

2011 John Byrne Award launched today




This morning on Calton Hill, John Byrne, the Scottish artist and playwright launched the award that shares his name. He stood on a soapbox as if preaching which was a fearsome sight in itself!

[This annual competition](#) began in 2010. The award requires that sixth year students, attending school in Edinburgh, respond to a piece of text, relating to the theme 'Inspiring Values for Today,' while considering, examining and challenging these values.

This year's text was chosen to celebrate the 400th anniversary of The King James Bible. The Sermon on the Plain, from The Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 6, vs 17-49 has been chosen as the inspiration for this year's competition.

Students will work both in teams and as individuals. A panel of judges will then look for an independent response to the chosen text which they feel reflects reason, clarity and imagination while also conveying the competitor's thoughts, their study and the conclusions they have drawn. Students will not be judged based on the specific values that they select, although judges wish to be certain of what these values are, and be thoroughly persuaded of the students' position.

There are six judges on the 2011 John Byrne Award panel – John Byrne will be joined by writer and broadcaster Richard Holloway, lighting designer and Pilates teacher Jeanine Davies, political journalist and theatre critic Joyce McMillan, former head teacher at James Gillespie's High School Alex Wallace and Scottish international rugby player Ruaridh Jackson.

 For The John Byrne Award there is a total prize fund of

£10,000 split between a first prize of £7000 and three special commendation awards of £1000 each.

The John Byrne Award is privately funded. The sponsor wishes to acknowledge the support and advice provided by the Children and Families Department of the City of Edinburgh Council and, in particular, Councillor Marilyn MacLaren.

At the Arts & Business Scotland Awards in Aberdeen, last night (26/10/11), Andrew Paterson was presented with the special **Philanthropy Award** for his outstanding support of the John Byrne Award. The event is held each year to recognise the most outstanding and creative partnerships between business and arts organisations.

Steve Small, Award Coordinator of the John Byrne Award, said: "It was very encouraging to get such a good response in our first year, and we were delighted with the variety and quality of entries received. And so this year we set the challenge again with great excitement and high hopes. While this year's 'Stimulus' comes from Christian teachings, our aim is not to promote Christian values, or values from any particular culture or creed. We have, quite simply, given our competition entrants food for thought. To agree or disagree with anything – or everything – in the passage is entirely their choice. We look forward very much to discovering how the stimulus makes them think, and what it has led them to decide about values appropriate to their world."