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Kalabishis takes out Rick Amor Prize

Artist Gina Kalabishis awarded for her 'ghostly' black and white drawing

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26 Feb 2014

Melbourne award winning artist Gina Kalabishis has another award to put on her mantelpiece, having taken out the Rick Amor Drawing Prize for her work, Untitled.

Along with the prestige, Gina also takes home \$12,000 in prize money and will have her work displayed alongside the other 72 shortlisted entrants till 23 March at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

Her work, a beautiful monochrome drawing of a flower arrangement emerging from blackness, captured the eyes of judge Alisa Bunbury, of the National Gallery of Victoria, for its "ghostly form".

"It harks back to the genre of Dutch still life paintings and to Japanese ikebana, but by omitting colours, so integrally associated with flowers, it also evokes the idea of the memento mori, the visual reminder that death approaches, and is unavoidable," she said.

The work of art actually came from Gina's short artist residency at the Harry Brooks Anatomy and Pathology Museum at the University of Melbourne in February 2013 and was a part of a series of drawings that included bones.

The museum is actually closed to the public and doesn't permit photography, so Gina was forced to sit and draw, something she says was actually very useful.

"Sometimes an image doesn't give you that information you need or the essence," she tells Neos Kosmos.

The inspiration for her work actually came from a much deeper place, after Gina returned home to draw.

"When I was drawing I was thinking of my mum and dad," she says.

"My mum and dad passed away, my dad when I was 16 and my mum when I was 23.

"My dad died from a heart attack, and five years later my mum got breast cancer and then it



http://neoskosmos.com/news/sites/default/files/2014/February/Kalabishis_gina.jpg

Gina Kalabishis' award winning work, 'Untitled'.

traveled to her bones. That's when I saw her in absolute agony and it was a really traumatic time. I saw death really early."

Her piece reflects those thoughts with the mood but also its physical form, with Gina actually drawing her dad's lung and her mother's breast within the flower arrangement surrounded by bones as the stems.

"All the flowers have lost their colour, they've faded in a way," she adds.

The prize is thanks to one of Australia's leading artists, Rick Amor, who sponsors the award for small drawings at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

The award is a way to give people one more reason to keep drawing on paper, Amor hopes.

You can see Gina Kalabishis' award winning artwork along with the other shortlisted entrants at the Rick Amor Drawing Prize 2014 Exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ballarat, 40 Lydiard Street North, Ballarat, until March 23.

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