

# Portia Geach Memorial Award

## 2008 Judges' Report

The 2008 Portia Geach Memorial Award attracted submissions of 294 works from which 56 works were selected.

Commenting on this year's entries, the judges were particularly impressed by the freshness and the diversity of approach to the challenge of portrait painting displayed by the artists. The judges believed they were amongst some of the best they have judged over the last decade.

This year's winner, Jude Rae's *Self Portrait 2008 (the year my husband left)*, stood out progressively more clearly throughout the judging process. It has strength of tone and subtlety of construction that brings to mind certain old masters of the Spanish school. And yet, it has a risk-taking quality through the creation of a vertical movement of stripes down the surface of the canvas that underlines the poignancy of solitude of the figure in its context. The nuancing here and there of these stripes into the flat picture plane shifts it emphatically towards a contemporary arena of space more psychological and emotional than physical.

The judges highly commended Jo Bertini's *Luise Hercus at the Widows' Waterhole – Yarluyendi Country* and Shonah Tescott's *Wendy Sharpe in Paris*. Together with the winning work, these paintings form a triumvirate of styles that are complementary whilst at the same time reveal different polarities of sensibility for the capacity of the language of painting to portray individual character.

The judges would like to thank all of those who contributed to a large submission of works and for their continued support of portraiture as an important aspect of contemporary painting.

16 September 2008

Barry Pearce  
Aida Tomescu  
Jane Watters