

MARK BAGALLY

Winner: Contemporary Art Awards 2019

A Pensive Moment

By Di Erlichman

Victorian artist, Mark Bagally (b.1961) won first prize in the Contemporary Art Awards 2019, for his painting *Self-Portrait* (2018). Mark dispensed with his usual landscape imagery and realistic application to detail and created an internal world using broad painterly strokes and layers of complementary colour to create mood and depth. Consequently, the work illustrates a vibrant self-portrait of the artist in a pensive moment.

The painting depicts a dark solitary figure in the lower two-thirds of the painting's right side. Here, the subject is positioned front on, gazing directly at the viewer. Behind the body is a painterly abstract background conceived in a compelling colour scheme of rose, cream, umber and phthalo-blue. The background provides depth and movement and juxtaposes the stillness of the figure. The use of light and shadow also creates a dynamic effect causing the character to protrude from the painting's surface.

Using the fat-over-lean method, Mark started with a wash of acrylic paint and extender to give a warm under-glow to the substrate then finalised the work with a dripped and translucent contrast to the overpainting in thick oil. Mark calls the act of painting his 'obsession' and believes that portraiture can capture the character and 'spirit' of the subject. If this can be accomplished the artwork can have a profound effect on the viewer.

Mark's self-portrait creates an intimate moment for the viewer. By portraying himself in a contemplative state, it not only offers audience members an introspection into the depth of his inner world, but it also reminds us that contemplation is often needed to help direct one's attention in any circumstance.



Mark predominately paints seascapes and landscapes created in his art studio. His work often depicts moodiness and can instil a sense of calmness, particularly with his larger paintings. He is currently studying Visual Arts at Oxygen College in Geelong and has been a recipient of a number of awards including winner of the DAFT Art Competition Torquay 2017, a finalist in Contemporary Art Awards 2018, and the winner of the People's Choice Award in the Surfcoast Arts Inc Exhibition Anglesea 2018. Mark sits on several art-related committees including Surfcoast Arts Inc and Surfcoast Arts Trail Committee run by the local shire.

On this page, *Self-Portrait* (2018) , oil on board, 40 x 51cm.

Image courtesy of the artist

Mark Bagally's artwork can be viewed at:
<http://www.contemporaryartawards/finalist-exhibition-2019.com>