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<<http://www.theguardian.com/arts/gallery/2007/jun/15/1>>.

Culture

BP Portrait Prize 2007

Following a record number of entries, four artists have been shortlisted for the 2007 BP Portrait Award, one of Britain's most prestigious art prizes, the winner of which will be announced on Wednesday June 20. The artists in the running for the £25,000 award are Johan Andersson, Paul Emsley, David Lawton and Hynek Martinec, whose work is currently on display alongside that of 60 other contestants at the National Portrait Gallery in London. The images that follow give a taste of the show.

Friday 15 June 2007 16.50 BST Last modified on Monday 18 June 2007 16.50 BST



Tamara (oil on canvas, 1000 x 734mm), by the first of four shortlisted artists Johan Andersson, currently studying fine art at Central St Martin's Art and Design College, London. His work was exhibited as part of the Direction 2007 Group show at London's Lethaby Gallery. This portrait is of his 21-year-old friend Tamara, the shyness of whose demeanour adds a silent tension to the work. "This insecurity of posing nude is evident in the awkwardness of the pose," Andersson says.

Johan Andersson



Zuzana in Paris Studio (acrylic on wooden board, 1300 x 1100mm), by the second shortlisted artist Hynek Martinec. Martinec was born in Broumov, Czech Republic, but currently works as a freelance painter in Prague, London and Paris. This large portrait depicts the artist's girlfriend Zuzana Jungmanova, captured in startling close-up.
Hynek Martinec



Michael Simpson (oil on canvas, 1370 x 1120 mm), by Paul Emsley, the third name on the shortlist. Emsley has exhibited widely and won several prizes. His portrait is a large close-up of 67-year-old artist Michael Simpson. "I find his face and head visually interesting and with a strong presence," Emsley says. "I feel it is essentially European, particularly carrying something of the history of Eastern Europe."

Paul Emsley



Stephen (oil on canvas panel, 270 x 200mm), by the fourth artist on the shortlist David Lawton. Lawton is a night support worker for the charity Turning Point. His last entry for the BP Portrait Award, in 2000, featured exactly the same model as this image - the artist's friend Stephen Player, a San Francisco illustrator. While the last portrait of him was a nude study, this one is a dramatic mugshot-style image.

David Lawton



Lynn Ahrens' Time to Talk (oil on canvas, 720 x 590mm). Ahrens was born in Glasgow and lives in Edinburgh. Her work has been exhibited in numerous group exhibitions in Scotland and England.

Lynn Ahrens



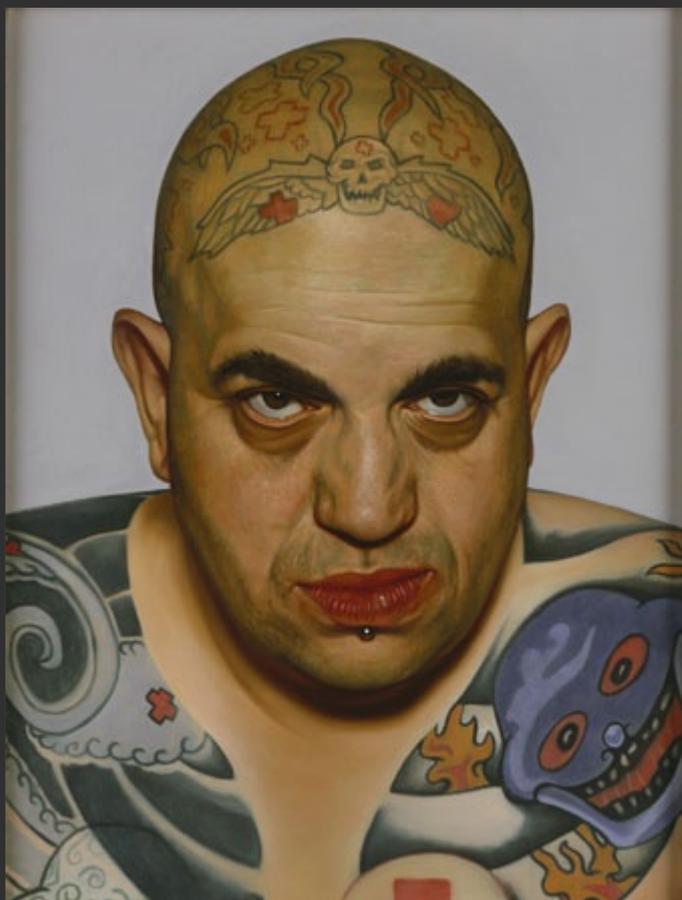
Ana Maria Micu's Self-portrait (oil on canvas, 500 x 500 mm). Ana Maria Micu was born in Romania, and is based in Bucharest. She completed her MA in Painting at the University of Art and Design of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Her work has been exhibited in a solo show at the Aniad Art Gallery, Bucharest, in 2006, and in numerous group exhibitions. This is the second year that her work has been exhibited in the BP Portrait Award exhibition.

Ana Maria Micu



Rupert Alexander's portrait of Christopher Darroux-Xavier (oil on canvas, 600 x 440mm). Rupert Alexander is based in Middlesex and trained at the Florence Academy of Art. His work has been exhibited in a solo exhibition at Quadrant House, London in 2005 and in several group shows. The portrait of Christopher Darroux-Xavier was painted exclusively from life.

Rupert Alexander



Jeremy Andrews' portrait of Franko B (oil on canvas, 400 x 340mm). Jeremy Andrews was born in Colchester and lives in Cambridgeshire. He trained in Fine Art at Southampton Institute of Higher Education. His work has been exhibited in several groups shows, and this is the second time his work has been exhibited in the BP Portrait Award exhibition.

Jeremy Andrews