

studio A

Media Release

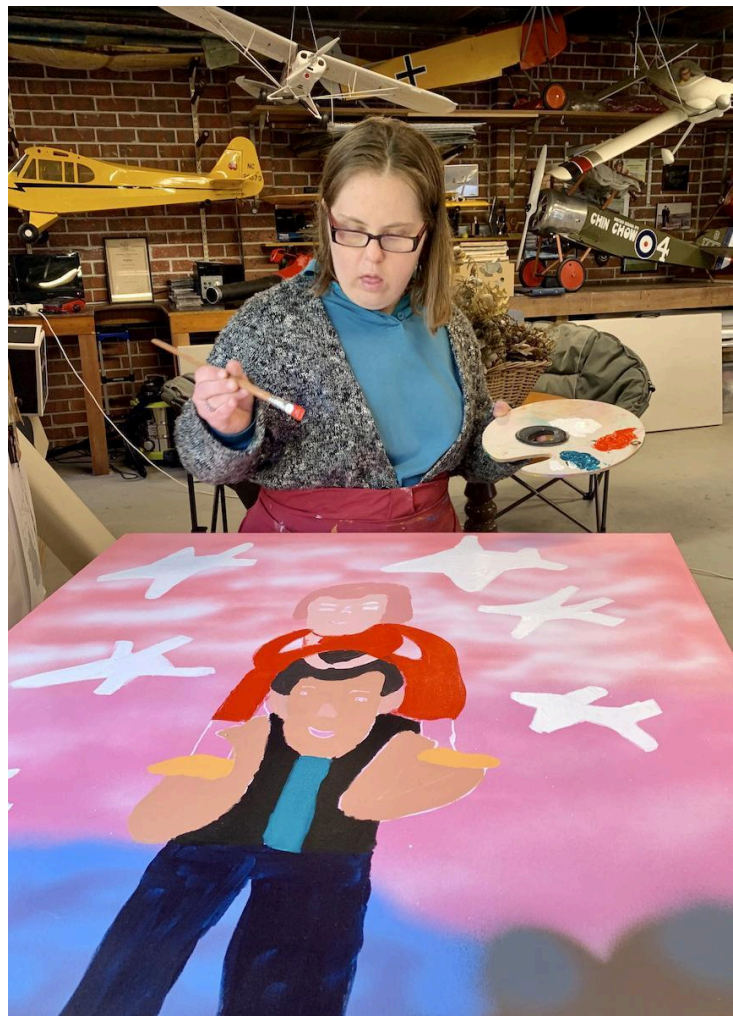
17 September, 2020

The Archibald's first Studio A artist

Emily Crockford is the first artist from Studio A – a social enterprise arts studio that supports neurodiverse artists - to be named a finalist in Australia's most prestigious and oldest art prize, the Archibald Prize.

Emily's vibrant self-portrait, which is painted in acrylic on a large canvas (80.3 x 2000cm), depicts the artist surrounded by daisies and model aeroplanes as she sits atop the shoulders of her late father John Crockford who passed away in January 2020.

"I made myself a 'selfie' with memories of my dad. Because we are the best father and the best daughter." said Emily, a 34 year old Sydney based artist with Down syndrome. "It's my dream come true. It's my dream of my Daddy. I watched him flying his beautiful planes in the fields. He made amazing models. This painting is very special to me, because he's my lovely father."



Titled 'Self Portrait with Daddy in the Daisies watching the field of Planes', the painting features Emily's trademark, intricate patterns as it vibrates with pinks and greens and illustrates some of her favourite memories of her father who was an avid creator of model planes.

On being selected as a finalist for the Archibald Prize Emily said, "I'm loving it and so happy! I'm feeling good and great about myself and being in the Archibald. I'm loving it so much. And I love my friends and family, because they're around me and they're supporting my artwork! Kiss kiss hug hug...I am a champion!"

Emily is one of a group of neurodiverse artists from Studio A, a social enterprise that paves professional pathways for artists with intellectual disability by providing a supported studio space and the tools to be successful and renowned visual artists.

"Emily's passion for, and fluency with colour, pattern and paint was a key inspiration in starting Studio A over three years ago. I first encountered her work when she showed me her sketchbooks 5 years ago and was amazed by the strength of her design and the volume of her work. I immediately knew the world needed to experience her art and the way she sees the world." said Gabrielle Mordy, CEO and Artistic Director at Studio A.

Emily's love of neon colour, lively compositions and intricate details has inspired countless works that often feature the patterns and life of the natural environment. She has built a reputation for creating energetic, whimsical artworks, and has become an in-demand artist for the creation of many large-scale murals and hoardings across Sydney for clients including the City of Sydney, Lendlease and WestConnex.

Last year, Emily's Archibald Prize submission, a portrait of artist Rosie Deacon titled 'Funky Jungle Rosie in her Pom Pom Zoo', was selected for the alternative Archibald Prize, the highly-respected Salon des Refusés. In being selected for last year's Salon des Refusés, Emily followed in the footsteps of fellow Studio A artist Thom Roberts, whose portrait of architect Phillip Cox was selected in 2018.

"Recognition as a finalist in the Archibald Prize is a testament to Emily's incredible artistic talent and her professional commitment as an artist. It is equally exciting that Australian cultural institutions are beginning to champion that talent, the voice of artists with intellectual disability and the important role they play in enriching our cultural fabric." Ms. Mordy said.

The exhibition of finalists for the 2020 Archibald Prize will be held at the Art Gallery of NSW from September 26 to January 10, 2021.

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Images: Emily Crockford 'Self Portrait with Daddy in the Daisies watching the field of Planes', 2020, acrylic on canvas, 80.3 x 2000cms

Emily Crockford painting in her home studio in Northern Sydney.

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