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THE ARTS

VISUAL ARTS

## A small but perfectly formed prize

William Packer is delighted with the standard of work submitted for a little-known but worthy award

has its own imperatives and justifications. And size isn't everyway to put down the larger brethren to point out that more modest and private efforts may be no less worthwhile, and, in a quiet way, do just as much good.

The Gilchrist-Fisher Award, which every other year or so gives £3,000 to its winner and £1,000 to the runner-up, is hardly lavish by current standards. Yet in its own way it is as remarkable and admirable as any other, and - here I with which I have been more than happy to be associated, as a member of its jury, more or less since its inception. The award was set up in 1987, by a group of young friends in memory of Alasdair Gilchrist-Fisher, who had died of cancer the year before. During his short last illness he had taken a course in painting, with a particular bent towards landscape, and so the prize in his name is one for landscape painting, and open to any artist under 30.

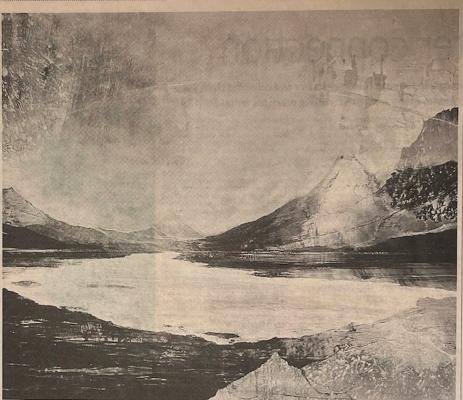
Not everything submitted has been hung in the show now at the first prize. No less ambitious than graphic designer who has become Rebecca Hossack Gallery in Fitzrovia, but each artist is more edgy and direct, and takes fairly represented, and the rest more risks. remains available to the interested visitor

a wild year, with four of the art- who is now in his early 50s. Of

Prizes and awards abound these ists producing romantic images of days, which is no bad thing in waste and wilderness, and the itself, whatever shock, horror or other two, though formally more controversy the event may pro- abstracted and restrained, noneduce. But that said, commercial theless looking to sea and rock, sponsorship, however generous, and to the wild wood. All, in their several ways - Felix Baudenbacher, with his mountain tops; thing. The important thing is to Ruth Brownlee with her Shetland do what is possible, and it is in no skies and cliffs; Sarah Longley with her bogs and meres; Deborah Nikolls and her delicate rock surfaces and strata - had decided quality and promise, but two, leaving quite aside the sheer physical presence of their huge canvases (each sent in six sixfooters) were outstanding.

Katarina Ivanisin's pale grisaille paintings, with but the occasional graphic flick of sharper colour, or underlying paler blush. must declare my interest - one seem to draw us into a lightsuffused but misty wood, as into a Chinese scroll or Japanese screen. They are a curious yet convincing amalgam of the Oriental and artnouveau and art-deco, the decorative at its most sophisticated and refined. They are very beautiful things. And they could hardly be Thompson's rather more darkly monochromatic paintings of deep Alaskan valleys and winter lakes and rivers, all set about with black peaks and looming glaciers. to which in the event we gave Ivanisin's work, it is much rawer.

Another surprise is the exhibition at the Royal National Theatre how familiar his work is, and how This has turned out to be rather of the work of Andrzej Klimowski.



in greater contrast to Mark Inner landscape; Mark Thompson's winning work depicts deep Alaskan valleys and winter lakes and rivers, surrounded by dark peaks

much of the 1970s in Warsaw, and is now a senior tutor at the Royal College. He is an illustrator and design of book covers and posters for the theatre and the cinema. and in part the surprise is only at

Polish extraction, he was born in declare itself in its quality not so and movement forward. True art its ambiguities, and its distance, London , where he studied, spent much as applied art, but as art pure and simple.

His staple is the collage, and in his practice of it he places himself firmly in the modernist tradition particularly associated with the that comes from Dada and Surrealism on the one hand, Constructivism and the Bauhaus on the other. But here is no mere following upon a stronger influence or pervasive his influence. The fur- exercise in pastiche, but rather an

is always of its time, and here we More than surprising, it is impreshave an edge and clarity to the work, and a wry and often subversive visual wit, that are all Klimowski's own. With the film and theatre posters of the late 1970s especially, made when he was in Warsaw, the underlying social and political edginess is all but palpable. Yet there is nothing to them of propaganda or polemic. ther surprise is that it should entirely personal development. For art, as it always must, keeps

sive stuff.

'The Gilchrist-Fisher Award 2002'. Rebecca Hossack Gallery, 35 Windmill Street, London W1. Tel 020 7255 2828. www.r-h-g.co.uk. Until February 9. 'Andrzej Klimowski - a Graphic Retrospective'. Royal National Theatre, London SE1. Tel 020 7255 2828. www.nationaltheatre.org.uk. Until RECITALS BARBICAN

## Terfel delivers seriously good fun

Having discovered is suitability as a venue fo solo singers, the refurbishe Barbican Hall is not wastin any time. Two more bis name singers drew sold-ou houses over the weekend.

It is not hard to see wh Bryn Terfel has such a fo lowing. He holds the aud ence in the palm of his hand wins applause for tickin them off when they coug too much ("I know a goo doctor in London"), get everybody to sing along wit the chorus of "Mud, gloriou mud", throws in an encor from the musical Camelo and then clinches the ever ing by tossing his bouquet t a lady in the front row.

Before anybody complain that this sounds far to much like fun, let us remem ber that song recitals were not always intended to be earnest affairs. It was partic ularly in the 1950s and 1960 that the celebrity recita gave way to the instructive evening of art song, as a dynamic generation of nev singers stepped forward with serious ambitions and people got to know the song reper toire better through record

The marvellous thing about Terfel is that he car deliver at a serious level too. He opened Sunday recital at the Barbican witl a Schubert group that place thunderous epics ("A Schwager Kronos") along side barely-whispered minitures ("Meeres Stille") jus