

Bond art impresses Bendigo judges

By **BLAIR THOMSON**

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MELBOURNE artist Chris Bond has taken out the prestigious Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize and \$50,000 cash.

Mr Bond was one of 33 artists shortlisted for the award and was handed the top honour at the Bendigo Art Gallery in front of 400 people last night.

“I’m shocked,” he said.

“I was really surprised, stunned. This work comes from a larger series of work that I made last year. They’re about reduction more than anything else and formalism. There’s no message, it’s just part of my obsessive nature.

“They’re wrapped up in my weird internal logic that drives a lot of the work. It’s left open to interpretation.”

The 38-year-old said the prize purse would allow him greater freedom as an artist and reduce commercial pressures.

Bendigo Art Gallery senior curator Leanne Fitzgibbon said it had been a “really surprising choice for many people”. “It’s actually the smallest work in this current exhibition,” she said.

“It’s also probably the scale of the work that will puzzle many people.

“I think it’s a well-deserved winner and I think it shows the judges have been very tuned in to current directions in contemporary painting.”

The award was initiated by Allen Guy, whose brother Arthur was shot down during a flying mission in the World War II. Mr Bond’s work, which he said was based on a Jackson Pollock biography, has become part of the Bendigo Art Gallery’s permanent collection.