

NATIONAL PHOTO- GRAPHIC PORTRAIT PRIZE 2025

PRIMARY TEACHERS
RESOURCE

**NATIONAL
PORTRAIT
GALLERY**

Let's take a look at the *National Photographic Portrait Prize* for 2025! This year, the judges – Benjamin Law (writer and broadcaster), Serena Bentley (Senior Curator at the National Portrait Gallery) and Leigh Robb (Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia) – selected 48 portraits from over 1400 entries. The finalists show the different ways portraits can tell stories, challenge stereotypes, look at identity and expand the ways we think about ourselves, each other and the world we live in.

How to use this resource

The portraits in this resource have been chosen to spark discussion, encourage exploration and invite creativity for students in Years 3–6. Each activity is designed to be flexible, whether you're planning a full lesson or looking for a quick task to fit into a busy day. Students can explore the portraits together in pairs, small groups or as a whole class, creating opportunities for collaboration and shared learning. The activities support inclusive classroom practices by encouraging respectful dialogue and celebrating each student's unique way of seeing the world.



Natalie Grono *Blue Tongue* 2025. *National Photographic Portrait Prize* 2025 finalist © Natalie Grono

Discuss

Consider this portrait, focusing on the pose, gaze and facial expression of the two young people, Annabelle and Dakota. Working in pairs, use the following prompts to analyse the work:

1. Do Annabelle and Dakota seem strong, fragile, or maybe a mix of both?
List three things in the portrait that support your view.
2. Why do you think one has a blue tongue and why are they holding phones?
What could these details say about their personalities or the world they live in?
What things would you include in a portrait of yourself?
3. Strike a pose with your partner! First, choose a pose that makes you feel powerful or confident. Then, try one that feels more gentle or vulnerable. What do you notice about how your body language changes?



Renae Saxby *Mary at Momob 2024. National Photographic Portrait Prize 2025 finalist* © Renae Saxby

Investigate

The subject of this portrait, 93-year-old Kodjdan Mary Kolkkawara Nadjamerrek, is one of the last surviving speakers of the Dalabon language. She is holding a Waddan (frill neck lizard) caught by her grandchildren, who travelled with her so they could be on their Ancestral lands on Dalabon Country in Arnhem Land and learn to speak the language.

Note to teachers: To help students investigate issues around language using the prompts below, they could work in groups of three or take part in a teacher-led class brainstorm.

1. What is a sleeping language? Why do you think some First Nations languages have stopped being spoken? What are some ways people can help bring these languages back?
2. Why is it important for people to speak and learn their languages?
3. What happened during colonisation that made it hard for First Nations people to speak their languages or practise their culture?



Emmaline Zanelli Aida Azin 2024. *National Photographic Portrait Prize* 2025 finalist © Emmaline Zanelli

Make

For this artwork, the artist Emmaline Zanelli used a few different techniques to make it look interesting. These included taking the photo using a simple box camera and decorating it with stickers. She also made a photogram – an image created by placing objects onto light-sensitive paper and exposing it to light.

Now it's your turn to experiment with textures and decoration to create your own unique portrait!

1. Draw a face on a piece of paper. It could be your own or someone else's.
2. Take your paper outside and use crayons to rub textures from different surfaces such as:
 - tree bark ■ concrete paths ■ bricks
 - leaves ■ playground equipment
3. Decorate your portrait with stickers, drawings or other things that show your personality.
4. Share your artwork with a partner or the class. What textures did you use and why?
What do you think your portrait says about you?

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