

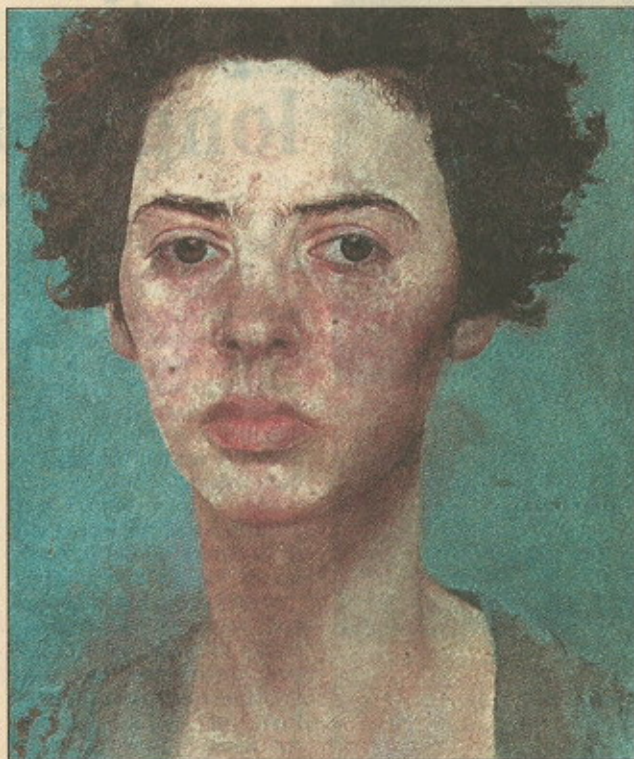
Slade sets standard in national portrait prize

Graduate keeps up art school's recent winning streak, reports
Dalya Alberge

ANOTHER graduate of the Slade School of Art has won the National Portrait Gallery's annual BP portrait award. As well as a cheque for £10,000, Thomas Watson, 27, wins a commission worth £3,000 to paint a portrait for the gallery.

The gallery's director, Charles Saumarez Smith, said that the Slade particularly excelled at the BP award: it produced the winner of this year's BP travel award, Stuart Pearson Wright; last year's overall winner, James Lloyd; and the 1995 winner, Isabel Myerscough. The most talented artists for the award tended to come out of the Slade or Glasgow School of Art, while those being recognised by the Tate Gallery's Turner Prize — conceptualists such as Damien Hirst and Rachel Whiteread — were products of Goldsmiths.

"We don't get conceptual



Second prize: *Self-portrait*, by Frances Borden

artists," he said. "Within our rules it's expected to be a painting from life. That has meant we haven't had entries by conceptual artists, although we do try to be liberal in our interpretation of what

constitutes portraiture." The Slade and Glasgow were "maintaining a vigorous tradition of figurative art".

Dr Saumarez Smith described Watson's submission as very strong. He said: "It is



The winner: *Jude*, by Thomas Watson, who wins £10,000 and a £3,000 commission

not a conventional portrait ... It is incredibly dominant ... It stands out as a winner."

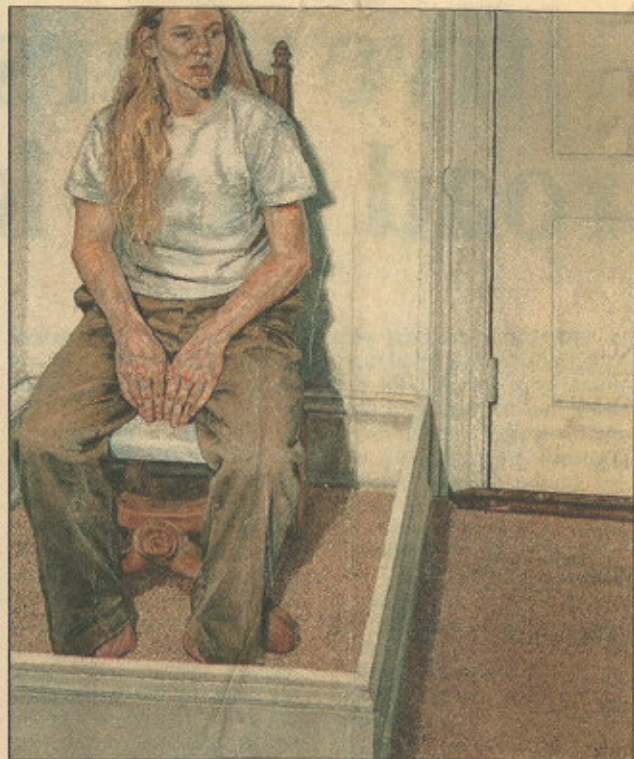
Bernard Cohen, director of the Slade School, welcomed the news. "He was always a fantastic student, extremely

talented. He was a great draughtsman from the start and totally dedicated."

He also pointed out that a former Turner prizewinner Antony Gormley was a Slade student, and that Ms

Whiteread went to both his college and Goldsmiths.

The judges included Penny Johnson, director of the Government Art Collection, Julia Peyton-Jones, director of the Serpentine Gallery, and the



Third prize: *A Space*, by Clive Smith

artist John Keane. They selected 62 paintings for exhibition and eight prizewinners. Second prize, of £5,000, was won by Frances Borden, a graduate of Chelsea College, for a self-portrait; third prize, of

£3,000, went to Clive Smith, who graduated from Kingston Polytechnic with a BA in fashion. Five others were commended with £1,000 prizes.