



April 5, 2005

**Media only:** Shonali Burke, Ruder Finn (202) 974 -5027  
Vicki Moeser, National Portrait Gallery (202) 357-2627, ext. 111

## The Sun Rises on a New Era in Figurative Art

*Former volunteer funds the National Portrait Gallery's first-ever  
Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006*

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery announces the first-ever Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2006. Named for Virginia Outwin Boochever, a former Portrait Gallery volunteer whose generous gift has endowed this program, this competition aims to launch a new direction for the Gallery as it welcomes figurative art into the 21st century.

"The later 20th century saw some brilliant figurative artists who made compelling portraits, but they were relatively few in number," said Marc Pachter, the Gallery's director. "Now, however, many artists are turning to figurative art and portraiture to explore complex issues of identity, so this is a particularly exciting time to work in this genre."

A 19-year volunteer with the Gallery, Boochever was inspired by well-established portrait competitions at the National Portrait Gallery in London and Australia's Art Gallery of New South Wales to support the Gallery's goal of a similar competition in the United States. With her generous gift, the National Portrait Gallery now has the resources to establish a portrait competition of its own and encourage contemporary portraiture, especially among emerging and mid-career artists.

The inaugural competition will run from June 1 through Sept. 6. Entries will be accepted online at the Gallery's Web site and will be initially judged using an online jury system. Jurors include the artist Sidney Goodman; Thelma Golden of The Studio Museum in Harlem, N.Y.; independent scholar and curator Trevor Fairbrother; and art critic and scholar Katy Siegel.

This first competition will accept painted and sculpted portraits. All finalist portraits will comprise the lead exhibition for the Gallery's July 2006 reopening. The grand prize of \$25,000 will include a commission to create a portrait of a remarkable living American for the Gallery's permanent collection. Other cash prizes will be awarded for selected works. Additionally, entrants may be featured on "Portrait of an Artist," an online diary which will allow millions of Americans to come face to face with the artists' work, or even win a People's Choice Award.

Future competitions, to be held triennially, will explore other forms of portraiture, including watercolor, drawing, photography, film, video, and electronic and digital media. For more information, visit [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu).



*Alice Neel self-portrait; National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution © Estate of Alice Neel, 1980*

Alice Neel's self-portrait is just one example of modern portraiture in the Gallery's collection.