

# Paddington artist Nick Stathopoulos paints Geoff Ostling for Archibald Prize

THE face is a prominent feature in most Archibald Prize portraits, but what happens when the subject's public persona is derived from other bodily features?

This was the dilemma that Paddington artist Nick Stathopoulos was faced with when he sat down to paint retired history teacher Geoff Ostling.

The resulting painting, which depicts a completely naked Ostling from behind, was last week named as a finalist in the coveted prize.

Ostling is an art lover who had his body tattooed from head to toe.

He was thrust into the media spotlight last year when he pledged to donate his skin to the National Gallery in Canberra.

"He'd been getting some exposure and is a bit of an identity in the gay community so I thought it was a good time to paint him," said Stathopoulos, whose portrait of film critic David Stratton was an Archibald finalist in 2008.

"The main reasons I chose that pose was that he's not that type of celebrity whose face is simply recognised – his



identity is derived from his tattoos.

"I also didn't want the painting to be something out of a freak show, so it solved several issues."

Ostling's body is adorned with pictures of Australian native flowers, tattooed onto his skin over a 15-year period.

"I think they're gorgeous and I wanted to get them as accurate as humanly possible," Stathopoulos said.

While he normally only takes two weeks out of his schedule to complete an Archibald entry, the portrait of Ostling, titled *The bequest*, took more than five weeks to paint.

"A lot of labour went into this one but the end result was worth it," Stathopoulos said.

Ostling's desire is for his body art to be appreciated, so it was no surprise he was delighted when the painting was



named as a finalist.

"It's unlike anything else I've ever seen in the Archibald and I just hope it wins," Ostling said.

"It's different – seven feet tall, larger than life and just amazing. Very, very beautiful."

Stathopoulos said he was honoured that his work was chosen to be hung in the NSW Art Gallery.

"A lot of people get to see the work, it travels around and the exposure is fantastic," he said.

"It's a strong year, there are some many beautiful pieces and it's getting so hard to get into the finalist list, so I'm really happy."

To see photos of Nick and Geoff, check out our photos section.

*Article from Wentworth Courier  
by Menios Constantinou*



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Date Tues 6 April, Fri 9 April, Tues 13 April & Fri 16 April

Time 10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue Nicholson Museum, In the Main Quadrangle of the University of Sydney

Cost \$10 per child, Parents Free -Bookings are essential as places are limited

Contact 02 9351 2812

Language English

[www.greekfestivalofsydney.com.au](http://www.greekfestivalofsydney.com.au)



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