

Archibald Prize 2024

Art
Gallery
NSW

Learning resource



About this resource

This learning resource is designed to engage students with the 2024 Archibald Prize and inspire art-making, critical thinking and discussion about portrait painting. Using a selection of focus artworks from the prize, it brings together an analysis of the winning work, artwork images and wall labels, and curriculum-based strategies for making and responding.

Use this resource in the classroom or in conjunction with a visit to the [2024 Archibald Prize](#) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (8 June – 8 September 2024) or [on tour at regional galleries](#) across Australia.

K–6 questions and activities encourage students to identify, discuss and experiment with different techniques, media and subject matter within portraiture. These making and responding ideas help students connect the artworks to their own world.

7–12 questions and activities are designed to support student analysis of the artworks using the frames and conceptual framework. These prompts encourage critical thinking about the artists' practices and the relationships between artists, artworks, audiences and the world we live in.

How to read a portrait

A portrait can be read or understood in many ways. These strategies and questions can be used to analyse and interpret portraits, helping to guide the eye and reveal the story of the sitter.

Facial expression

What emotion is being conveyed by the sitter?
Where is the sitter looking?

Body language

Is the sitter shown full-length or close-up?
What does their pose communicate to us?

Clothing and hairstyle

What is the sitter wearing and how have they styled their hair? What do these things tell us about their personality, profession or status?

Setting

Where is the portrait set? What is the background? What does the setting communicate to us about the sitter?

Objects and symbols

Are there any objects depicted in the artwork?
What might they symbolise, and do they provide any information about the sitter?

Composition

What scale is used? How is the sitter positioned within the artwork, and what is their relationship to other elements in the work? Where is your eye drawn, and what might this communicate about the sitter?

Artistic style and technique

What colours and media have the artist selected to create the portrait? Is it realistic or abstract? Do these artistic choices and the artist's own style tell us something about the sitter or context?

Context

When and where was the portrait created?
Who is the intended audience? What is the purpose of the portrait?

Analysing the winner

Laura Jones
Tim Winton



In 2016, Laura Jones undertook an artist residency to study the bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef, leading to her exhibition *Bleached*. Afterwards, she met acclaimed author and conservationist Tim Winton at an environmental advocacy event.

'I was amazed by the humility of this great novelist, who has enchanted generations of Australian readers,' says Jones, a four-time Archibald finalist who is also in this year's Sulman Prize.

'Last year, I watched his ABC documentary, *Ningaloo Nyinggulu*, about the fight to save Ningaloo Reef. It was beautiful and terrifying. In a speech, Tim said the lack of action on climate change hasn't been challenged enough in the arts. I was stunned to discover a portrait of Tim had never been a finalist in the Archibald Prize. Then I found out why – he was a reluctant subject,' says Jones.

'When I flew to Perth for a sitting, the Great Barrier Reef was suffering its fifth mass bleaching event in eight years. Tim was warm and witty. We spoke about the historical relationship between printmaking and political activism. I approached his portrait as if it was a monotype, using thin brushstrokes and letting the paint bleed across the canvas like ink into paper. Dreamy yet direct.'

K-6 discussion questions

- Look closely at this portrait of Tim Winton by Laura Jones. Note how Winton's face has been painted in more detail than his body and the background. Observe his facial expression, the direction of his gaze and the way he is standing. Describe the colours in this painting and the feeling or mood they evoke. Based on your observations, how do you think Winton is feeling in this moment? What do you think he's thinking about?
- Jones's subject is Australian author and environmentalist Tim Winton. Jones and Winton are both passionate advocates for the environment and express their concern and love for the natural world through their art and life: Winton through his writing and advocacy, and Jones through her painting. Consider different art forms, such as visual arts, music, performance, literature and film. Which form would you choose to say something about the environment and why?

K-6 activities

- Notice the gaze of the sitter in this portrait. What do you think he's looking at? How would you feel if he was looking directly at you instead? Create two similar portraits of the same person: one in which your sitter has a far-off gaze and another in which they look straight at the viewer. Present your portraits to the class and brainstorm adjectives that describe each of them. Do you notice any common themes or types of words being used to describe each work? Which portrait do you prefer and why?
- Jones's choice of sitter reveals her interest and passion for environmental care. What about the environment are you most passionate about? Create a self-portrait that tells audiences something about your particular concern or love for the natural world. Think about the setting of your portrait, your expression and what symbols you might include. Experiment with different art materials found in your classroom to find those best suited to tell your story.

7–12 discussion questions

- Laura Jones is interested in capturing moments of wonder and vulnerability in her art as a way to convey the fragile relationships between people and nature. 'I have always turned my concern for the environment into art,' she writes. Research the artist's practice and discuss how she expresses these concerns through composition, subject matter and technique. Do you see evidence of this approach in this portrait? Discuss the idea of vulnerability and wonder in relation to this work.
- Jones was struck by one of Tim Winton's speeches in which he said that 'the lack of action on climate change hasn't been challenged enough in the arts'. Do you agree with Winton? How do you think artists and art organisations can or should contribute to raising awareness of climate change? How do you think Jones's winning Archibald portrait will contribute to this discussion?

7–12 activities

- During the sitting for this portrait, Winton and Jones talked about the connection between printmaking and political activism. Browse [prints in the Art Gallery's collection](#) that convey a political message or have been used as a form of political activism. Taking inspiration from these works, experiment with printmaking techniques to create a portrait of someone you admire who has fought for a social or political cause. Think about how you will represent this person and what your portrait communicates about their achievements and beliefs. How do you think your artwork would differ if it were made in another medium?
- Jones says that she approached this painting as if it was a monotype. What do you think she means by this? Research the definition of 'monotype' and browse [examples in the Art Gallery's collection](#). Based on your research, note the ways in which Jones's painting references a monotype. Experiment by creating a portrait of a classmate using paint on canvas that echoes elements of this printing technique. Think about the consistency of paint you use and the effects of bleeding and blending. What are the challenges of using this technique to depict a person? What mood or effect does it create?

Focus artworks

- Thea Anamara Perkins
Mum (Hetti)
- Mostafa Azimitabar
Angus McDonald
- Yoshio Honjo
Akira Isogawa
- Tim Owers
*On the bench and on the cusp
(portrait of Cortnee Vine)*
- Kris Andrew Small
New
- Digby Webster
Trevor my filmmaker with camera



Thea Anamara Perkins
Mum (Hetti)

For this year's Archibald Prize, Thea Anamara Perkins has chosen to paint her mother, Hetti Perkins, an art curator and writer.

'I think she's extraordinary. She's my mum, so I get to talk her up!' says Perkins, a four-time Archibald finalist, who is also represented in this year's Wynne Prize.

'She's a champion of the arts and it has been a privilege to be surrounded by the many artists and arts workers who are drawn to her and her nurturing ways, many of whom we now consider family.

'In her work as a curator, she has set a precedent of hard work, consultation and the practice of putting artists first. I want to celebrate curators and people working in the arts, because their contributions are the reason we understand, platform and value First Nations art,' says Perkins.

'Mum is a very strong woman and has captained our family's little ship through troubled waters. She is now living in Mparntwe/Alice Springs, and I wanted to include Country as another figure in her portrait.'



K–6 discussion questions

- Observe the colour and expressiveness of this painting's sitter and landscape. What different elements can you see? How would you describe the colours? Notice how the artist has used tonal variation to create a realist impression. Colours can evoke a particular environment. Does this remind you of somewhere you have been?
- Thea Anamara Perkins has a close relationship with sitter Hetti Perkins, her mum. Identify how Thea's love and admiration is being expressed. She endearingly speaks about her mum's role in the arts. When we look at art, it can make us reflect on who and what is special to us. Talk about a person or place that holds important meaning to you. Discuss their qualities. How would you convey these through a portrait?

K–6 activities

- Experiment by creating your own unique style and colour palette. Use different techniques like repetition, pattern, texture and movement to build the composition of a self-portrait.
- Create a portrait of someone you love. What kind of background would you include to celebrate them? It could be their favourite place or a memory you have. Think about their facial expressions, body language and characteristics.

7–12 discussion questions

- Thea Anamara Perkins considers both her mum, Hetti Perkins, and the landscape as figures within this scene; both hold personal meaning. Is a portrait different to a landscape painting? Discuss the differences. What parts of the painting stand out to you? Name the techniques Thea has used to achieve this. Observe and describe the brushstrokes. Are they textured, layered or sweeping? How do the brushstrokes create a certain mood in this painting?
- Notice the natural beauty and vegetation in this landscape. What visual characteristics reveal what kind of climate it is? Look at the scenery and describe an environment that would be opposite to this. Discuss the different ways a landscape can shape our identity and relationship to a place.

7–12 activities

- Take influence from Thea Anamara Perkins and experiment with unique brushstrokes to create a landscape painting. Divide an A4 page into four sections and paint each quarter utilising different techniques. Consider how you would create the allusion of motion and dynamism using fluid strokes. In contrast, experiment with ways to show depth and perspective.
- Compare Perkins' Archibald and Wynne Prize entries. What are their similarities and differences? How would you describe Perkins' artistic style? Create a portrait and a landscape that each demonstrate your own style of art-making. Think about the consistency of your approach in both works. How would you describe your artistic style?

Yoshio Honjo
Akira Isogawa

Fashion designer Akira Isogawa is renowned not just in Australia but internationally. His collections have been shown in Paris, his outfits have been exhibited in Australian museums, and he has worked as a costume designer for Sydney Dance Company and The Australian Ballet. Like his portrait subject, artist and tattooist Yoshio Honjo was born in Japan. The three-time Archibald Prize finalist met the designer at the opening of the 2022 Archibald exhibition, and they have since become friends.

'To come to Australia on his own at 21 and work so hard towards success is extremely brave. He has such a great personality and is very funny, which I have tried to capture,' says Honjo. 'This year, Akira turns 60 and it's the year of the *kinoe-tatsu* (wood dragon). I have included that dragon in the portrait to reflect Akira's strength and resilience.'

Honjo has referenced the woodblock printing aesthetic from Japan's Edo period (1603–1868), from which he regularly draws inspiration.



K–6 discussion questions

- In this portrait, Yoshio Honjo depicts the Japanese-born fashion designer Akira Isogawa. What clues in this artwork reveal Isogawa's identity? If you were to have your portrait created by Honjo, what symbols or clues would you want included to reveal something about you?
- Notice the elaborate outfit worn by Isogawa in this portrait, a reference to traditional samurai armour of Japan's medieval past. What do you think it would feel like to wear? Why do you think the artist has depicted his sitter in this costume? Discuss the role of costume in portraiture and what clothing might reveal about the sitter.

K–6 activities

- Honjo wanted to show Isogawa's funny personality in this portrait. Do you know someone who is funny? Can you remember a time when this person made you laugh? Create a portrait of this person by placing them in this scene. Think about how you can best represent their funny personality in the composition.
- Isogawa is a well-known fashion designer in Australia and internationally. Collect images of his fashion designs and create a catalogue of his work to celebrate him turning 60 this year. Write an introduction to the catalogue to commemorate his achievements.

7–12 discussion questions

- In his art practice, Yoshio Honjo often draws on the woodblock printing aesthetic from Japan's Edo period (1603–1868). Browse the [Japanese woodblock prints from this period in the Art Gallery's collection](#). What elements from these works can you see in Honjo's portrait? Consider composition, line, pattern, colour and symbols in your answer.
- Akira Isogawa has also been a subject in previous Archibald Prize entries. Compare this work to [Akira](#) by Jessica Ashton and [Akira](#) by James Cochran. What do each of these portraits communicate about Isogawa? Seen together, do you have a better understanding of the sitter?

7–12 activities

- Honjo included the image of the dragon to represent Isogawa's strength and resilience. Think about a person who is close to you. What are their main attributes? Create a portrait of this person and reference their character through symbolism.
- Research [ink paintings in the Art Gallery's collection](#). How have artists experimented with this medium? What are the strengths and challenges of this technique? Create a body of work that experiments with this method of painting.

Tim Owers

On the bench and on the cusp
(portrait of Cortnee Vine)

Cortnee Vine plays soccer for the Australian women's national football team, known as the Matildas, and for Sydney FC in the country's top-division women's competition.

'Like many Australian households, my family marvelled at the achievements of the Matildas during the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup and were particularly mesmerised by Cortnee's skill and athleticism. When she secured her team's quarterfinal victory against France by scoring the winning goal in a gruelling penalty shoot-out, we joined four million viewers in an eruption of celebration,' says Tim Owers, a first-time Archibald finalist.

'Cortnee started that game on the sidelines. After 104 minutes on the bench, she was brought onto the field and, in a quick sequence of events, her life was transformed. The bench became a threshold, a cusp; a new life began the moment she stepped off it.

'I sought to create a painting that portrayed the moments before Cortnee came off the bench, but in an urban setting, dressed in casual clothing, to allude to the impact on her personal life. I asked her to sit on the garden bench at my studio for 104 minutes as I worked to capture her, gazing out in anticipation.'



K–6 discussion questions

- This painting depicts Australian soccer player Cortnee Vine, who plays for the Matildas. What clues in this painting help communicate who she is? Why do you think the artist Tim Owers has chosen not to depict Vine in her recognisable Matildas uniform or on the soccer field?
- What time of day do you think is depicted in this painting? Can you tell where the light is coming from? Look closely at the artist's use of white paint across Vine's face, shirt, window pane and on the pebbles below to determine your answer. Notice the direction and thickness of the brushstrokes, and the way colours are placed next to each other. How does the light in which a sitter is painted impact the way we might see or think about them?

K–6 activities

- In this portrait, Vine is away from the soccer pitch. Instead, she's been depicted in a moment of stillness, resting on a bench. What would this painting look like if she were shown in action? How would this change the mood of this work and the way you see her? Create your own portrait of Vine that shows her in motion, running or jumping for the ball. Think about her facial expression and pose. How does your portrait convey speed or movement?
- Who is your favourite athlete? What do you imagine they do when they're not playing sport? Imagine this person going about the tasks of everyday life, such as shopping for groceries or brushing their teeth. Create an artwork that depicts your favourite athlete in one of these imagined scenarios. First, make a drawing of the setting and then, on a separate piece of paper, paint a full-length portrait of this athlete as you imagine them when they're not in uniform. Cut your portrait out and paste it onto your drawing. How does your artwork compare to images you've seen of your favourite athlete in action?

7–12 discussion questions

- Like many Australians, Tim Owers and his family were captivated by the skill and triumph of the Matildas during the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. Does this also describe you and your family? When you look at this painting, does it evoke or connect you to any of these memories or feelings of excitement? Can a calm and reflective portrait still convey or hint at a sentiment of celebration?
- Owers asked Cortnee Vine to sit for him for 104 minutes, the same period of time she sat on the bench before going out on the field and scoring the winning goal against France in the 2023 Women's World Cup quarterfinal game. Notice the reference to this time in the top right-hand corner of the painting. Do you think Owers is successful in his tribute to this moment in time? Consider his sitter's facial expression and pose or the title of the work when answering. What do you think the experience for the artist and sitter was during this 104-minute sitting?

7–12 activities

- Create a body of work that examines portraiture and the act of waiting. As research, browse [artworks in the Art Gallery's collection](#) that address this theme and observe people around your school or neighbourhood in various stages of waiting, such as at the bus stop or in line at the canteen. Make preparatory drawings based on your research. For your final work, think about your sitter's pose and facial expression. What is your subject's emotional response to waiting – for example, contemplation, irritation or boredom – and how is it conveyed?
- Note Vine's gaze in this portrait. Is it direct or indirect? What do you imagine she's thinking about? Imagine a scenario for Vine's thoughts – the winning goal referenced in this work, a training session or perhaps the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris. Create an artwork that depicts Vine in this imagined scene. How does it compare to Owers' portrait?



Kris Andrew Small *New*

Kris Andrew Small's subject is actor Will McDonald, whose screen credits include the hit Netflix remake of the TV series *Heartbreak High* and the forthcoming series *Thou shalt not steal*, set in Central and South Australia during the 1980s.

'I wanted to paint Will as he is not only an incredible actor, but part of a new generation of artists, who tell stories that represent Australia without using the stereotypical norms we have become accustomed to. In 2024, we have more to say and so much diverse history to share through stories and images that are set in Australia but feel accessible to a wide group of people here and overseas. I feel my work sits in that world too,' says Small, a first-time Archibald finalist, based in Sydney.

Small's work explodes with colour, typography, pattern and collage. He uses exuberant, abstract imagery to explore social issues, particularly to do with the queer community.

'While this portrait is very much within my style, I wanted it to feel even more joyous and optimistic than normal,' he says. 'It suggests that the future of art in Australia is bright, energetic and diverse.'

K-6 discussion questions

- In this portrait, Kris Andrew Small uses and references a variety of materials and art techniques. Can you see and list them all? Why do you think the artist chose to work in this way?
- This painting depicts the Australian actor Will McDonald. Imagine this is a portrait of him at work, acting in a movie scene. Look closely at his gaze, facial expression and body gesture. What is he looking at? Is he in the middle of a conversation? What do you think he's saying?

K-6 activities

- In this portrait, Small aims to project a feeling that 'art in Australia is bright, energetic and diverse'. Do you think he has been successful? Create a portrait of a classmate that reflects optimism and joy. Think about what colours, lines and shapes might help portray this feeling or outlook.
- Small is known for using bright colours and abstract forms in his artwork. Be inspired by Small's approach and create an abstract self-portrait using vibrant colours. What do your colour choices say about your personality or mood? Do they correspond to the expression on your face? Display your work and see if your classmates can identify the purpose of your self-portrait.

7–12 discussion questions

- Observe and describe the artist's artistic approach in this work. Think about the composition, colour and artistic style. Why has the artist chosen to depict his sitter in this way? Do you think this aesthetic or visual approach is a reflection of the artist, the sitter or the intended audience? How would this portrait differ if it was painted in a realistic style?
- '[This painting] suggests that the future of art in Australia is bright, energetic and diverse,' states Kris Andrew Small. Do you agree? What elements in this work contribute to Small's aim? How is the idea of the future implied or communicated? How is this statement also a reference to the sitter, Will McDonald?

7–12 activities

- Why do you think the artist has titled this portrait *New*? Create a portrait with the same title. Who have you chosen to portray and what is your artistic approach? What about this work is 'new' to you?
- 'In 2024, we have more to say and so much diverse history to share,' says Small. Do you agree with his point of view? Do you think he has achieved this in the portrait of McDonald? Research Small's art practice for inspiration and create a body of work based on this belief through your own perspective.

Digby Webster

Trevor my filmmaker with camera

Trevor Graham is an award-winning documentary filmmaker. He is best known for his film portrait of native title rights campaigner Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo, *Mabo, Mabo: life of an island man*, which won an AFI Award for Best Documentary in 1997. His recent films include *Make hummus not war* and *Monsieur Mayonnaise* about artist Mirka Mora's family escaping the Holocaust.

'Trevor is now my filmmaker. He is making a film about me and my girlfriend Camille,' says Digby Webster, who was a finalist with Neil Tomkins in the 2020 Archibald Prize for their dual self-portrait.

'I wanted to paint Trevor because he is now my friend. He is kind. He is friendly. He is a guy who never, ever stops holding the camera, and I wanted to put all of that on canvas.

'When I was painting Trevor, I was trying to find the best way to describe him. He has a very unique style. I like having a film made about me. I think it's beautiful. It's not about acting; it's about playing myself on screen. My girlfriend Camille likes being on camera too and that makes me happy.'



K-6 discussion questions

- Digby Webster's unique style of painting features flat areas of bright colour, applied with big expressive brushstrokes. Look closely at this painting and find these sections of colour. What shapes do you see? Can a face be broken down into geometric shapes?
- Notice what the sitter, filmmaker Trevor Graham, is carrying. According to Webster, Graham 'never, ever stops holding the camera'. In this painting, who do you think Graham is recording with his camera, the audience or the artist? How does the camera represent the sitter? If you had your portrait painted, what personal item would you hold in your hand?

K-6 activities

- Webster creates portraits of people he connects to and knows personally. He aims to capture the qualities he admires in his sitters, such as kindness and creativity. Think of a family member or friend and write a letter to this person listing the qualities you admire in them most. Using a range of coloured pencils, textas and crayons, create a portrait of this person that captures these qualities.
- The two colours Webster uses in the background are a reference to a visit his sitter once took to Central Australia. How do these colours refer to or capture this region? Take influence from Webster and create a self-portrait located in a place special to you. Simplify the background by using only two colours to depict this place. Include an object that represents who you are, just like the camera represents Graham in this work .

7–12 discussion questions

- Unlike some of his earlier works, Digby Webster painted this portrait on an easel rather than on a table or the floor. Think about the artist's posture and movement while creating this work. What do you think the physical demands on the body might be? What are the advantages of working on an easel compared to a flat surface? Do you see evidence of movement in the work? Can making art be a workout?
- Webster talks about his experience being filmed as the subject of Trevor Graham's documentary film, saying, 'It's not about acting; it's about playing myself on screen.' Do you think sitters always play themselves when having their portrait painted, or are they acting? Discuss the performative aspects of portraiture.

7–12 activities

- Create a portrait of someone close to you. What object will they hold, and why is it important to include it in the portrait? Think carefully about the use of colour, the background and how the sitter is positioned. Write a short story about this person to display next to the artwork.
- Webster uses vibrant colours to express emotion and capture the essence of a sitter. Make a body of work that uses colour as the primary element for conveying feeling or mood. As the basis for your work, create a colour chart that associates colours with emotions. Experiment with hues, tones and saturation. Think about what your colour choices communicate about the subject you have depicted.

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