

Archibald Prize 2018 celebrity podcast transcript: Rove McManus tour

Speaker 1: Welcome to the 2018 Archibald podcast tour, thanks to ANZ.

Julian Morrow: Welcome to this podcast tour for the 2018 Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The Archibald is for many Australians, the most prestigious, most popular, and most controversial art prize. It's an open competition and the prize is awarded to 'a portrait painted from life with a subject known to the artist having at least one live sitting with the artist'. Subjects of the Archibald tend to be individuals who, as the will of JF Archibald, himself, put it, are distinguished in arts, letters, science or politics. And in this podcast, some distinguished Australians will tell you what they think about the portraits, which have been chosen for the 2018 Archibald exhibition. Russell Crowe talked with artist and Archibald judge, Ben Quilty. And Rove McManus, Yumi Stynes and Rachel Perkins will talk with me, Julian Morrow, as we walk through the Art Gallery of New South Wales for the 2018 Archibald Prize.

As we move through each room, we'll announce each artwork and its exhibition number, which you can see on the gallery wall high above the painting. When we're about to move on to next artwork, you'll hear this sound [bell rings]. If you'd like to spend more time with any work, just pause the podcast. We'll move through each room from left to right. In this episode, I'm speaking with Rove McManus about his impressions of the 2018 Archibald Prize.



Image: Joanna Braithwaite *Hall of fame – portrait of Pat Corrigan*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The tour will start in room one. We will begin at painting number six.
- Julian Morrow: We're in room number one of the Archibald 2018, Rove McManus...
- Rove McManus: Present.
- Julian Morrow: We're looking at painting number six. This is called *Hall of fame* - portrait, indeed, of Pat Corrigan, by Joanna Braithwaite. It's a bargain painting, isn't it? You're getting 12, 13 paintings for the price of one.
- Rove McManus: Here's what I love about Pat. Pat's been approached to have his portrait painted for the Archibald, and he's gone 'You know what I've got like a gazillion portraits of myself already. Why not one more? Why not one more for the Archibald? We have here, a man standing in front of a bunch of pictures of himself. This is my dream. I've longed to just be standing in front of just a myriad of different portraits of myself.
- Julian Morrow: I would have thought Channel 10 looked like this at various times with your portraits, wouldn't it?
- Rove McManus: Look, it should have, it should have. Even to this day. I love we can see at the top right-hand corner a bit of puffy jacket action, the man's ahead of his time. But it's an interesting choice by Joanna, the artist. Because, I guess what she has to do is, she has to paint Pat in whatever style she has and she's obviously gone for something that's relatively realistic and kind of looks like him. But then she's going to have to paint the other portraits around him, I guess to match what they would like. Man that's big call. That's a tough decision.
- Julian Morrow: There's going to be 12 or 13 artists looking very closely at this one.
- Rove McManus: Do you get royalties off of someone painting your painting?
- Julian Morrow: There's going to be as many lawyers as artists involved.
- Rove McManus: This is like an Escher drawing, it's just going in on itself. And if you're here and don't understand that reference I can't help you. We're in a gallery. Google is available in the art gallery
- Julian Morrow: Exactly right.



Image: Noel Thurgate *Elisabeth Cummings in her studio at Wedderburn, 1974 and 2018*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 51.
- Julian Morrow: Okay, let's have a look at painting number 51. Now this is called *Elisabeth Cummings in her studio at Wedderburn, 1974 and 2018*. So again, two portraits in one in this one. It's by Noel Thurgate. Rove, what do you make of this?
- Rove McManus: I love this one. I had seen pictures of some of the works before I came in and this one actually leapt out at me because this is one of the reasons you come to a gallery and see things... I was gonna say in the flesh but that's not quite the right term. Because...
- Julian Morrow: Because there's so much going on isn't it? It's not just the painting.
- Rove McManus: Yeah, it's using so many different mediums. I can actually see proper sticks, actual branches. You've got a bit of scribbly gum painted on and then some actual scribbly gum bark, and just the texture on her hands. I mean, my hands look like that now... I'm guessing the early '74 version of Elisabeth is what we see creepily peering in...
- Julian Morrow: Hiding in the left there, yes...
- Rove McManus: Through the actual fly screen, and again the frame itself is kind of mismatched. It's not a perfect square. Parts of it are missing. Other parts are jutting outside the frame. Even her herself, it's like she's a wood panel that's on it. And then this great blank canvas behind her, herself. Little jars, actual paint brushes, this is just an exquisite piece. This has suddenly leapt out as a favourite of mine from just having come in to see it, which I would not have expected, as much as it's a great piece, just I love all the different elements to it. It really makes it a special piece of the exhibit I think.
- Julian Morrow: And Rove McManus I've gotta say after all these years doing interviews on live television on Channel 10, after that description you should have been on the ABC doing the arts coverage. That's amazing work!
- Rove McManus: What are you gonna expect, 'She's holding a paint brush. Looks tops!'
- Julian Morrow: I feel like I've learned something.
- Rove McManus: We used the word composition once
- Julian Morrow: I feel like I've learned something. That was very good.



Image: Euan Macleod *Guy at Jamberoo*

Speaker 1: [Bell rings] We're now moving into room number two. The next artwork is painting number 32.

Julian Morrow: We're in room two now of the Archibald, and let's have a look at painting number 32. This is *Guy at Jamberoo*, by Euan Macleod. Now I need to clarify here, because the subject of the work is the artist Guy Warren. But when I saw this 'Guy at Jamberoo', I was thinking of Jamberoo recreation park on the South Coast and I thought...

Rove McManus: 'Where you control the action'.

Julian Morrow: That's right. This is just some guy at Jamberoo. It's not that.

Rove McManus: That's disappointing.

Julian Morrow: I like the idea to think he's just about to whizz down a water slide. Do you like this portrait?

Rove McManus: I really like it. I think most people, when they think portraits, they do think something that's very photo-realistic. This has just got that great slap dash impressionist feel of just big, thick chunks of oil paint. And it sometimes can work really well when you've got the right subject, which I think this is. So Guy is not just a guy, he's actual, Guy.

Julian Morrow: Actual Guy. Guy Warren.

Rove McManus: Not a random guy, specific Guy.

Julian Morrow: Yes that's right.

Rove McManus: And you can still make out the tones of his skin, the creases on his forehead, and the bags under... Sorry Guy, I just made it sound like you're really old. Goatee, all that kind of stuff. And even in the background, it just works well as a piece despite the fact it is, it looks like a fairly loose brush strokes, and things like that...

Julian Morrow: And a hell of a challenge too because Guy Warren himself won the Archibald Prize in 1995.

Rove McManus: That's so bold! Audacious to Guy. I'm just going to do it again. And this time I'm going to be myself.

Julian Morrow: Yeah.



Image: David Darcy *Charlotte*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 11.
- Julian Morrow: All right, let's have a look at painting number 11. This is a portrait of Charlotte by David Darcy...
- Rove McManus: The shoes.
- Julian Morrow: Yes. Love them. Absolutely.
- Rove McManus: How can you not say yes to those shoes?
- Julian Morrow: So much going on in this painting, isn't it?
- Rove McManus: I love everything about it. This is probably what most people expect a portrait to look like. It actually looks like it's a photograph of the subject. I wonder how much of this is: can you wear the craziest outfit you've got, to really make my portrait just leap off the canvas. And how much of it is just: this is just what Charlotte wears.
- Rove McManus: I love that she's not wearing any makeup, she just seems very natural in the way that she presents herself except she's just got this incredibly bright colourful outfit. And then the background, just grey, that's a really interesting decision to make. To just say, I'm just going to put the subject front and centre, there will be no busyness behind it. And then to try to make that work without it flat. I think it's a really difficult thing. But this is great. I love it.



Image: Julian Meagher *Herb and Flan*

Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 37.

Julian Morrow: Okay let's have a look at painting number 37. This is called *Herb and Flan*. Flan of course being the acclaimed Australian author Richard Flanagan. And Herb is the bird there. So you get two for the price of one, he's a hell of a bird, isn't he? He's a special bird.

Rove McManus: It's a pink and grey galah.

Julian Morrow: That's right.

Rove McManus: What I love about this piece is Herb. Herb wins for me. I love myself a bird. I love myself a pink and grey galah. I think feathers are not an easy thing to paint.

Julian Morrow: Yeah.

Rove McManus: Is this oil? Is this an oil?

Julian Morrow: Oil on linen, yeah.

Rove McManus: Linen? There's a lot of linen being used, I've discovered this year. I like that. Again, the use of colour here is simple but also really bold. And you look at how much detail you can get into someone's face.

Julian Morrow: A lot of authority in that face.

Rove McManus: Yes, and it's pretty daring to go 'I'm just going to just really get my brush nice and wet', that's not a euphemism, grow up. But you can see where some of the paint is just trickling down on the linen, or canvas.

Julian Morrow: Absolutely.

Rove McManus: That would terrify me to think, oh I'm going to ruin my painting, but it works really, really well. And just how his eyes leap out to it. But let's be honest, Herb is the star of this and I think Flan, you can move on.

Julian Morrow: That's right.

Rove McManus: I look forward to Herb getting his own self-portrait in a couple years. Get his little wings dipped in the paint.

Julian Morrow: Bound to happen.

Rove McManus: Splatter around.



Image: Peter Bernier *Self-portrait with hindsight*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 4.
- Julian Morrow: Let's have a look now at painting number 4. Now, Rove, this is a self-portrait. A self-portrait with hindsight, indeed, by a man I'm sure you and I know very well, Peter Berner.
- Rove McManus: Yes, this is a conflict of interest for the two of us.
- Julian Morrow: Exactly, absolutely, but great to see Peter. Known all around the country for his comedy, *Backberner* was something that I watched incessantly, and of course on radio as well. But also, Peter's a trained artist and he's made it into the Archibald.
- Rove McManus: I had no idea that he was. I don't even know if he's even attempted to get into the Archibald before.
- Julian Morrow: Is this a better self-portrait than Peter's done than if you were to get the oils and the canvas out?
- Rove McManus: Absolutely.
- Julian Morrow: Yeah, you'd reckon you'd make the Archibald?
- Rove McManus: No, there's no chance in hell. I think it comes down to what a great head.
- Julian Morrow: Yes.
- Rove McManus: I've always said that about Peter Berner, great head. He has a wonderful dome that I think he's captured beautifully. Look, I'm gonna be honest the ear leaps off this canvas. Sorry, plywood, acrylic and pencil, but I just also like the idea of, even the title's suggesting hindsight. Looking to your past and the comment, 'Nothing back there makes sense anymore'.
- Julian Morrow: It's got a very different tone, isn't it, from the sort of wise-cracking jokes. This is reflective, serene, and a sense of regret or confusion.
- Rove McManus: Yeah, and you know it's a seemingly dark portrait. You know, it looks, very stormy kind of colours. But, that idea of, I don't know I feel like there's a bit of contentment there as well, the idea of, I can relate a little bit as a performer, you get to a certain point in your life, in your age, career, where you realise, 'Well, most of it's behind me now'. Purely just because the clock is ticking. There's only so many years I have left on this planet. And, am I happy with what I've done? Even if you're not, nothing can be changed, it's all about looking forward. For many people this might seem like it's a bit negative or a bit glass half empty, but I really see the positive in it. I really like it.



Image: Kirsty Neilson *Anxiety still at 30*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 41.
- Julian Morrow: Okay let's have a look at painting number 41. This is called *Anxiety still at 30* and it's by Kirsty Neilson. Rove, what do you think of this portrait?
- Rove McManus: I think it's beautiful. It's striking, it's got a lot of vulnerability about it which I think is part of the intent of this piece. When I first read the title, I assumed it just meant something to do with the idea of when you hit 30 and it's a big change in a lot of people's life and it's when they start to question well what have I done and have I still got time to achieve all I want to achieve? But being here and actually having a better look at it and understanding the description a bit more, it seems it is a lot to do with mental health issues and even after you get older that life doesn't necessarily get easier to understand and deal with the issues you might have.
- Rove McManus: And I think this captures it incredibly. Very striking, very powerful. The hand across the mouth means a lot. The fact that there is so much detail and so much going on, and then as you work down at the bottom right hand side there's less and less and less. Makes it really impacting. And just almost the incomplete colouring on the arm as it comes down, I think is very telling with the subject matter behind it. But those eyes, wow. You just want to give her a cuddle and go you'll be okay. I wish I could help you.
- Julian Morrow: The interesting thing as well is Kirsty has been hung in the Archibald before in 2016, with a portrait of Gary McDonald.
- Rove McManus: I remember that one.
- Julian Morrow: Yeah, absolutely. And Gary of course has been very open about his struggles with anxiety and depression. Having said that, there's something about painting on that theme for Kirsty which seems to get all the way through to the Archibald.
- Rove McManus: Well, exactly right. And to think you have all this anxiety, and I think this is a wonderful thing about art in general. You do hear a lot about the cliché tortured artist. But the reality of that is, if you are someone who has a lot of anxiety, to think, I'm not only going to paint a picture, or anything, just create the piece of work to put on public display for people to judge. Whether they like it or don't like it. And let's be honest, sometimes it can be as simplistic as that. Not only that but it's going to be a self-portrait.
- Julian Morrow: Could there be anything more anxiety to see?
- Rove McManus: Exactly. It's a terrifying thought. I do stand-up, which people think is scary. But if I have a bad gig sometimes not everybody has seen it. Or when it's done it's done, and you can forget it ever happened. But to put yourself

out there with a self-portrait that people can come in and see for as long as it's hanging up here, I think is a big achievement.

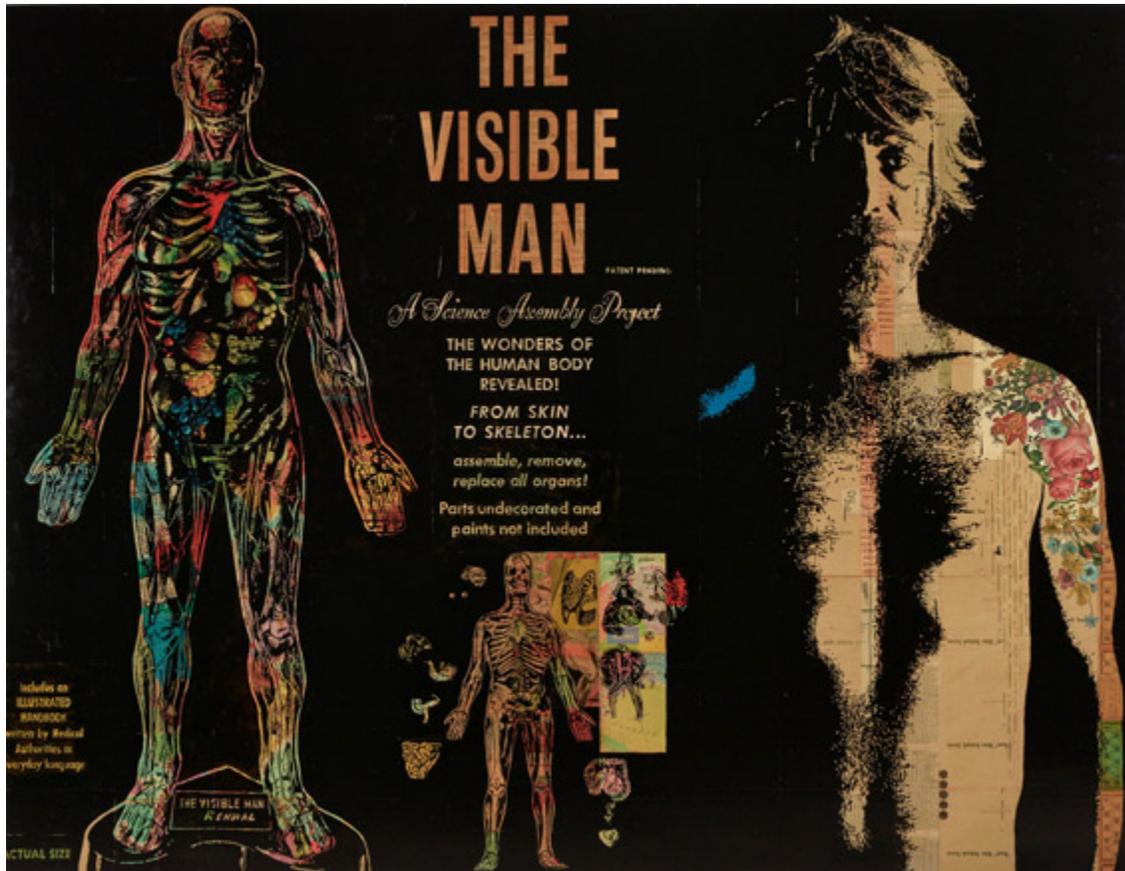


Image: James Powditch *Narcissist, the anatomy of melancholy*

- Speaker 1: [Music] You're listening to the 2018 Archibald podcast tour, thanks to ANZ. We're now moving into room three. The next artwork is painting number 43.
- Julian Morrow: This is painting number 43. It's titled *Narcissist, the anatomy of melancholy*, by James Powditch. This is a big work. I think a sense of irony maybe in the title Narcissist. Do you like it?
- Rove McManus: I do. There's a lot going on in this one too. I just like the idea of creating a piece that sort of steps outside what you would consider a normal portrait. And for many people, the fact that it's even here I think is fantastic because the idea of it might have a lot of people just suddenly turn away and go, well we can't allow that, it doesn't quite fall in...
- Julian Morrow: And of course there's been a lot of controversy in the Archibald over the years with people even going to the courts over what's a portrait and what's not.
- Rove McManus: That is very true. Very true. Again, one of the incredible things and why I have always said to people, if you get the chance to come in and see any works, it doesn't even have to be famous, but to come and see it in its actuality.



Image: Del Kathryn Barton *Self-portrait with studio wife*

Speaker 1: [Music] You're listening to the 2018 Archibald podcast tour, thanks to ANZ. We're now moving into room three. The next artwork is painting number 2.

Julian Morrow: Alright let's have a look now at, we might go to painting number 2.

Rove McManus: This is great.

Julian Morrow: *Self-portrait with studio wife* by Del Kathryn Barton. Big, colourful, striking piece and great animal on the shoulder there. Not a parrot this time, I think it's a little bull dog.

Rove McManus: It looks like, I would say a Boston terrier. I'm no expert but certainly, look let's call it one of those yappy dogs, you know the ones we mean. This is a tremendous piece, just it's very bold. It's hard to miss this one. It's not just about the colour, it's how an artist can put so much on a canvas and have you think that a lot of it is just flecks of paint that don't make any sense. But, there's all these little dots all over there that look like just drops of paint. I'm gonna walk right up to it.

Julian Morrow: Don't touch!

Rove McManus: You're in an art gallery! Don't do it! But yeah, I reckon that each one those is almost put there on purpose. But, just the composition of the hands, the hair, the outfit, this great spiral of, I don't know what, I don't know if that's just creative choice or if it's just an interesting brooch.



Image: Natasha Walsh *Numb to touch* (self-portrait)

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 53.
- Julian Morrow: Painting number 53, which is *Numb to touch (self-portrait)* by Natasha Walsh. Does this one draw you in as well Rove?
- Rove McManus: It does. And just how you can compare the two quite clearly, a big bold colourful canvas is going to do it. The painting that draws you in. That makes you want to just stare at it. The eyes are just so engaging, the hand that's up, almost like it's trapped behind this piece of perspex that it's encased in.
- Rove McManus: Just this wondering flowing feeling of this whole piece being underwater is what I love about it. And to get that with oil paints? On copper. Get out. Right. It has this real watercolour feel to it. And to be able to achieve that with oil is pretty impressive.
- Julian Morrow: But on copper as well. We've been talking about copper for years.
- Rove McManus: Haven't we? Pete Smith, all those years with all those copper art ads, and had he known you could of been also been selling them as great surface to paint on.
- Julian Morrow: It's a great tribute to Pete.



Image: Yvette Coppersmith *Self-portrait, after George Lambert*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number eight.
- Julian Morrow: The big one. This is number eight. The winner of the 2018 Archibald Prize, it's *Self-portrait, after George Lambert* by Yvette Coppersmith. Now Rove, if you had sole control, if you were the only trustee of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, would this be your winner?
- Rove McManus: I don't know that it would be to be honest. I'm always excited to find out who the winner is going to be.
- Julian Morrow: Because it's such a personal choice isn't it?
- Rove McManus: Yeah. And then when you match up with what the Packers choose of them, then with what the public choose. Not the Packer family, who knows what that would choose. They've got their choices that you can never pick it. That's the beauty of art.
- Julian Morrow: So what do you see in this one?
- Rove McManus: I see drapes. I see wonderful velvet drapes.
- Julian Morrow: Yes.
- Rove McManus: Look it's one of those ones that, I like it, it wouldn't necessarily be at the top of my list or the bottom of my list. It's just a solid performer. And maybe sometimes that's what you want in a piece. I love the composition of it. I love obviously, your subject matter is front and centre here. I respect the idea of saying, and I'll put on what looks like a leopard print coat.
- Julian Morrow: Apparently the artist has quite a thing for leopard print.
- Rove McManus: And well why wouldn't she? It's the best of all prints.
- Julian Morrow: Indeed.
- Rove McManus: The more I look at it, the more I can see how it would probably leap to the top. There's a lot to like about this. Just the shadow as the dress kind of falls down just to get those folds in, and it seems like it's an easy thing to do, but, to try and get that represented on a canvas, good luck if you're trying to do it yourself.
- Julian Morrow: And congratulations to Yvette, the winner of the 2018 Archibald.



Image: Amber Boardman *Self-care exhaustion*

Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 5.

Julian Morrow: Alright let's have a look now, we'll move on over to painting number 5. A real explosion of colour. This is called *Self-care exhaustion* by Amber Boardman and...

Rove McManus: This is everything I want to be. This...

Julian Morrow: There's a lot of fun and comedy in this as well isn't there?

Rove McManus: Yeah, this is just, if I could have a perfect day, this looks like it. To just be in the bath, reading a book, you've got the scented candles, a nice glass of red wine, a bit of smoothie action in the background with my wig at my side. Who doesn't want to be living this life? Cucumber slices over the eyes. This is so much fun.

Julian Morrow: I think that's one of the things about the Archibald as well, that people have this kind of image sometimes of art as very serious. But, there's a lot of fun and satire and comedy in it too.

Rove McManus: Yeah, exactly, it's not stuffy, it's not just for the elite. You know this is a whole lot of fun, and even just to look at some of the lines on it too. They're not perfect straight lines, the perspective isn't 100%, it's part of what makes art work is taking those tried-and-true rules and forms that says this is how art is meant to be, and just breaking them and playing with them a bit. You know just the messiness of the bath water as well. Just the randomness of a wig! Who doesn't like that. So much fun.



Image: Marc Etherington *Me and Granny*

Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 16.

Julian Morrow: Let's have a look now at painting number 16. This is called *Me and Granny*, by Marc Etherington. Rove, you mentioned before that you liked sort of, did you say cartoony? A little bit of that perhaps, in this.

Rove McManus: Yeah there is. There is. Great to see another pet.

Julian Morrow: Yep.

Rove McManus: And look...

Julian Morrow: This is an imaginary pet. An imaginary whippet.

Rove McManus: Haven't we all imagined we've had a whippet.

Julian Morrow: And they're very easy to care for.

Rove McManus: That's true. I've only now, I haven't seen it up close. You've got two tiny little spiders.

Julian Morrow: Yep.

Rove McManus: There is a lizard and let's not forget, a tremendous Boba Fett action figure for the Star Wars fans...

Julian Morrow: Now correct me if I'm wrong but just looking back, I think this is the first time Boba Fett's been in the Archibald. Maybe Darth Vader but I don't think bounty hunters have made it, as a rule.

Rove McManus: Statement. And just all of the little.. .like there we've got a Darth Vader badge on the jacket as well.

Julian Morrow: The Juicy Fruits in the pocket.

Rove McManus: The Juicy Fruits! Misfits t-shirt, skull ring. This is also a wonderful example of just, you paint what you want to paint, the way you want to paint it. There's just a very seemingly big, plain brick wall that really takes up most of the space. If you were to say to me, could you take a picture of me with my imaginary whippet please, if you put that much head room in the shot, I would be really unhappy with you. If I had to do a painting, you don't have to be the greatest painter in the world. The arms aren't quite right, the dog's face is a bit lopsided. This isn't exactly like a photo would come out. And once again, that's what's great about the Archibald. Just seeing so many different ways of painting and styles that, I think, can, hopefully, send people home inspired.



Image: Jamie Preisz *Jimmy (title fight)*

- Speaker 1: [Music] You're listening to the 2018 Archibald podcast tour, thanks to ANZ. We're now moving into room four. The next artwork is painting number 44.
- Julian Morrow: Let's have a look at painting number 44. This is called *Jimmy (title fight)* by Jamie Preisz, and it's the winner of the Packing Room Prize. Perhaps there's no surprises there 'cause Jimmy's such a man of the people in Australia and the Packing Room loved him. What do you think of this portrait?
- Rove McManus: Well, I think if I had to give it a prize, I would because it looks terrifying. The idea that I could bump into Jimmy Barnes and he would be taping up his fist like this.
- Julian Morrow: That's well believable, isn't it?
- Rove McManus: It has me thinking, sure. I almost feel like this wasn't posed for, they just caught him on a Saturday night on his way out. Just went, 'Oh, hang on a second, can we just paint your portrait please?' The great thing about Barnsey is he's got such a legacy and it's... he's a real larrikin.
- Julian Morrow: You would presumably have interviewed him many times.
- Rove McManus: Yeah, and he's fun, and he has this tough guy image though. I think people can see this part of him very easily, like the grimace on his face. He looks like you've said something about... you didn't appreciate the work of the Tin Lids back in the day, and he is about to let you know his feelings on it, but before I do, I'm a gentleman, I'll tape my hands so it's not too rough on you. But for some reason, I still find that it plays in the world of fantasy a little bit too. 'Cause Jimmy's actually, he's great fun, he's a very funny person, quite gregarious, and to be able to marry this side of him with what people know him to be. And *Title fight*, what a great name for it too.



Image: Paul Jackson *Alison Whyte, a mother of the renaissance*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 27.
- Julian Morrow: Painting number 27 is titled *Alison Whyte, a mother of the renaissance*, and it's by Paul Jackson. Definitely one of the best ginger portraits at the Archibald this year.
- Rove McManus: Yes. I'm surprised they don't have their own section by now. I can't help but think, has Alison ever played, of course, Alison Whyte, wonderful actress.
- Julian Morrow: Fantastic, yeah.
- Rove McManus: Has she ever played Queen Elizabeth before? I feel like this is something we've never seen before. And that ruff, around the neck. Who would even attempt to paint one of those? It's like, imagine a million little because that's what they are. I just hope that this creates a ruff renaissance, but the other part of this is, it looks to me like you've got this bright spotlight on her face, on her pupils, a dilated big or small. Pupils are fixed and dilated, you hear that on medical shows. She's got small pupils, meaning the light is shining on them.
- Rove McManus: Almost to the point where you can see the art is reflected in them. There's a little bit of detail going on there, but quite striking, and then especially with the background being so dark. And everything from her neck down is very dark and shadow as well. So it's almost like she has this fixed spotlight on her face, you could imagine her walking out dressed like that to an STC production.

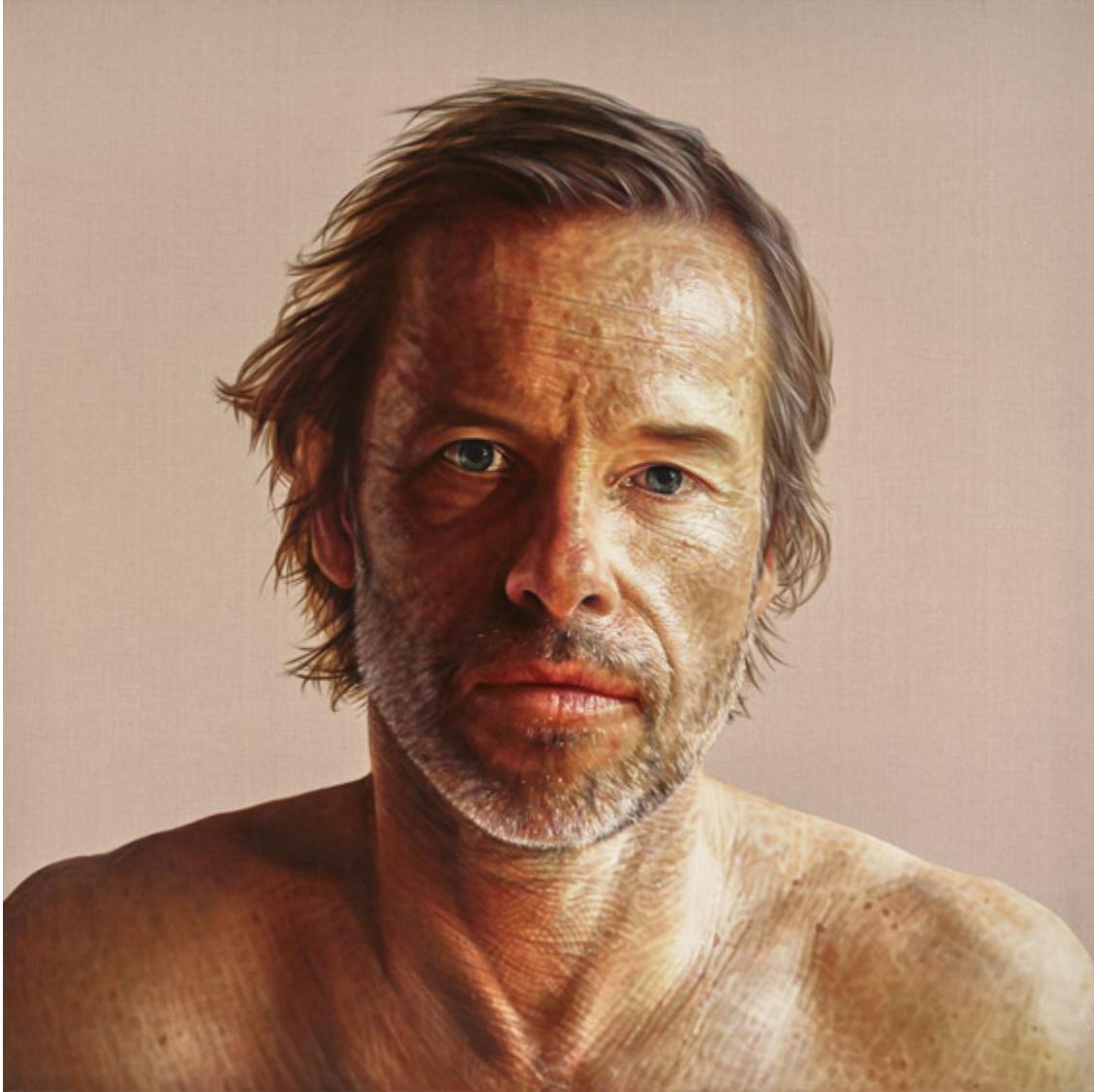


Image: Anne Middleton *Guy*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 38.
- Julian Morrow: Painting number 38, *Guy* by Anne Middleton. The photo-realism here, amazing.
- Rove McManus: It's terrifying. It feels like you have a giant Guy Pierce starting at you. And Julian, haven't we all lived that dream? I just think this an incredible work. You can see why this is the poster boy, no pun intended, of this year's Archibald. It's so striking. But also the idea that we know Guy Pierce. A lot of people have seen him work over the years. And this is just a wonderful bare bones representation of him. His hair is tussled, you can see the sun spots, and the stubble, the greys. It's all there. Just that texture. To be able to even achieve that, is...
- Julian Morrow: It's hard to believe it's a painting, isn't it?
- Rove McManus: I know!



Image: Andrew Lloyd Greensmith *The serenity of Susan Carland*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 19.
- Julian Morrow: We're in room four at the Archibald and...
- Rove McManus: Correct.
- Julian Morrow: Rove McManus and I are looking at painting number 19, *The serenity of Susan Carland*, by Andrew Lloyd Greensmith. There is something incredibly serene about this, isn't there?
- Rove McManus: Yeah, Susan is such an incredible woman.
- Julian Morrow: You know her?
- Rove McManus: I do know her, obviously I never want to put someone in this category, but just for people to get context, she's the wife of Waleed Aly. She has done so much in her own right with women.
- Julian Morrow: And a constant presence in the media as well.
- Rove McManus: Exactly. And she was great on *Get crackin'*. I think what I love most about this, apart from just her very serene expression, just that idea of eyes closed, head slightly back. Just the edge of the framing here, just the fact that the paint doesn't go all the way to the edge. We've seen a lot of pieces today that do just have a very simplistic, plain background. By plain, I mean, there's not a lot of detail going on. And this makes it very striking. And I'm just a fan of incomplete works, as in, you can see that there's so much detail from her head, working down, to the point where almost the artist has run out of time, and you haven't quite got the leg that's crossed over finished.
- Rove McManus: There's a bit of paint that's seemingly bleeding off the chair that she is sitting on. There's an artist called Alice Zhang who I really like, and a lot of her work has that feeling of, gravity has just bled the paint off the canvas, and everything just looks like it's running. And I just really, really like that.



Image: Prudence Flint *Double*

- Speaker 1: [Music] You're listening to the 2018 Archibald podcast tour, thanks to ANZ. We're now moving into room five. The next artwork is painting number 18.
- Julian Morrow: Moving onto room five now. And our first port of call is painting number 18. It's called *Double* by Prudence Flint. Double or triple, Rove, I think we've got three of the subject there.
- Rove McManus: Isn't like an artist to just put a title in there that makes you question what you are looking at. [Inaudible] picture of a pipe, then underneath it has, this is not a pipe. You're like, what are you talking about? Regret? You're crazy! I love the apples as well. It's just three bathing beauties, well they're not really bathing, they're in bikinis sitting on a slab, just sunning themselves.
- Rove McManus: This to me is a fun piece. I don't know if that is the intent behind it, but it just really has a sense of playfulness about it, the idea of just sitting out and lounging taking the sun is great. Who is the subject of it?
- Julian Morrow: It's Saskia Beudel, who is the author of several works... we read from the notes on the side of the painting.
- Rove McManus: Let's be honest, we're all doing it.
- Julian Morrow: That's right.
- Rove McManus: So I'm guessing it's her in multiple forms, moving around a space, which is wonderful. And I'm not sure where the setting is, it kind of has this weird sort of Alice in Wonderland fantasy element about it. She's just on this big slab, random apples and bottles, and a mirror or something, a frisbee, perhaps? Because of that it just has this great playfulness about it, it's great to have pieces like this here, that make you have a stop and a think. It's not just, well, I'm looking at a very real picture of Guy Pearce. This makes you think, what is the artist trying to say? What is she trying to portray? What do I get out of this, as opposed to what was her intent? Which I think sometimes is what is that great divide of art, that also is what makes it so wonderful. Because it really is down to your interpretation, no matter what the artist themselves has interpreted.
- Julian Morrow: And that's one of the great things about the Archibald, isn't it?
- Rove McManus: Yeah! Absolutely.
- Julian Morrow: Everyone has an opinion and can chat about it all day.



Image: David Griggs *The warrior and the prophet*

- Speaker 1: [Bell rings] The next artwork is painting number 20.
- Julian Morrow: Painting number 20 is *The warrior and the prophet*. It is a portrait by David Griggs, apparently it's his seventh in the Archibald, and it's of the fantastic film director Warwick Thornton. Do you like it, Rove?
- Rove McManus: I do, I really like this one. This is probably one of those ones that wouldn't be to everyone's taste. I'm a big fan of Warwick's as well. Yeah, I don't know what it is, it is what it is. You've got devil tongues, and smoking skeletons in top hats, and there's horns. It has the feel, now that I look at it, I couldn't quite put my finger on it, what I really liked about it, but, I think what it is, is it looks like, especially because of the depiction of Warwick, it's almost like someone has put an exhibition piece in here of Warwick that then someone else has come in and defaced. You know, they just let a bunch of high school kids come in after hours, and then someone's walked in to lock up the Gallery and went, 'Aw, someone's destroyed Griggsy's painting!' But you know, the pill capsules, the cross, the candles, just the check squares all over it, and the grinning skeleton with the top hat. Very voodoo, that's a very voodoo thing I think. It's very bold and almost a bit of a recalcitrant piece to have in the Archibald, so I'm glad it's here.
- Julian Morrow: Thanks for listening to the 2018 Archibald Prize podcast, recorded at the Art Gallery of NSW. And, remember, you can download and listen to more episodes featuring our other guests.
- Speaker 1: You've been listening to the 2018 Archibald podcast tour, thanks to ANZ.