

Final
EMBARGOED until 10 January 2015

MARK TWEEDIE voted the winner of the Kilgour Prize 2014 People's Choice Award



Over the years, Newcastle Art Gallery's Kilgour Prize has become one of Australia's top prizes for original art. A popular new addition to the annual prize is the People's Choice Award, which encourages Gallery patrons, local art lovers and the general public to choose the entry that most appeals to them.

This year, Gallery visitors responded strongly to the emotional impact of the work of artist Mark Tweedie, announced today as the winner of the Kilgour Prize 2014 People's Choice Award. Tweedie's oil on canvas piece *Lost my way*, a portrait of the artist's father, received 24% of the overall votes. This quiet portrait, with the subject's

head bowed and eyes nearly hidden, evokes strong feelings through its subtle messages of ageing and loss. The 32 year old Perth-based artist will receive \$5000 for his efforts, generously funded by the bequest of artist Jack Kilgour.

"I position subjects within an emotional realm characterised by themes of self-reflection, melancholia, mortality, and anxiety," said artist Mark Tweedie. "The darkness of these themes is balanced by a considered approach to intense light, colour, and contrast."

"This work is an exploration of my anxieties about mortality. The title *Lost My Way* was the starting point for this piece. It is a comment my Dad made in the context of his mindset in recent years and reminded me of the expressions 'wandering around in the dark' and to 'lose one's bearings'.

"I have not yet experienced death within my immediate family and during the past year I have grown increasingly anxious about the brevity of life, in particular confronting my dad's own mortality. In the work I address these concerns and present my dad as I see him without pretence."

The 2014 *Kilgour Prize* exhibition will remain on display at the Gallery until 25 January 2015, showcasing some of the finest examples of Australian portraiture art. In 1987 Jack Kilgour bequeathed funds for the creation of this major figurative and portrait art competition to be held in perpetuity at Newcastle Art Gallery. Known today as the *Kilgour Prize*, it was conceived to be national in scope, and invited artists to submit paintings that portray either portrait of figurative subjects. Each year, in accordance with the bequest, the work judged most outstanding is awarded a prize of \$50,000. It is one of the most lucrative art prizes in the country. The 2014 winner of the Kilgour Prize, announced in November, was Alan Jones for his outstanding piece *Robert Forrester #2*.

UPCOMING ART WORKSHOP – Don't miss out:

Kilgour Artist Workshop

with 2014 Kilgour Prize winner Alan Jones

Saturday 17 January, 11.00am – 3.00pm

In this creative workshop, each participant will use acrylic paints and glazes to make a painting inspired by a treasured family photograph. Participants will explore materials and processes driven by Jones' own practice, and use assemblage and collage techniques to create a painting.

\$55 per person, includes lunch and some materials.

Participants must bring their own primed canvas.

BOOKINGS REQUIRED

Call 02 4974 5100

Cultural Director Liz Burcham, Curator Sarah Johnson and artist Mark Tweedie are available for interview. To coordinate, contact Council Media Officer Dana Fischetti on (02) 4974 2264 or dfischetti@ncc.nsw.gov.au.

For details regarding all exhibitions and events programming visit www.nag.org.au

Artist Statement – Mark Tweedie

My painting practice involves deconstructing the male face and amplifying geometric qualities. My current work explores dualities including light and darkness, structure and fluidity, and visibility and concealment. I have a dichotomous way of thinking and the explicit use of dualities is an extension of this trait.

I position subjects within an emotional realm characterised by themes of self-reflection, melancholia, mortality, and anxiety. The darkness of these themes is balanced by a considered approach to intense light, colour, and contrast.

I am interested in the sculptural and gestural capabilities of oils whilst concurrently revealing surfaces and textures. The immediacy and singularity of using palette knives in my practice is central to constructing incisive and simplified surfaces. Dismantling the face into basic shapes and planes directs focus to the paint's individual surface qualities and application, whilst past works have been more concerned with likeness and aesthetics.

Statement about the work

The work is an exploration of my anxieties about mortality. The subject is my 70-year-old father.

The title *Lost My Way* was the starting point for this piece. It is a comment my Dad made in the context of his mindset in recent years and reminded me of the expressions "wandering around in the dark" and to "lose one's bearings".

I have not yet experienced death within my immediate family and during the past year I have grown increasingly anxious about the brevity of life, in particular confronting my dad's own mortality. In the work I address these concerns and present my dad as I see him without pretence.

I arrived at his home one day unannounced and began photographing him. He was wandering around in his blue pyjamas, somewhat getting his day started (If I had told him I was coming around to photograph him, he is the kind of person who would freshly iron a new shirt, shave, and comb his hair).

Cataloguing his ageing appearance, I created his face as a series of interlocking shapes to emphasise the sculptural elements of his weathering features. There is a strong contrast between the face's structured impasto facade against the background's loose gestural scrapes and slabs of paint.

The disorderly appearance of the background has equal significance in the work. Considering the title's themes of being lost and deviating, and my concerns surrounding death, the background is positioned as a dark void lingering over his shoulder, with no distinguishable bearing or form.

Caption for photo above:

Mark Tweedie *Lost my way* 2014, oil on canvas, Kilgour Prize 2014 People's Choice Award Winner