. I hope when people contemplate the scene they'll make their own story of what they find.'

Born in Kaniva, Victoria in 1972, Wills graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1995 and was awarded the 2000 Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship. He has been a finalist in the Sulman and Wynne Prizes. This is his fourth time in the Archibald Prize, which he won in 2006.

Facing the canvas

oil on canvas

In her self-portrait, Madeleine Winch paints herself surrounded by 'the tools of her trade'.

'As I ponder the empty canvas, so many forces come into play. Each new canvas presents a fresh challenge. Once the idea is conceived, the process of transferring it to the blank surface begins. Innumerable decisions must be made. Guided by my intuition, the painting gradually takes form. My hunger to delve and explore takes over,' says Winch.

'Painting for me is a constant process of self-questioning and self-discovery, both impassioned and demanding. With my trusted materials and tools at hand, in the seclusion of my studio, endless creative possibilities emerge.'

Winch is a painter and printmaker with studios in Sydney and Central West NSW. She has been a finalist in the Portia Geach Memorial Award on five occasions, winning the People's Choice twice as well as being highly commended and commended. In 2004, she was a winner of the Kedumba Drawing Award. She has also been a finalist in the Sulman Prize and Dobell Prize for Drawing. Her work is represented in collections held by the National Gallery of Victoria and regional galleries in NSW. This is her first time in the Archibald Prize.

ANZ is proud to be the presenting partner of the Archibald Prize – Australia’s most prestigious and popular art competition – for the eighth year running.

Celebrating Australian and New Zealand artists, the Archibald Prize provides an artistic record of a who’s who of our local culture and community.

This important initiative forms part of our support of the community, the thriving arts sector and our customers.

Fred Ohlsson

Group Executive, Australia

ANZ

Presenting partner

