

ABOUT FACE

Elizabeth Fortescue chooses her Archibald Prize favourites

The judges have chosen the right painting to win this year's Archibald Prize — Del Kathryn Barton's fecund and mysterious portrait of actor Hugo Weaving. Visitors to the Art Gallery Of NSW this weekend will notice Barton's intricately worked painting *hugo* exerts a stronger pull than any other picture. Drooping foliage frames Weaving's face, echoing the leaf-faced "green man" found throughout the art of Christianity, Islam and in pagan cultures. Weaving holds a cat-like animal. An obviously wicked and ungrateful creature, it is ready to scratch the arms of the man who is ambassador for the animal rights group, Voiceless.

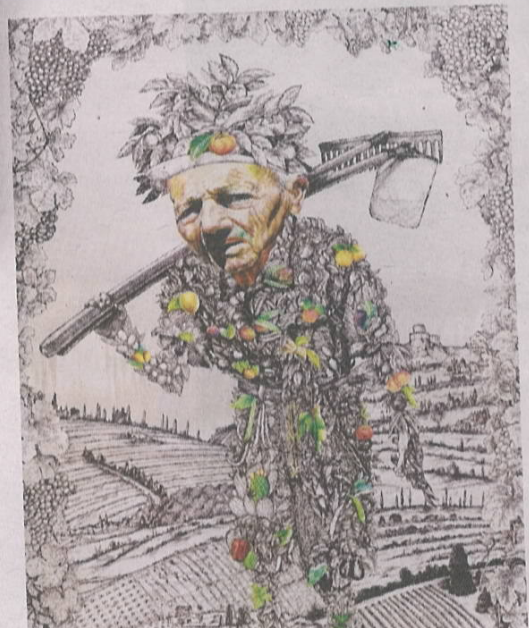
The Archibald is judged each year by the trustees of the AGNSW. The 11 trustees include two artists, Ben Quilty and Lindy Lee. Westfield's Steven Lowy is chairman.

The trustees' runner-up this year was Fiona Lowry's portrait of artist Shaun Gladwell, followed by Julie Dowling (a portrait of Wilfred Hicks), David Griggs (artist TV Moore) and Wendy Sharpe (burlesque star Venus Vamp).

Here's where I part company with the trustees. My second favourite portrait was Carlo Pagoda's *Habit de jardinier*, an eccentric evocation of the artist's 97-year-old father in oil paint and permanent marker on stainless steel. It's original and heart-felt. Refreshingly, Pagoda is a newcomer to the Archibald scene which has as its most common failing its predictability.

Sharpe's frank and confident *Anything goes* (Venus Vamp — burlesque star), exudes vitality. Venus accompanied Sharpe to the Archibald announcement, dressed in character and just loving the expectant atmosphere.

Artist Michael Zavros engrossed with his reflection in a limpidly blue



used by artist Joanna Braithwaite, who is its subject. The black pug is her studio companion, Brains. There is intrigue here, too. Why does Braithwaite wear a left shoe on her right foot? elizabeth.fortescue@news.com.au [twitter @0zartwriter](https://twitter.com/0zartwriter)

● Archibald Prize, Art Gallery Of NSW, Art Gallery Rd, The Domain; until June 2, adult \$10, conc \$8, 5-17 years \$8, family \$28, under 5 free, qtix.com.au, artgallery.nsw.gov.au

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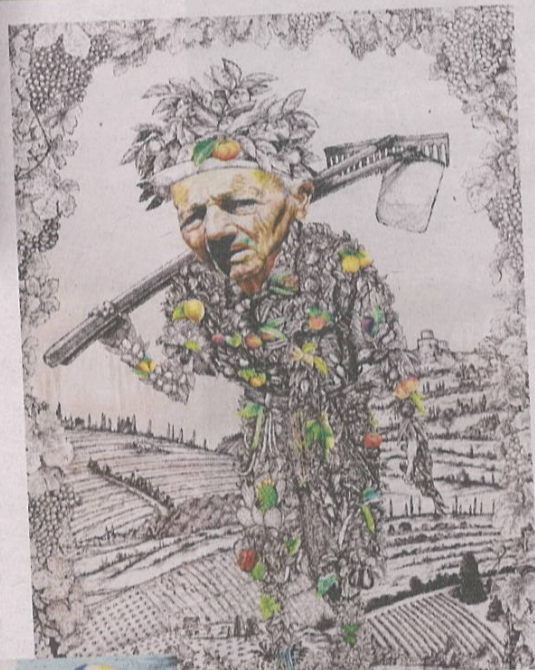
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Artist Michael Zavros engrossed with his reflection in a limpidly blue swimming pool in his self-portrait, *Bad dad*, is reminiscent of Ben Braddock (Dustin Hoffman) in the pool scene from *The Graduate*. The more obvious reference is Narcissus. Either way, it's a knock-out picture which delivers a strange, psychological jolt.

In Paul Jackson's entry *Jo* there are overt references to the motifs



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From top: Gina Riedel and daughter Michaela, 5, check out the winning portrait of Hugo Weaving; *Anything goes (Venus Vamp — burlesque star)*; *Jo*; *Habit de jardinier* and *Bad dad*