



The Archibull Prize 2017

Teacher Newsletter 13
22nd August 2017

Good Afternoon Creative Minds

Welcome to Newsletter 13

I am the Art judge for 2017, and have been the art judge since this competition started. I am an architect, and have designed displays and also painted cows. I know what it takes, how hard it is, but also how much fun it can be!

My first helpful hint for you is to understand what it is that I like. Have a look at the past entries that have done well or won.

Looking back, I can see a consistency in what I mark highly. I like a design which has clarity of thought, simplicity and tells a wonderful story without having everything that has been ever been considered on it. Sometimes it is more about what you choose not to show rather than what you do.

When I judge, I am particularly looking for three things.

Loosely, they are:

- what** is the story you are telling
- how** are you telling this story, and
- which** is the best method to tell it

To do well, all three of these need to have been well considered.

The first area is what story do you want to tell? Find an area of your allocated farming industry or some part of the theme which strikes a chord with you, or your school community. The themes involved with the programme this year are broad and interesting and have plenty of room for exploration. Don't try to show everything –you will tell a more

interesting and legible story by being selective. Be clever about what you choose. There is no point telling a highly complex story if the viewer will not understand it. I need to be able to tell what your commodity is and what you are saying about it at a glance.

The second area I focus on in judging is the concept. This is how you choose to tell your story. What is the 'big picture'? Every story will have endless ways of being told, so how you choose to tell your story is crucial. The concept can turn a great story into a muddle, or take a very simple thought and turn it into a masterpiece. It can be as obvious as turning your Archie into a couch or a tractor, or as subtle as adopting an art style or motif to tie the ideas together. It is taking the story you want to tell and developing the best way to showcase it and tie it together as a whole. It creates the visual interest and the integrity in the design. It needs to be intellectual and well considered.

The third area I look at is which method has been chosen to represent the concept and the story. In some cases, the concept will dictate a technique, or the style chosen can direct the concept. There are many factors which should contribute to this decision –time, relevance to the message, legibility and of course, visual appeal. However, one of the first that should be considered (and scarily often isn't) is what are the skills of the people who will be involved? There is no point choosing to do a series of realistic paintings if you do not have someone with the skills to do them well. Very often after judging, I am told by a school that they couldn't do well as they didn't have the skills to achieve what they wanted to. Art is a very wide field. There is no end to the methods available to convey a story, so find one that you can do well. It is about being clever about your choices and considering what works and what doesn't. First and foremost, I want an Archie that is done and finished well. How you do the work on your cow is important, and if not considered will let down the best stories or concepts.

Another factor of technique and method which I have found is often not well considered is looking at your Archie. While your Archie is just a blank canvas for your thoughts and ideas, it is a little more bumpy and tricky than the normal blank canvas. Look at this as an opportunity. It can be a lot more than a left side and a right side –there is a front and a face, a rear, an underneath, the inside of a leg or the udder. Your design should make your Archie hard to photograph, as no single photo should be able to capture the ins and outs and intricacies of your design. Clever details make a difference.

I hope this has helped to give you an insight into some of the things that I am looking for. If you have questions, are stuck or just need some confirmation that you are heading in the right direction, please don't hesitate to let me know. It is better to sort it out now than later.

See The Archibull Prize Hall of Fame [here](#) You will also find a short video of me discussing some of the entries [here](#)

Looking forward to meeting you and your students

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