

The Portia Geach Memorial Award 2026

About the award

The Portia Geach Memorial Award was established by the will of the late Florence Kate Geach in memory of her sister, artist Portia Geach.

It is awarded by the Trustee for the entry which is of the highest artistic merit, '...for the best portrait painted from life of some man or woman distinguished in art, letters or the sciences by any female artist resident in Australia during the twelve months preceding the closing date for entries'.

How do I qualify?

An applicant must be a female artist who is an Australian citizen or British born and have been resident in Australia during the twelve months preceding 15 August 2025.

Paintings must be:

- an original work and must not infringe copyright;
- executed entirely during the year commencing 14 August 2025;
- completed by the date of submission;
- a portrait, painted from life, of some man or woman distinguished in Art, Letters or the Sciences. (Please note that self-portraits are accepted for this award);
- two-dimensional and must use the medium of paint.

Refer 'Eligibility' section for full entry conditions and requirements.



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Key information

Prize - \$30,000

Applications open
April 2026

Applications close
Friday 14 August 2026 midnight
EST

Completed application forms and all relevant attachments must be received by this date

Pre-selection of works by judges via submitted materials

August 2026
Applicants will be advised via email if artworks are selected for the finalist exhibition

Delivery of selected paintings

Thursday 10, Friday 11., Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 September 2026
Selected paintings must be delivered to nominated collection point pre-exhibition (details will be sent to relevant applicants)

Announcement of winner

Thursday 17 September 2026

Exhibition closes to public*

Sunday 1 November 2026

Exhibition works to be collected from nominated collection point

Tuesday 3, Wednesday 4, Thursday 5, Friday 6 & Saturday 7 November 2026

Trustee:

Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd

Award Administrator:

S H Ervin Gallery
T: 02 9258 0140
E: shervingallery@nationaltrust.com.au
www.shervingallery.com.au

To apply visit

www.shervingallery.com.au

Terms and conditions

Eligibility

Applicants must fulfil the following conditions and requirements.

1. An applicant must be a female artist who is an Australian citizen or British born and have been resident in Australia during the twelve months preceding 14 August 2026.
2. An applicant's painting must be:
 - a. executed entirely during the year commencing 14 August 2025;
 - b. completed by the date of submission;
 - c. a portrait, painted from life, of some man or woman distinguished in Art, Letters or the Sciences. (Please note that self-portraits are accepted for this award);
 - d. two-dimensional and must use the medium of paint.
3. If any doubt should arise as to the eligibility of any entry under Conditions 1 or 2, the Trustee may seek the guidance and advice of the Director of the Art Gallery of NSW, or the Dean of the appropriate faculty of the University of Sydney. Any decision on eligibility approved by the Trustee shall be final and binding.
4. The maximum size of paintings that will be accepted is 210cm high by 300cm wide.
5. Sculpture, photographic and video works are not eligible.
6. Collaborative works are not eligible.
7. The sitter of the portrait must be known to the artist and aware of the artist's intention and have had at least one 'sitting' with the artist for the portrait. From the sitting, the artist is allowed to take photographs of their subject which they can refer to in the completion of their works.
1. The applicant must submit a JPEG image file of their artwork via the online application: <https://www.shervgallery.com.au/enter-the-portia-geach-memorial-award/>
2. The applicant must submit an online application form and confirm their acceptance of the Terms and Conditions via the online system. The application process closes at Midnight EST on 14 August 2025.
3. The applicant must submit an artistic statement via the online system with the application form. Files must be PDF files or Microsoft Word documents. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all files are readable on PC. Mac files are not acceptable. The artistic statement should be no more than 180 words in total.
4. The applicant must submit a signed statement from their subject agreeing to the portrait being entered in the award and consenting for the Gallery to use the image for publicity (non-exclusive) in perpetuity. The sitter's statement must be attached to the online entry form.
5. The applicant must forward an administration fee of \$50.00 for each entry via the online payment portal. Entries are not valid without an entry fee. There are no refunds under any circumstances. CASH WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Ensure your name and artwork details are clear on the online payment.
6. There is no limit to the number of entries an artist may submit, but each entry must have a separate application and online payment.
7. Receipt of payment will be issued by email.
8. Late applications will not be accepted.
9. No correspondence will be entered into with applicants after submissions have been made.
10. The winning applicant must submit either a passport or birth certificate to show citizenship or evidence of residency as support material.
11. Dates listed under 'Key Dates' must be strictly adhered to by the applicant. There are no exceptions to this rule.
12. All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by email.

Application requirements

Each applicant must complete the following requirements in order to be eligible for this award. Physical paintings are not required for the initial judging. The initial selection is to be completed from digital images submitted via the online form. Only works selected for the exhibition will need to be sent.

Exhibition

1. Only finalists' artworks, selected by the judges, will be exhibited at S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney from Friday 18 September – 1 November 2026 (dates may be subject to change).
2. All finalists who will have their work exhibited will be contacted by email to inform them of the selection and next steps, including transportation and timing information.
3. All finalists must organise delivery of their artworks to the Gallery. Artworks will not be accepted by the Gallery unless free of all freight and other charges incurred in delivery. No freight or other charges incurred for the return of the artworks will be met by the Gallery.
4. The Trustee reserves the right to publicly exhibit a selection of entries, including the winning entry, for a period following the announcement of the award.
5. By entering this award, you the artist acknowledge and agree that whilst the Trustee and S.H. Ervin Gallery will exercise all reasonable care with the artworks submitted. All care but no responsibility is taken for work/s delivered wet.
6. A 33 ⅓% commission will be charged on all works sold during the exhibition for unrepresented artists. Artists with Sydney gallery representation will be charged 40% commission which will be split with the representative Gallery.
7. The Gallery recommends each artist maintains their own insurance for packing and transit to and from the Gallery. Whilst the works are in the care, custody or control of the Gallery, the Gallery will provide cover in accordance with the NSW Treasury Managed Fund Statement of Cover. Cover will commence upon receipt of delivery at the Gallery until such time as the work is collected.
8. The Gallery will attribute the artist when exhibiting, reproducing or publishing the work or communicating the work to the public.
9. The Gallery will generally reproduce the work in full. However, details of the work may be used under the licence above at the Gallery's discretion, and the artist consents to any such use. The Gallery will not make other material changes to the work without the prior written consent of the artist.

10. The Gallery reserves the right to not display any entry to the award.

Judges and judging process

The prize shall be awarded to the entry which, on the recommendation of the majority of judges, is considered to have the highest artistic merit.

If the majority of judges consider that there is no entry of sufficiently high merit to warrant the award, no prize will be awarded.

The majority decision of the judges, and of the Trustee on the interpretation of all award rules and conditions, shall be final and legally binding, and no correspondence will be entered into with regard to the judges' decision.

The judges' names are not disclosed until after the judging process.

If at any time after the award has been granted to any entry, a majority of judges determine that the entry did not comply with the conditions of entry or eligibility, the award may be withdrawn from that entry and the artist must immediately repay the prize money to the Trustee. In the event that an award is withdrawn from an entry pursuant to this condition, the other entries which were submitted in the same year may be reconsidered for the award; otherwise no award will be conferred in respect of that year.

Whilst it is expected that these conditions will be strictly observed, the Trustee reserves the right to waive compliance with or alter any conditions between Award periods.

The prize money is \$30,000 and no further funds will be distributed. The award recipient should obtain their own professional advice in respect of any taxation implications

Publicity and promotion

By entering this award and if selected as a finalist, you the artist grant the Trustee and the Gallery, a non-exclusive perpetual licence to reproduce any material or entry/ies by electronic or print media or on television leading up to, or for the duration of the exhibition, and thereafter, to further advertise and in other ways publicise the Portia Geach Memorial Award, and any other arts scholarships/awards in its portfolio.

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