

# Artist takes a hard look at his awkward self

SAMELA HARRIS

WITH his eyes wide shut, Daryl Austin is looking at the world without its social mask.

"I'm into what doesn't look right," the artist says.

"Images people delete from their mobile phone cameras. All those photos which don't look right, which take out the social aspect."

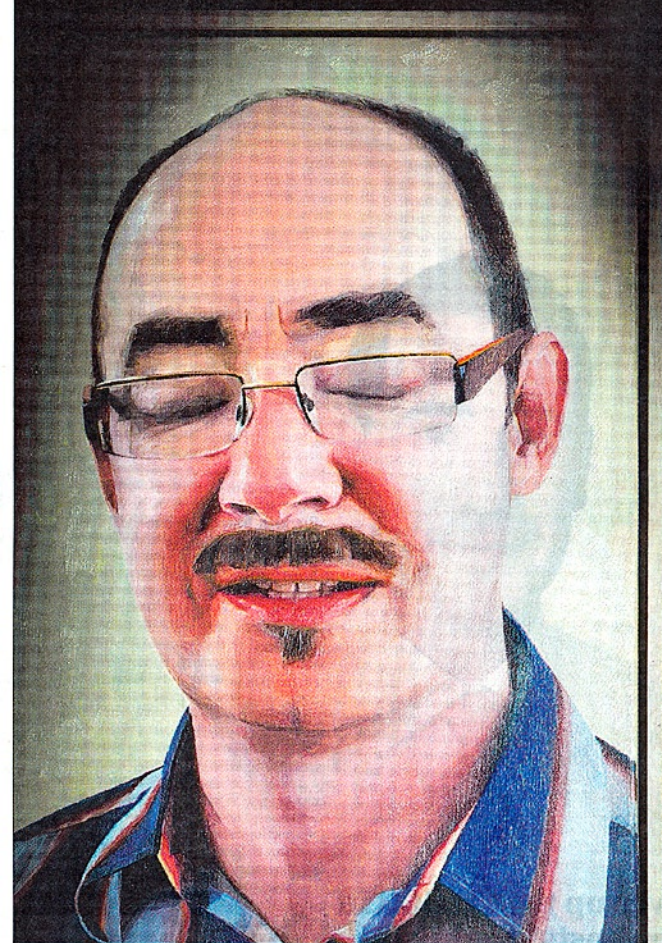
So Austin painted himself - not just with his eyes closed, but in the middle of saying something - at the most classically awkward moment.

The judges of the world's richest annual portrait prize, the \$150,000 Doug Moran Portrait Prize, loved it and from a field of 650, chose it as one of the 30 finalists which are now touring around the nation.

The show opened yesterday at the Royal South Australian Society for the Arts, which has been hosting the Moran since it began in 1998.

Robert Hannaford, Robin Eley and Deidre But-Husaim were other South Australian Moran finalists, and the winning work was a portrait of film director Baz Luhrmann by artist Vincent Fantauzzo.

The Doug Moran finalists will be on show at the RSASA in the Institute Building on North Tce until September 18.



UNMASKED: Daryl Austin yesterday reflects on his self-portrait showing a socially awkward moment, selected as a finalist in the world's richest portrait competition. **384** Picture: BROOKE WHATNALL