



Smithsonian
*Donald W. Reynolds Center for
American Art and Portraiture*
National Portrait Gallery

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006

What is the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006?

Since the beginning of time, artists have given voice to their thoughts and feelings, hopes and ideals, by depicting something we all possess—the human form. In fact, painting and sculpture are two of the most traditional media employed by artists.

During the last few decades of the twentieth century, artists such as Lucien Freud, Alice Neel, Chuck Close, Philip Pearlstein, Duane Hanson and Alex Katz—who all made innovative and compelling portraits—were few in number. Recently, however, many of today’s emerging artists are using portraiture or self-portraiture to explore complex issues of identity, race, and gender and at the same time to test the boundaries of the genre of figurative art.

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, in recognition of this trend and as part of its increasing engagement with contemporary portraiture, began its inaugural Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition in the summer of 2005. Named for the late Virginia Outwin Boochever, a former NPG volunteer whose generous gift endowed this program, this inaugural competition and resulting exhibition focused on innovation and excellence in portrait painting and sculpture.

From more than 4,000 entries received, the jury chose 51 painted and sculpted finalist portraits, which will comprise the lead exhibition for the Gallery’s July 2006 reopening.

How do you define “portrait”?

In the broadest sense of the word! There are many valid approaches for representing an individual, some of which may not even include a face. But the work entered must be based on your direct contact with a living individual, and the human figure must predominate.

Did the subject of the portrait matter? Were the portraits of famous people?

No. We received a range of portraits, with diverse subjects. The common theme to each eligible portrait was that it was based on the artist’s direct contact with that person. Self-portraits were also accepted.

Has anyone ever held a national portrait competition before?

Yes. Although this is the first national portrait competition to be held in the United States, the OBPC 2006 is similar in some ways to the annual BP Award held at the English National Portrait Gallery in London. Check out their Web site at www.npg.org.uk to see examples of contemporary portraiture exhibited there, as well as commissions created by past winners.

Who were the judges?

The seven-member jury was composed of the following persons:

- Carolyn K. Carr, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- Trevor Fairbrother, Independent Scholar and Curator, Boston, Mass.
- Brandon Fortune, Associate Curator of Painting & Sculpture, Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- Thelma Golden, Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Programs, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New

York, N.Y.

- Sidney Goodman, Artist, Philadelphia, Pa.
- Marc Pachter, Director, Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- Katy Siegel, Associate Professor of Art History and Criticism, Hunter College, CUNY, and Contributing Editor, *Artforum*

What are the awards?

The first prize is \$25,000 and a commission to paint a portrait for the National Portrait Gallery's permanent collection. The second prize will be \$5,000. The third prize will be \$3,000. Up to four artists may be commended for their work, and they will receive \$1,000 each.

How will the commission be awarded to the winner?

The Gallery is poised to begin to commission portraits of remarkable Americans for its collection in all media. NPG will determine a working list of possible subjects from the worlds of the arts, science, business, entertainment, sports, and public service. The winning artist will then work with the Gallery to select a subject from the list and arrange sittings.

Was there an entry fee and, if so, why?

The OBPC was made possible through a generous gift from the late Virginia Outwin Boochever, a former volunteer at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, who initiated this program to invigorate the art of portraiture in the United States and to offer support to artists. The costs of launching and administering a national competition are great, however. Therefore, the Gallery charged a minimal entry fee to offset some of these costs, so that Mrs. Boochever's gift can continue to support future competitions.

If I am a semifinalist or a finalist, will my work be insured?

Yes. The work will be insured "wall-to-wall," and will be shipped to and from Washington, D.C., at the Gallery's expense.

Can the artwork be offered for sale during the period it is entered in the competition?

No.

Do I have to relinquish my copyright?

No. The copyright in all paintings and sculptures submitted for the Portrait Competition and which are exhibited will remain the property of the artist. But it is a condition of entry that the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery shall have the irrevocable right of free reproduction of all exhibited paintings and sculptures for the exhibition publication, postcards, prints, posters, and other products, its Web site (or other electronic outlets), publicity, educational, and reference purposes in connection with the Portrait Competition and the resulting exhibition, and other standard museum uses.

If I was featured on Portrait of an Artist, does that mean I'm a finalist?

No. Artists featured on Portrait of an Artist were chosen at random for the duration of the Competition in 2005. This in no way affected their status in the competition. In addition, a variety of the seven Competition finalists will also be featured on Portrait of an Artist in the spring and summer of 2006.

Will the National Portrait Gallery hold similar portrait competitions in the future?

Yes. The Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition will be held every three years, so please check our Web site regularly for news and announcements.

Will future competitions also focus on painting and sculpture?

No. The inaugural Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition focused on painting and sculpture because

these are two traditional media that have been used by figurative and portrait artists. Future competitions will feature photography and other media.

How can I enter a future portrait competition?

Remember to check our Web site, www.npg.si.edu, regularly, since we will first post competition news and announcements there.

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