



📷 Artist Amanda Penrose Hart, winner of the Gallipoli Art Prize with her winning painting, *The Sphinx, Perpetual Peace*. Picture: John Fotiadis

Arts

Amanda Penrose Hart wins the Gallipoli Art Prize with her portrait of indifference in the face of death

Elizabeth Fortescue, Arts Editor, The Daily Telegraph

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A FACE that watched, impervious, as Anzac troops suffered and died in a World War I killing field is portrayed in a painting that today won the \$20,000 Gallipoli Art Prize.

Amanda Penrose Hart's landscape featuring the dramatic cliff face overlooking the Gallipoli battle grounds is titled *The Sphinx, Perpetual Peace*.

The Sphinx was so named by Aussie troops who landed at Gallipoli from April 25, 1915.

The tall rock formation reminded them of the famous Egyptian statue they had camped near on their way to the Turkish hellhole which became the birth site of the Anzac legend.

Penrose Hart, of Sydney, visited Gallipoli in 2013 and 2014 for two weeks each time.

The trips included other prominent artists, who were able to choose their own painting sites.

“We had a bus driver on the second trip, and we jumped out wherever we wanted to go,” Penrose Hart said.

“I worked mostly down at the beach.”

Setting up on North Beach, around the headland from Anzac Cove, Penrose Hart painted The Sphinx from the spot where many soldiers also saw it when they landed at Gallipoli.

First, she had viewed the Sphinx from a vessel out at sea.

“It looked pretty mellow, and they slowly moved the boat in towards the coast and the hills got higher and higher,” Penrose Hart said.

“When we got to the beach where I painted this picture from, the hills are hundreds of metres high.”

The artist later tried to climb the lower slopes of The Sphinx, but was soon turned back by vicious thorns on the bushes that hug the hills.

Also on the trip was well-known war historian Brad Manera.

“Brad told us the Australian soldiers lived on these hills for nine months,” Penrose Hart said.

“They had no water. They lived in caves.

“We found a skull. Every time it rains there’s a whole lot more bones exposed.

“The peninsula is a gravesite.”

Penrose Hart was absent from today’s announcement. She was painting former battlefields on the Western Front, again on an artists’ tour.

Just one Australian horse returned from the war in Europe, and it is the subject of Alison Mackay’s entry in the Gallipoli Art Prize.

Sandy, a 10-year-old bay gelding, was the mount of General Bridges who was killed at Gallipoli. It was Bridges’ dying wish that the horse should return to Australia at war’s end.

Andrea Malone painted a Vietnam veteran with post traumatic stress disorder, Christian Morrow painted the grandfather who was “an unknowable presence” in his life, and Geoff

Harvey depicted the famous Australian artist Margaret Preston helping rehabilitate returned soldiers by teaching them craft.

All 39 finalists will be on display at the Gallipoli Club in Sydney from tomorrow (April 20) until April 28.