

Gallery issues explicit warning over Panayiotis Lamprou's intimate photograph



A detail from Panayiotis Lamprou's portrait of his wife PA

Jack Malvern

Last updated September 16 2010 12:01AM

The [National Portrait Gallery](#) will issue a warning to visitors for its annual photographic prize this year after judges selected an intimate portrait showing a woman's genitals. The photograph, by Panayiotis Lamprou, shows the artist's wife sitting on a chair with her dress hitched up and one leg raised.

The gallery's collection contains many nude portraits, including a full-frontal self-portrait by Gilbert & George, but Lamprou's work is believed to be the most graphic image selected for display at the state-funded gallery.

Sandy Nairne, director of the gallery and chairman of the judging panel for the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize, said that the image was justified in a gallery because of its artistic merit. "Every year we've had a portrait with a person or a couple without

clothes on,” he said. “Nudity is par for the course. [The judges] look at 3,000 portraits [submitted for the award] so the whole of human life is there.

“What we loved about Panayiotis’s portrait is that it’s wonderfully, intimately relaxed. It is so straightforward that it is, in a sense, unshowy. We thought very carefully about this. It shows the relationship between the subject and the photographer.”

Portrait of my British Wife is competing with three other images for the £12,000 award. Jeffrey Stockbridge has been nominated for *Tic Tac and Tootsie*, a portrait of twin drug addicts who have turned to prostitution. Abbie Trayler-Smith is on the shortlist for a photograph of a girl who is part of a childhood obesity support group. David Chancellor has been nominated for *Huntress with Buck*, a woman on horseback clutching a dead deer. All images will go on display in November.

Lamprou told *The Times* that he did not see his image as controversial. “I hope that people will not be offended, because what I can really see in this photograph is a beautiful female quality — of being intimate, having a confidence in yourself and your body. I hope that people can be open in their view.”

He added that his wife was pleased that he had submitted the picture. “She really liked the portrait. That compliment made me feel more confident to put this forward for the prize.”

The Metropolitan Police said that it would investigate only if a member of the public complained. Obscenity laws are rarely enforced in art galleries, but police intervened at the Little Black Gallery, Chelsea, in April after a complaint about pornographic images that were visible from the street. Last year Tate Modern removed a photograph of the actress Brooke Shields showing her naked, aged 10, after police told the gallery that it could be prosecuted under child protection laws.