



Sad ending ... Vincent Fantauzzo with his Baz Luhrmann portrait, which didn't make the Archibald final round.

Fantauzzo goes from Baz to worse

Baz Luhrmann is disappointed a portrait of him, painted by **Vincent Fantauzzo**, did not get selected as a finalist in this year's Archibald Prize.

Fantauzzo, the artist behind two highly commended Archibald Prize entries, including 2008's **Heath Ledger** and 2009's **Brandon Walters** portraits, was dismayed his work did not make the cut this time around.

His portrait of director Luhrmann, captured on canvas burying his face into his hands, was not successful in reaching the round of 34 finalists. Fantauzzo

says he and Luhrmann are incredibly disappointed.

"I honestly thought this was the best piece I've ever done," Fantauzzo says. "Baz was really pleased with the painting and he's pretty disappointed too. I don't understand the politics with the Archibald, I felt really connected to this painting. Baz was so surprised I caught him in this way and in this moment where everything becomes too much."

Fantauzzo's portrayals of Ledger and *Australia* actor Walters both won the People's Choice awards in

their entry years. The artist says he is most disheartened by the fact he won't have a stab at this year's title.

"What sucks the most is I've developed a public following and I don't get to share it with them again," he says. "I'm always suspicious about why certain works don't get in. The criteria asks for a personality who is respectful of the arts and contributes to the arts and that is Baz. I'm really, really disappointed."

Julian Boram's painting of **Antonia Kidman** was also omitted from the finals mix. **KL**