

03 October - 09 November 2008



Congratulations JUDE RAE Winner 2008 Portia Geach Memorial Award

Australia's most significant prize for celebrating the creativity of Australian female portrait artists, the **Portia Geach Memorial Award**, has been won by **JUDE RAE** for her work *Self Portrait 2008, (the year my husband left)*. Rae first won this Award in 2005 for her work *Large Interior (Micky Allan)*.

The winner for 2008 *Portia Geach Memorial Award*, valued at \$18,000, was announced Thursday 2 October at the National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney. Fenella Kernebone, ABC TV & radio presenter, officially opened the exhibition.

This year's Judging Panel congratulated Rae for *Self Portrait 2008 (the year my husband left)*, which stood out progressively more clearly throughout the judging process.

Commenting on her win, Rae said, "In 2005 it was a very special honour to receive The Portia Geach Award, It is doubly an honour to be awarded the 2008 Portia Geach, a second time and after only three years!"

I painted this self portrait whilst pondering my new status as a single middle aged woman on the unstable income of an artist, 'self employed'. It is based on Velasquez' *Las Meninas (The Handmaidens)* which I saw recently, along with the collection of his astonishing paintings at the Prado in Madrid. I have taken great liberties with the master's work, reversing the composition and subtracting the key figures of the Infanta and her retinue, and the royal parents who are mirrored in the dark interior of the original. Only the dog remains, with me standing in the place of Velasquez himself, under the glare of the studio lights. I do not envy his position but I do aspire to his subtle virtuosity and breadth of vision. There is something intensely compassionate in his portraits of royalty and courtiers, jesters and buffoons alike. These characterizations reveal all the complexities, burdens, negotiations and compromises of 17thC Spanish court life from top to bottom.

The self portrait is my first acrylic painting ever. It was a steep and rewarding learning curve for me and I hope it is indicative of the new developments in my work," Rae concluded.

The Judging Panel also highly commended

Jo Bertini

Luise Hercus at the Widows' Waterhole – Yarluyendi Country

Shonah Tescott

Wendy Sharpe in Paris.

Judges for the 2008 Award were Barry Pearce, Aida Tomescu and Jane Watters.

294 artists entered this year's competition with 56 being selected for the exhibition. Commenting on this year's entries, the Judging Panel was particularly impressed by the freshness and the diversity of approach to the challenge of portrait painting displayed by the artists. The judges believed they were amongst some of the best they have judged over the last decade.

First awarded in 1965 to Jean Appleton for her work "*Self Portrait*", the *Portia Geach Memorial Award* continues to play a major role in developing the profiles of many of Australia's female artists.



Public viewing 03 October - 09 November 2008

PUBLIC PROGRAM of artists' talks Sundays at 3pm*

SUNDAY 12 October at 3pm

Artist Talk - JUDE RAE, Winner 2008 Portia Geach Memorial Award

The trustee is Trust Company of Australia and the Award is organised by Cauz Group Pty Limited.

ENDS

MEDIA INFORMATION & INTERVIEWS:

S.H. Ervin Gallery: Leah Haynes Tel: 02 9258 0150 lhaynes@nsw.nationaltrust.org.au
Award administrator: Petrea Salter Tel: 02 9144 2415 psalter@cauzgroup.com.au

S.H.ERVIN GALLERY National Trust Centre, Watson Road, Observatory Hill, Sydney
Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Sunday: 11.00 am– 5.00 pm (Closed Mondays & Public Holidays)
Admission: \$6, \$4 national trust members, seniors & concessions
Group bookings & school tours available. Bookings *essential*.
Education Officer: PH: 9258 0122 (Tuesday – Friday)
Public Program: Series of Guest Talks, including exhibiting artists, Sundays at 3pm
(*subject to availability and may change without notice)
Gallery Front Desk: PH: 02 9258 0173
General information: www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au
Trust Café PH: 9258 0175 Bookings advised.

ABOUT JUDE RAE

Jude Rae was born in Sydney in 1956. From 1976 to 1988 she studied at the University of Sydney and College of Fine Arts (UNSW) where she also lectured and tutored in Art History/Theory. Her first solo exhibition was at Painters Gallery in 1987. In 1988 she was awarded an Australia Council Residency in Paris after which she moved to New Zealand with her husband. While living in New Zealand from 1990 to 1998 she was awarded an MA from the University of Canterbury, worked in a variety of jobs including arts administrator and university tutor and lecturer, and consolidated her practice as a painter.

Since returning to Australia Jude has taught at the National Art School in Sydney and the ANU School of Art in Canberra. In 2005 she won the Portia Geach Memorial Award with her portrait of fellow artist Micky Allen. A monograph on Jude Rae's work with text by Justin Paton, was published by Ouroboros Publications in 2006. Her work is primarily represented by Jensen Gallery in Auckland New Zealand. Jude Rae is represented by Helen Maxwell Gallery in Canberra and Jonathan Smart Gallery in Christchurch (NZ). Her work is held in public and private collections in Australia and New Zealand. Jude is currently enrolled as a PhD candidate at the ANU School of Art and lives in Canberra with her dog Tilly.

ABOUT THE PORTIA GEACH MEMORIAL AWARD

http://www.trust.com.au/philanthropy/awards/portia_geach

The *Portia Geach Memorial Award* is a celebration of female Australian artists. It is Australia's most prestigious portrait prize for female artists. Established by Florence Kate Geach in 1961 in memory of her sister, Portia Geach, it is awarded each year to the best portrait painted from life of some man or woman distinguished in Art, Letters or the Sciences. Since 1965, the Award has played a major role in developing the profiles of Australia's women artists, and is now recognised as one of the most important celebrations of the talents and creativity of female portrait painters. Past winners include Jean Appleton (1965), Elizabeth Cummings (1972), Brenda Humble (1982), Jenny Sages (1992 and 1994), Wendy Sharpe (1995 and 2003) Nerissa Lea (2004), (Lucy Culliton (2006), Maryanne Coutts (2007)