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THE BALD ARCHYS ARRIVE IN MELBOURNE ON JUNE 30

When the Archibald Prize comes along, you can be sure the irreverent Bald Archys can't be far behind.

Dubbed “the most eccentric event on the Australian arts calendar” and recently acknowledged by Queen Elizabeth II, the Bald Archy Prize, now in its 14th year, can be witty, whimsical, a little melancholy, hilarious and sometimes just downright outrageous. There's always something for everyone in this ‘people's’ exhibition, the spoof of the more serious Archibald, as the Melbourne public can discover from Saturday 30 June, when this year's collection of more than 40 finalists opens at City Museum at Old Treasury in Spring Street at the top of Collins, where the swag of hilarious portraits will be on view for four weeks.

The 2007 exhibition has been breaking attendance records since its Preview exhibition which opened in Wagga Wagga in early February. Since then hordes more fans have visited the show in Sydney, Canberra and Coffs Harbour, breaking attendance records at all venues.

When asked to describe this year's exhibition, the founder and director, Peter Batey OAM, commented, “Imagine walking into a room and coming face to face with Bronwyn Bishop, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Eddie Maguire, Mel Gibson, Malcolm Turnbull, Bindi Irwin, Naomi Robson, Barry Humphries, Germaine Greer, Hugh Jackman, and Kylie Minogue. It's pretty confronting – and that's about half of the celebrities hanging on the walls. Once over the initial surprise, it's great to see people

smiling, chuckling and occasionally guffawing with laughter, and placing their vote in the people's choice competition.

The Bald Archys were shown in Melbourne for the first time in 2004 at the Meat Market's Gallery B, where it was obvious that Melbourne's art lovers were not as much swayed by 'political correctness' as their Sydney counterparts. This year's winner, a double portrait of Barry Humphries and Dame Edna Everage, is a good example of the satirical aspect of the Bald Archy Prize of \$5000, along with Maude's larrikin savviness.

It is the general opinion that this year's collection is the most entertaining so far, achieving its aim of poking fun at the serious and often detached world of art competitions, while providing an accessible, populist exhibition.

As always, the competition is judged by the now notorious sulphur-crested cockatoo, Maude, who this year, shows her knowledge of the contemporary art scene and demonstrates that her decision 'defies criticism'.

WHAT:

The 2007 Bald Archy Prize

WHEN:

30 June to 29 July 2007

WHERE:

City Museum at Old Treasury, Spring Street, Melbourne

For more information please contact:

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The 2007 Bald Archy Prize

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