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# University's fine show in national art competition

The fine art course at the University of Chichester is basking in the warm glow of reflected glory following the magnificent achievements of some of our undergraduates and alumni.

The opening night of the National Open Art Competition, Chichester, saw the first prize go to Pat Grindley, one of the university's current final year students.

This was a tremendous outcome not only for the accolade from artists and peers but also for the not inconsiderable sum of £10,000 which Pat won as the overall winner of the competition.

Also receiving a prize was Jo Wilbraham, an alumni of the course, who won third in the 'young artists' category.

Jo graduated last year and already had received praise by the visitors to last year's exhibition by being voted the best artwork in the exhibition.

Mentioned for highly-commended were Lucy Tidbury, who graduated last year, and Jess Loseby, an alumni and former associate lecturer in digital media to the Fine Art course.

This year's exhibition represents four resounding successes from within the community of artists

centred on the university.

The results stands as a testament to the work of the fine art course through which students reach this high level of accomplishment in the quality, contemporary critical commentary and consummate professionalism of their work.

This is in no small measure down to the great team of lecturers and support staff that teach and encourage this level of art practice.

The chair of judges, Maurice Cockerill, RA, spoke with enthusiasm about Pat's winning painting. He commented: "It was an outstanding work, clearly different from the other works 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."

Pat herself says of her painting: "The process of creating the work took more than six months.

"Initially I developed a theme in response to the Malevich painting '3 Peasant Girls'."

"The image was created 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 SL (Second Life).

"From this blueprint, I made a very careful copy in acrylic on canvas taking more than 220 painting hours.

"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."

Pat's success should be seen as a product of the dynamic and varied culture of art production at the university.

Pat is a serious student; this success is a wonderful credit to her ability, commitment and tenacity, and she should be congratulated.

Her work displays the complex relations between media and different forms of representation reflecting the plurality of contemporary practice.

This plurality is also reflected in the work of other students at the University of Chichester's fine art department where their work is of similarly high quality and displays similarly high levels of skill.

Steve McDade, subject leader, fine art, University of Chichester

