



CULTURE BUFF

# Archibald portraits

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‘A portrait is a painting with something wrong about the mouth’ is a quotation attributed to John Singer Sargent, painter of the most glamorous portraits of the early 20th century. His remark came to mind when viewing this year’s winner of the Archibald Prize; Louise Hearman’s portrait of Barry Humphries. It is a strikingly executed portrait but oddly, not immediately recognisable as Barry. But the Archibald (since 1921) wouldn’t be the Archibald without something for us to talk about. It’s really a three-ring circus – the

Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes – with the finalists of each all on show at the same time.

The Wynne primarily for landscapes, founded in 1897, was this year won by the Ken Family Collaborative for *Seven Sisters*. The Sulman, established in 1936, for ‘subject or



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one woman, Lucy Culliton, who remarkably, was a finalist in all three prizes. In her Archibald entry, a handsome self-portrait *Lucy and fans*, she depicts herself surrounded by her collection of fan-tail pigeons. Pigeons without fantails are the subject of her striking, limited palette Sulman entry. My favourite is her Wynne finalist: a 170cms square landscape *Monaro/ Ando* painted on a property near her home where she spent her childhood. It is utterly beautiful and deeply felt.

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