

studio A

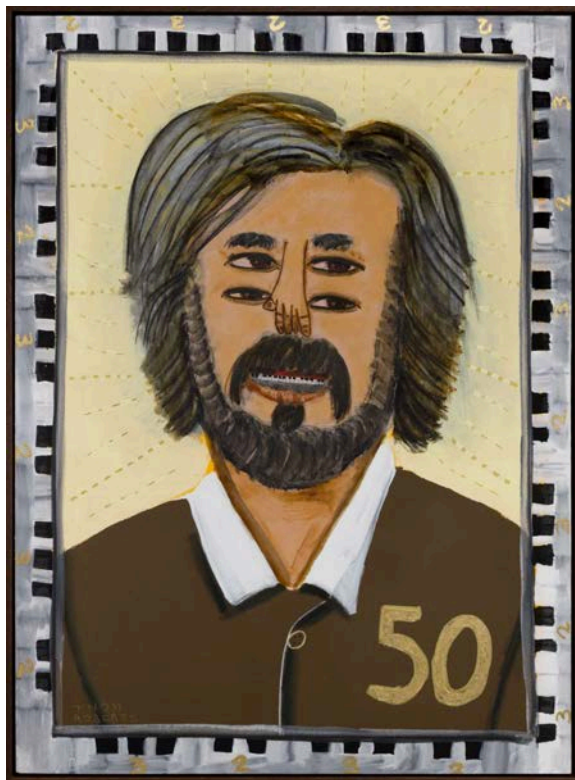
Media Release

30 April, 2026

Seven Years of Archibald Success for Studio A

[Studio A](#) is thrilled to announce that, for the seventh consecutive year, its artists have been selected as finalists in the prestigious Archibald Prize. Daniel Kim and Meagan Pelham have each been named finalists for the fourth time, while Thom Roberts celebrates his fifth inclusion in the renowned portrait prize.

Since 2020, Studio A artists have been shortlisted an impressive 22 times. This achievement reflects both the exceptional quality of their work and the impact of Studio A's support. As a leading supported studio, Studio A is dedicated to empowering artists with intellectual disability to build professional careers and have their voices heard within contemporary Australian culture.



Left: Thom Roberts, *George Harrison is turning 50*, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 127.7cm x 93.7cm. Right: Daniel Kim, *Lesleigh 'Alemais'*, oil on canvas, lace on board, 124.5cm x 93.5cm.

This milestone year also marks Studio A's 10th anniversary, a poignant moment to reflect on a shifting cultural landscape. In 2025, Thom Roberts held a solo exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, and in 2026 Studio A artists continue their strong presence in the Archibald Prize. Internationally, the recent Turner Prize win by Nnena Kalu of ActionSpace (UK) further signals the growing recognition of artists with intellectual disability.

"We're so pleased to see our artists receiving the respect and recognition they deserve," said Studio A CEO and Artistic Director Gabrielle Mordy. "Their success demonstrates what can be achieved when the right support systems are in place."

For this year's Archibald Prize, [Thom Roberts](#) presents a portrait of artist and multiple Archibald finalist Oliver Watts. The two previously collaborated on an Artbank Sydney window exhibition, curated by Thom. Oliver goes by the "Thom name" George Harrison and as such the portrait is titled *George Harrison is turning fifty*, the title celebrating a special anniversary that Thom and Oliver share this year. The portrait features Thom's signature motifs, multiple eyes and piano key teeth, alongside sunbeams referencing a favourite Beatles song.

[Daniel Kim](#)'s elegant oil portrait, *Lesleigh 'Alémais'*, depicts Lesleigh Jermanus, founder and creative director of Australian fashion label Alémais. In 2025, Studio A collaborated with the brand on its Fall '25 collection, with Daniel and fellow artist Greg Sindel contributing artworks across textiles, knitwear and hand-beaded designs. Inspired by lace detailing from the collection, Kim's portrait is presented in a bespoke antique lace frame. Reflecting on the work, Kim said: *"It's so great. Wonderful job, wonderful artist. I am so proud of myself. I'm so excited."*

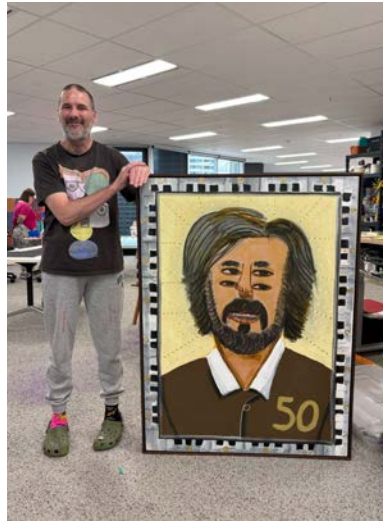
[Meagan Pelham](#) returns to the Archibald with *Dreamland Jessica*, a vibrant portrait of author, podcaster and fellow fashionista Jessica Rowe. The pair met at a Romance Was Born runway show, bonding over a shared love of fashion. Rowe is depicted wearing a pink lace Romance Was Born gown adorned with beaded and sequined heart motifs and poetry by Meagan, alongside her beloved pets Daphne, Freddy, Diana and Daisy.

"My favourite parts are the necklace I handmade with beading for Jessica, and the adorable babies—the doggy Daphne and the kittens," said Meagan. "I'm so proud of my artwork. It makes me happy."



Meagan Pelham, *Dreamland Jessica*, gouache, synthetic polymer paint, ink on canvas, 168 x 87cm

Studio A will celebrate its 10th anniversary with an exhibition at the Garden Gallery, Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, from 21–30 May. [*SAD, MAD, THINKING birthday – Celebrating Studio A's Diamond Decade*](#) honours ten years of groundbreaking artistic practice and advocacy for artists with intellectual disability.



L-R: Meagan Pelham and Jessica Rowe with Daphne during the portrait sitting. Thom Roberts with his portrait of Oliver Watts at Studio A. Daniel Kim sketching Lesleigh Jermanus at the Alémais studio in Surry Hills. Photos by Studio A.

As a leading Australian supported studio, Studio A champions the inclusion of artists with intellectual disability in contemporary culture and provides pathways to sustainable creative careers. Studio A is supported by Create NSW and Creative Australia.

The 2026 Archibald Prize exhibition will be held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales from 9 May 2026.

--- ends ---

Hi-res images [here](#).

Please contact Karla Hansen for more information:
karla.hansen@studioa.org.au 0401 916 048