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THE ARCHIBALD

Premieres on Foxtel Arts

Tuesdays from September 12 at 7.30pm

Features 2017 Archibald Prize finalists

Nicholas Harding and Yvette Coppersmith

The Archibald Prize is Australia's most popular and coveted art prize. Being awarded to portraits of prominent Australians the iconic prize is no stranger to intrigue and controversy across its 96-year history.

In 2017 the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) provided cameras unprecedented access to competitors, their work and the hidden internal processes by which the Archibald is judged, hung, announced and exhibited. The resulting four-part documentary series, *The Archibald*, will premiere on **Tuesday September 12 at 7.30pm** on **Foxtel Arts**.

Following the announcement today of the 2017 Archibald Prize finalists by the AGNSW, two of the eight artists featured in the series have been selected in the Archibald Prize – former Prize winner **Nicholas Harding** and three-time finalist **Yvette Coppersmith**.

The Archibald will take viewers behind the scenes and away from the media front-line, as the series follows the artists and their sitters as they strive to win the most iconic prize in Australian arts.

The Archibald follows the highs and lows of a clutch of artists ranging from three former Archibald Prize winners, four former finalists and a newcomer to the scene all vying to have their portraits hung in the prestigious exhibition. Their complete journeys from the artists' first approach to their sitters through to their final portraits are captured across Australia as well as overseas in Afghanistan, Hollywood, London, and Paris.

The Archibald has an all-access pass to the Art Gallery of NSW and for the first time, cameras capture the deliberations as the submissions pass the judges and they announce the final portraits. Following which, the 2017 Archibald Prize winner is revealed.

Fraser Stark, Group Channel Manager of Foxtel's Arts & Music channels said: "Part of Foxtel Arts' mission is to be an active participant in, and observer of, Australia's arts communities and institutions. By opening up for our customers such an unprecedented look inside the journey to the Archibald Prize we are certainly hitting that mark squarely. Mint Pictures has produced an insightful and revealing documentary series of which the channel is proud. We thank the AGNSW for their willing collaboration and for their trust in the quality of our treatment."

Artists featured in *The Archibald* are:

Dr George Gittoes AM

Art Style: Figurative Modernism

Archibald Finalist: 5 Times (1997 John Olsen, 1995 General John Sanderson, 1994 Self Portrait, 1993 Ronaldo Cameron, 1991/92 William Yang)

2017 Archibald Sitter: Julian Assange (Founder of WikiLeaks)

"I don't think there's anyone you'd ever want to paint that you'd take a bullet for – but I'd take one for Julian."

Jason Phu

Art Style: Chinese Landscape

Archibald Finalist: 2 Times (2015 Lisa Havilah, 2014 Evan Hughes)

2017 Archibald Sitter: Lin Jong (AFL Player - Western Bulldogs)

"Sometimes you talk to artists, and they say they have to paint every single day, every minute. I think maybe that's like a mental illness or something."

Nicholas Harding

Art Style: Expressive Realism

Archibald Finalist: 17 Times (including 13 years in a row from 1994 to 2006)

Archibald Winner, 2001 (portrait of *John Bell as King Lear*)

People's Choice Winner, 2005 (portrait of artist Robert Dickerson, *Bob's daily swim*)

2017 Archibald Sitter: John Olsen (one of Australia's greatest living artists)

"The thing about portraiture and painting... it's a very difficult pleasure, as Brett Whiteley put it."

Nick Stathopoulos

Art Style: Hyperrealism

Archibald Finalist: 5 Times (2016 Deng Adut, 2012 Fenella Kernebone, 2010 Geoff Ostling, 2008 David Stratton, 2003 Norman Hetherington)

People's Choice Winner, 2016 (portrait of Deng Adut, Sudanese refugee and lawyer)

2017 Archibald Sitter: Isla Fisher (award-winning actress & children's book author)

"I've been described as the Hillary Clinton of the Archibald – she won the popular vote, but didn't win the election."

Wendy Sharpe

Art Style: Figurative / Expressionistic

Archibald Finalist: 6 Times

Archibald Winner, 1996 (*Self Portrait – as Diana of Erskineville*)

2017 Archibald Sitter: Elena Kats-Chernin (Award-winning Composer)

"I really am the quintessential romantic artist."

Yvette Coppersmith

Art Style: Figurative / Abstract

Archibald Finalist: 3 Times (2016 self portrait, 2009 John Safran, 2008 Paul Capsis)

2017 Archibald Sitter: Prof Gillian Triggs (President, Australian Human Rights Commission)

"Portraiture is my first love."

"That's the problem with the Archibald – it's kind of like asking a total stranger to marry you."

Tessa McOnie

Art Style: Realism / Hyperrealism

Archibald Finalist: Never been a finalist before

2017 Archibald Sitter: Trevor Jamieson (Actor)

"When you're just starting out, you think the Archibald is unreachable."

Tim Storrier AM

Art Style: Genre Landscape

Archibald Finalist: 3 Times (2014, 2012, 2011)

Archibald Winner, 2012 (self portrait *The histrionic wayfarer (after Bosch)*)

Packing Room Prize Winner, 2014 (*The Member, Dr Sir Leslie Colin Patterson KCB AO*)

2017 Archibald Sitter: McLean Edwards (Archibald-finalist Artist)

"A good portrait should give you a slight quiver... or maybe even a small shock as to recognition of this human being, even if you don't know them."

Following its broadcast on Foxtel Arts, *The Archibald* will be available to watch from Foxtel's on demand library.

The Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes exhibition is at the Art Gallery of NSW from Saturday July 29 through to Sunday October 22.

The Archibald is produced by **Mint Pictures** exclusively for **Foxtel** with major investment from **Screen Australia**.

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