

## Gallipoli Art Prize awarded to Amanda Hart for painting of 'sacred burial ground' at Anzac Cove

By Chloe Hart

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PHOTO: Winning work The Sphinx, Perpetual Peace by Amanda Penrose Hart (ABC News: Chloe Hart)

**Sydney-based artist Amanda Penrose Hart has won the 2017 Gallipoli Art Prize for her painting of the beach at Gallipoli where the Anzacs first landed more than 100 years ago.**

MAP: Sydney 2000

The Sphinx, Perpetual Peace took out the coveted national award capturing the harsh environment of the now overgrown burial site.

"I found it an extremely moving place to paint and I called it Perpetual Peace because that's where they lived for nine months in those hills," Hart said.

"That's actually where they are now, no bodies were repatriated so they are there in perpetual peace."

Hart visited Gallipoli peninsula in 2013 and 2014 to compose the painting.

### Painting depicts 'sacred burial ground'

The large and striking piece depicts the towering hills, steep terrain and barbed wire-like vegetation which confronted soldiers in 1915.

"To some the land is just a tourist site, but it's also a sacred burial ground," she said.

"In the past 100 years, it's been rejuvenated by vegetation, grasses spread like wildfire - camouflaging thousands of body parts buried within."

Hart was thrilled by the win, with the work taking more than a year to create.

"I used oil to keep building it up until I get the perspective, starting at the beach which is a low point and moving up to the sphinx which is incredibly high and dominates the entire coastline."

President of the Gallipoli Memorial Club, John Robertson, went to Gallipoli for the 2015 centenary and said the artwork embodied the landscape perfectly.

"For me the win is very personal because it evokes the feelings of when I was there, that patch of land is sacred," he said.

This year saw a record number of entries in the competition, which started in 2005.

"We had 110 entries of very high quality, and exceptional range of mediums and 39 finalists and we struggled to fit them all on the walls," Mr Robertson said.

Ahead of Tuesday's Anzac celebrations, the award recognises the values of respect, loyalty, love of country, courage and comradeship and aims to keep those messages alive.

"The works form a permanent reminder to society of those sacrifices and evoke those same values," Mr Robertson said.



PHOTO: Finalist Noel Kelly painted The Last Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel (ABC News: Chloe Hart)



PHOTO: Finalist Andrea Malone with her portrait of Thommo, a veteran who had PTSD. (ABC News: Chloe Hart)

## Veterans' suffering and trauma also portrayed

Andrea Malone was also among the finalists for her portrait Thommo of a conscripted Vietnam veteran who struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The former machine gunner has since formed a PTSD veterans' support group.

"Fifty years after, these guys are still suffering and most people don't know that - but through art you can educate people and a picture's worth a thousand words," Malone said.

"They all have that thousand-yard stare where their faces are in repose, you can see the damage that's been done to them."

Malone said the veterans were able overcome the tragedies they faced in war by supporting each other and using humour.

"Early intervention with PTSD is far more effective [now] so early diagnosis, early treatment must be part of their service," she said.

"We must constantly be reminded of the Anzacs, especially as soldiers are still returning from war with mental health problems, if we are going to send people to war we have to support them."

The winning painting and 38 other finalists are on public display at Sydney's Gallipoli Memorial Club this week.

**Topics:** anzac-day, sydney-2000, turkey, australia