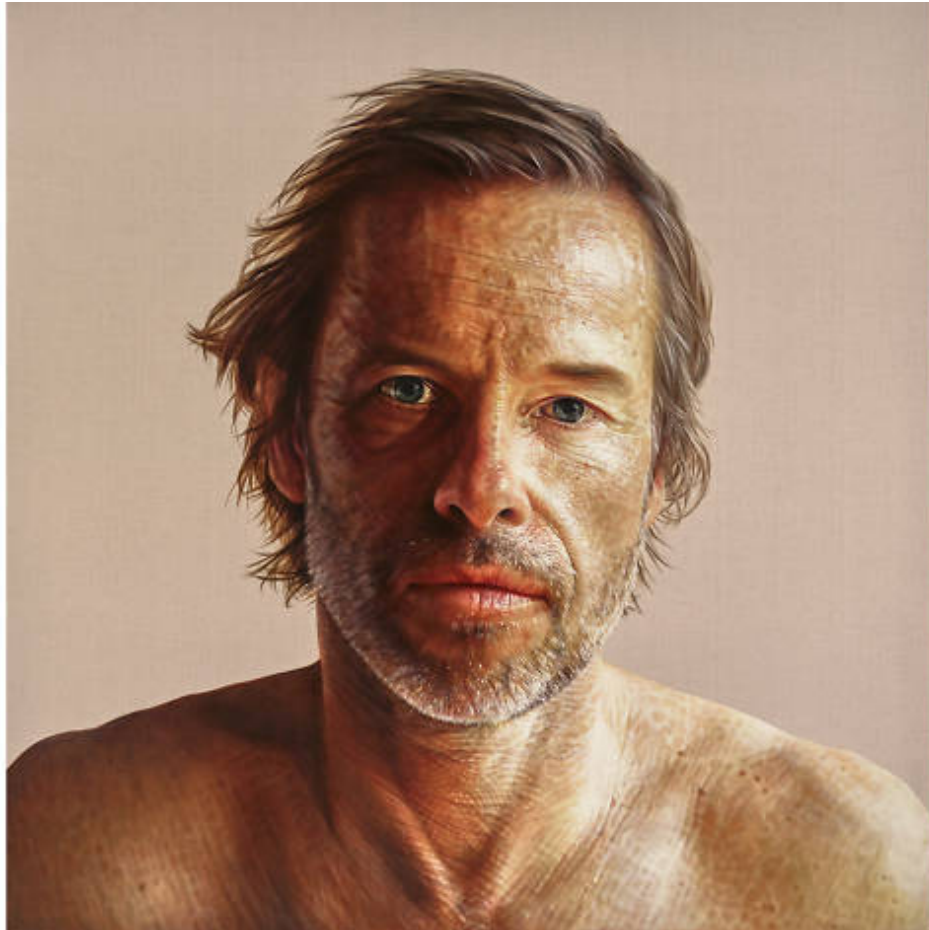


A Guy Pearce portrait has won People's Choice at the Archibalds

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By [Ben Neutze](#) Posted: Wednesday August 15 2018, 11:59am



Anne Middleton, 'Guy'

If the Archibald Prize really is the people's arts prize – for which everyone's a critic – then there's arguably no more important prize than the People's Choice award. It might be worth \$3,500 instead of the Archie's full \$100,000, but it's voted for by the visitors to the gallery who pass their judgement over the portraits. This year more than 20,000 people made their voices heard.

The 2018 winner is first time Archibald finalist Anne Middleton, the daughter of landscape painter Max Middleton. Her close-up portrait of actor Guy Pearce has been hanging outside the gallery for the last few months on a giant banner. Painted in oils on a square canvas, it's almost two metres tall and wide.

Middleton said: "I see profound depth of emotion and some sadness in Guy's eyes, however, his gaze is direct and bold. It was this curious melding of uncompromising determination and a certain boyish sweetness that led me to ask if I could paint his portrait.

“I painted Guy in the natural light of my studio. The light rakes across his face, casting one side of his face into deep shadow. Obscure and mysterious, it speaks of hidden and difficult times. The other side is brilliantly lit, highlighting the delicacy, transparency and vulnerability of his skin, and the subtle and tender quality of his eyes and mouth. It is an uncompromising light, honest and unflinching.”

She was inspired by early photographic portraits of Indigenous people using tintype photography, and aimed to emulate the direct and exposed style.

You've got until September 8 to see the Archibald exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW. [Check out the Archibald winner and other finalists.](#)

By Ben Neutze [79 Posts](#)

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