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Early hardships placed on canvases

WA pioneering woman remembered in young artist's award-winning creative paintings

By LISA CALAUTTI

THE history of pioneering women in WA is the story behind Bayswater artist Vanessa Bradley's latest artworks. "I have been particularly interested in painting stories of the hardship faced by women who came to WA, the harshness of the terrain and the colourful personal stories that make up the rich tapestry of the land," Bradley said.

Using a story as a starting point, was Bradley's preferred method of creating artworks.

"I thought it would be good to do research on pioneers," she said.

"It started because I'm becoming an Australian citizen this year."

One of her pieces titled, *Seams and Spaces In Between: Anne Whatley* earned Bradley the best local artist prize in the City of Bayswater Art Awards.

For the oil painting, Bradley researched the arrival of John Whatley, a private surgeon and one of

the first Bayswater settlers.

His wife, Anne, daughter Joanna and an unnamed baby, born on the voyage, accompanied him.

"Much of the research for this painting was taken from the book *Changes They've Seen: The City and People of Bayswater 1827 - 1997* written by Catherine May," Bradley said.

"The book contains some of Anne Whatley's diary entries and was a great source of inspiration for the piece."

In the diary entries, Bradley learnt Mr Whatley drowned at Fremantle in the risky process of crossing the river in a boat containing a cow he had purchased.

"Anne's diary fails to record this," she said.

"Perhaps this was too painful a fact to record." Bradley has planned more artworks inspired by WA's history.

Other category winners awards include Victoria Alonso who won the city's acquisition prize, and Tina Trudgen and Zoe Skivinis won youth art award high commendations.



Vanessa Bradley's winning artwork, *Seams and Spaces In Between: Anne Whatley*. Picture: Bruce Hunt