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Pat's peasant girls wow judges

The competition may have gone national this year but the big prize has gone decidedly local.

Pat Grindley, a final-year fine-art student from The University of Chichester, is the first winner of the newly-revamped National Open Art Competition - Chichester, formerly the Chichester Open Art Competition.

The mature student from Funtington triumphed with her painting Three Peasant Girls, After Malevich - a piece chosen from a record 1,200 submissions by artists

from across the UK.

"I was absolutely delighted to be chosen to exhibit and am stunned at winning," said Grindley, who was presented with the £10,000 first prize.

Her parents were Russian and this inspired her work, she explains.

"The process of creating the work took more than six months and more than 220 hours. Initially, I developed a theme in response to the Malevich painting Three Peasant Girls. The image was created by painting with

the aid of sketches produced using Photoshop tools, using a tablet and pen.

"It gave me the ability to incorporate layered images, produce multiples and imitate the constructs of computer graphics such as Second Life. From this blueprint I made a very careful copy in acrylic on canvas. I wanted to remove the emphasis on the brushstroke, both to indicate the conceptual nature of the piece and to question the role of painting in the age of digital saturation."

Chairman of the judges Maurice Cockerill said: "This outstanding work was clearly different from the others in the exhibition with a totally contemporary quality. The painting has a very strong visual language and combines this with critical complexity and historical dimensions."

Grindley's final-degree show can be seen at the University of Chichester's fine-art exhibition in May 2009. Entry is free and further details are available at www.chiuni.ac.uk/fineart

