

<https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/bulgari-art-award-2016-winner-jude-rae-depicts-the-still-lives-of-everyday-objects-20160428-goh5fz.html>

## **Bulgari Art Award 2016 winner Jude Rae depicts the still lives of everyday objects**

By [Andrew Taylor](#)

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Jude Rae was exploring a Canberra rubbish tip when she unearthed what would become a focus of her artistic practice.

"They let me fill up a shopping trolley of gas cylinders and fire extinguishers," she says.



Jude Rae, with her painting 'SL 359', is the winner of the 2016 Bulgari Art Award. *Credit: Daniel Munoz*

Rae says her unusual collection won her a few odd looks but she was allowed to take away her finds.

That was in 2003.

"I don't know that they would do it now," Rae says. "Now I find them on the street."

The winner of this year's \$80,000 Bulgari Art Award, Rae found the grey gas canister featured in her *SL 359* painting on a street in Potts Point.

Her still life rendering of gas cylinders and fire extinguishers has been acquired by the Art Gallery of NSW as part of the award.

Flowers and fruit are often the subject of still life painting, but Rae says her "modernist refuse" are beautiful if sometimes vexing.

"I often feel quite frustrated by the cylinders because those curves are very difficult, they are subtle," she says.

"These things may seem still but my perception is not still, my eyes are constantly moving."

The gallery's head curator of Australian art, Wayne Tunnicliffe, says Rae combines the tradition of still life painting with abstraction and "formal concerns".

"Her deceptively straightforward composition for *SL 359* is an exploration of mass, matter and surface," he says.

The Sydney artist is the fifth recipient of the \$50,000 prize, awarded annually to a mid-career artist, plus a residency in Italy valued at \$30,000.

Past winners of the award include Ildiko Kovacs, Daniel Boyd, Jon Cattapan and Michael Zavros.

Rae is excited by the prospect of the Italian residency and lists a number of cultural sites she hopes to visit including the San Carlino church in Rome, the Uffizi Gallery's self-portrait collection and the Arena Chapel in Padua.

Rae's practice focuses on the painting of objects, people and architectural interiors, with her work held in public galleries in Australia and New Zealand. She was awarded the Portia Geach portraiture prize in 2005 and 2008 and was a finalist in the 2014 Archibald Prize.

She was commissioned to paint Professor Frank Fenner in 2007 by the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra.

Rae says portraiture is a different practice to still life painting: "Sitting in a room with a bunch of objects on a table is an entirely different proposition to sitting in a room alone with a person.

"They may not want to be there or realise it's one-on-one and quite personal. And everyone is uncomfortable with scrutiny," she adds.