National painting prize for Kent classroom assistant's interpretation of London school boy's 1918 diary

Thursday 16 October, 2014

Kent-based painter and special school teaching assistant Jéréme Crow is today announced as the winner of annual Open College of the Arts (OCA) Richard Robbins' Award. The work Jéréme submitted for his final assessment as an undergraduate student with the college and which led to the award, is based on the 1918 diary of his great uncle, Edwin William Erlam, who was born in 1904.

The Richard Robbins Award recognises artistic excellence in the 3,000-strong community of painters, sculptors and print-makers studying creative arts subjects at university level with the education charity. OCA introduced the award in 2010 to honour the legacy of painter, sculptor and teacher Richard Robbins, who died in 2009 and who was a long-standing trustee of the college.

Jéréme researched his ancestor by visiting the house in Primrose Hill, London where Edwin lived when he was writing the diary. On the visits, Jéréme collected artefacts and materials that form the basis of a series of still lifes painted in his studio. The paintings elaborate on the diary entries and bring together collections of apparently disparate objects, the flotsam and jetsam left in the wake of a person's life. He has archived the diary in a film which shows each page of the diary. The entries record the bombardment of London by 'hostile powers', a sighting of German prisoners of war, visits to the theatre and the zoo, school prize day and his first appearance in long trousers.

The Richard Robbins Award is not the only accolade Jéréme's work has received this year. On the strength of eight of his final degree project paintings he is one of twelve artists whose work is being exhibited at the 'Art of Remembering' exhibition at the Rheged Centre in Penrith, Cumbria. The exhibition, which runs until 23 November, asks what emotional connection remains to the First World War, featuring new works by artists from across the UK.

The artist's journey from Cumbria to Kent

After Jéréme had finished studying A levels at school, he went to the Cumbria College of Arts and design to do a fine art foundation course. Jéréme began studying with the OCA in 2011. By presenting a portfolio of his work he was able to gain credits for two level 1 (first year undergraduate equivalent) courses, leaving him with one level 1 course to complete with OCA. He completed his degree in July 2014, fitting in studying with family, work and creative commitments.

In Jéréme's view, the solitary nature of distance learning suits his working style more than a traditional bricks and mortar university would have done. The development of his work has been guided by the 1:1 tutor he has had for each course, in particular the painter Emma Drye, who is based on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides.

He says: 'When I completed my painting degree earlier this year, I reached a goal I set for myself many years ago. I was overwhelmed to be awarded a first class honours at the end of the summer. Being named as the Richard Robbins Award winner just a few weeks later is almost too much to take in. I chose to study painting quite simply because I love to paint and wanted to develop my technical skills. I have ended up learning a great deal more than I anticipated, reflecting on and rethinking my practice as an artist.'

Speaking on behalf of the judges, OCA's Curriculum Director Jane Horton says: 'The strength of Jéréme's painting stood out for all of us from the beginning of the judging process. The decision to name him as this year's Richard Robbins' award winner has been determined as much by his positive presence as a member of OCA's student community as by the distinctiveness of his work. He has been particularly active on our online forums throughout his three years with us, supporting and encouraging his fellow students, sharing his own work, and showing that distance learning is as sociable or as solitary as each student wants it to be.'

Jéréme is continuing to explore the diary of Edwin Wiliiam Erlam and is planning a solo show for the new year of mixed media artefacts, film and paintings titled Portrait of E W Erlam.

ENDS

Media enquiries: Elizabeth Underwood, PR and

Media:







Related Sectors:

Education & Human Resources :: Entertainment & Arts ::

Related Keywords:

First World War :: Jereme Crow :: Richard Robbins Award :: Open College Of The Arts :: OCA :: Painting ::

Scan Me:

Communications (elizabethunderwood@oca-uk.com**, telephone 0759 0848783).**

Notes to Editors

1.OCA offers people the chance to take arts courses through open and flexible learning, and without prior qualifications or admission restrictions. OCA has no formal entry requirements, offering places on the strength of applicants' creative work and the qualifications they already have.

2.At undergraduate level, OCA offers creative writing, fine art, music, painting, photography, textiles and visual communications. All OCA's higher level qualifications are validated by the University for the Creative Arts.

3.OCA is an education charity founded in 1987 by Michael Young (Lord Young of Dartington). In the early 1960s, Michael Young was one of the educational visionaries who inspired what became The Open University later in the decade.

4.The total course fee for a full BA Honours degree for new students based on 2014/15 fees is £8,105.00. Students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland studying for their first degree are eligible to apply for student finance to help with the cost of their studies.

Company Contact:

Open College of the Arts

T. 0759 0848783
E. elizabethunderwood@oca-uk.com
W. https://www.oca.ac.uk

Additional Contact(s):
Elizabeth Underwood, Head of PR and Communications

View Online

Additional Assets:

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.open_college_arts.pressat.co.uk