

Tony

Elizabeth Thayer

In 2012, artist Elizabeth Thayer entered her painting *Tony* in the BP Portrait Award contest. The Portrait Award is in its thirty-third year at the National Portrait Gallery in London. In 2012, there were 2,187 entries from artists in 74 different countries. This painting was one of 55 paintings chosen to be exhibited this year. Thayer first learned about the competition when she moved to England in 2010 and was thrilled to be part of the show in 2012.

She writes, “Tony is a friend of ours that we met when we lived in Germany. James, my husband, was his home teacher for a while, and when our ward moved into a newly built chapel, we started driving Tony to church on Sundays because of where we and he lived. He occasionally came to our home to visit or have dinner. He was born in Goa, India, and raised as a Christian. He moved to Germany to work decades ago and was introduced to the Church in Germany. He lives alone and has never married; the rest of his family is still in India. Tony is a person that does not stand out in a crowd, but I had the privilege of spending time with him and appreciating him for who he is. He is constant, kind, and gentle. He likes to watch television late at night and loves eating fish with lots of chili powder. After our fourth child was born in 2010, Tony told us that our son was the first baby he had ever held. I wanted to paint Tony because as I gradually got to know him, I wanted others to know him too. I chose to paint him just as I remember seeing him: dressed casually and insistent in his gaze.”

Thayer earned a BFA at Brigham Young University, followed by MFA studies at Syracuse University and the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Her work has been seen in group exhibitions at her places of study and shows of the Society of Illustrators.