



Back to back: Vincent Fantauzzo and Brandon Walters beside the winning portrait yesterday. Picture: AFP

Brandon is face of the people

VICTORIAN artists have won the popular vote at this year's Archibald Prize.

Melbourne artist Vincent Fantauzzo yesterday won the People's Choice Prize for his portrait of young *Australia* actor Brandon Walters.

It was two in a row for Fantauzzo, who took the same award last year for a portrait of Heath Ledger.

Eltham artist Fu Hong's portrait of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch was second.

Fantauzzo received \$2500 cash and a \$1000 Myer gift card, and gave the voucher to his subject.

"I would like them to get a sense of Brandon's personality, maybe something they don't get to see in the film," Fantauzzo said. "A little bit of Brandon being himself."

He met Kimberley-born Walters through *Australia* director Baz Luhrmann, and made several sketches before painting his face in a gigantic close-up.



Runner-up: artist Fu Hong painting his labour of love, a portrait of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch. Picture: JENNY PIHAN

"He has a very intense gaze and amazing eyes and I wanted the feel of the harsh Australian sun across his face," said the RMIT graduate, who will soon start an artist residency in Hong Kong.

The Art Gallery of NSW received 33,629 votes for the People's Choice Prize. The 2009 Archibald Prize exhibition opens at Bendigo Art Gallery — its only Victorian venue — on May 29.