

Five Minutes with Nigel Sense, Artist

Written by [Sarah K Bryant](#) on Aug 05, 2015

Your portrait of Sunnyboys' Jeremy Oxley has been accepted into the *Salon des Refusés* exhibit on the back of the Archibald Prize. How did you come to paint Jeremy? I'm a Sunnyboys fan and I knew the legendary stories about Jeremy. After a few weeks of searching for contact details I finally was given his wife's email address. I sent her an email and in a few days got a reply. I thought it would be a no but they were really keen to do it. It was as simple as that.

What was it about his story that appealed?

I wanted to paint someone that was a true legend of the Sydney music scene, but really it was the documentary *The Sunnyboy* that inspired me to paint Jeremy. In the documentary it tells the story that love can conquer all, and with the right person by your side you can achieve anything. I saw Mary and Jeremy's relationship like my own, where having the support of my partner makes me a better artist and a better person. As an artist, it's sometimes hard to function as society expects us to and we forget to do simple things like pay the bills.

Can you be certain before sitting down to paint someone that they'll be a great subject?

No, it would have been really hard to paint Jeremy if he was an arsehole to meet. But luckily he was a lovely guy who just loves music.

What about the painting speaks to rock'n'roll and mental illness?

The way I painted Jeremy's portrait tries to show what it was like having a conversation with him, with multiple facets and stories being told at once, jumping to and fro from one another. My painting doesn't hide his mental illness, it celebrates it.

Have you had a chance to check out what else is exhibiting at S.H. Ervin Gallery?

I went to the opening night two weeks ago, and not to sound smug, but I always feel it's a stronger show than the Archibald. The works are generally more contemporary and you get to see some of the best up-and-coming artists in Australia.

[Pictured: "Hi, I'm Jeremy Oxley" by Nigel Sense]

Salon des Refusés 2015 shows until Sunday September 13 at [S.H. Ervin Gallery](#).

<http://thebrag.com/five-minutes-nigel-sense-artist>