

18.03.2020



Image: *Caspian Palms*, Almagul Menlibayeva (Finalist, The 2020 Sovereign Asian Art Prize)

The 2020 Sovereign Asian Art Prize Shortlist Announced

Hong Kong The Sovereign Art Foundation (SAF) today announced the names of 31 mid-career artists shortlisted as finalists for The 2020 Sovereign Asian Art Prize, the 16th edition of Asia's most prestigious prize for contemporary artists. Launched in 2003, SAF is a charitable organisation that raises funds for programmes that support disadvantaged children through expressive arts. In tandem with SAF's year-round fundraising initiatives, The Prize is now recognised as one of the most coveted annual awards in the region with a Grand Prize of US\$30,000. Nurturing talent from across Asia Pacific, The Prize has acted as a springboard to help artists go on to achieve record prices as well as gain invaluable exposure to wider audiences.

Finalists for the 2020 Prize hail from 18 countries and regions across Asia-Pacific, of which Hong Kong has the strongest representation with 4 artists shortlisted, followed by South Korea and Indonesia with 3 artists each. Amongst the shortlist are 13 previous finalists of The Prize, who have opted to participate again. The winner of the Grand Prize, along with finalists to be awarded a Public Vote Prize of US\$1,000 (decided through public votes online and at exhibition) and the Vogue Hong Kong Women's Art Prize of US\$5,000 (awarded to the highest scoring female finalist), will be announced in May 2020.

This year, over 600 entries from 30 countries were submitted, marking the largest number of entries in the award's history. A board of 88 independent arts professionals - mostly curators and academics who work closely with artists in their respective regions - nominated 400 mid-career artists into The Prize. The 31 finalists were shortlisted by a panel of five world-class art specialists, namely; writer, curator, and museum director David Elliott, Arts Editor of [Financial Times](#) Jan Dalley, art historian, curator, writer and art strategy consultant Jiyeon Lee, artist and Professor at [Central Academy of Fine Arts](#) Miao Xiaochun, and contemporary Chinese artist Zhou Li.

Chair judge David Elliott commented on this year's shortlist:

"The winner of The 2020 Sovereign Asian Art Prize will be chosen from the largest submission ever. Many congratulations to all those who have participated, as well as to the international team of



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nominators, who have ensured that the entries this year encompass an unprecedentedly wide span. Here, the numbers speak for themselves: the finalists have been chosen from 611 submissions and originate from 18 different countries and regions. Most strongly represented is Hong Kong, followed by South Korea and Indonesia in the top three. As would be expected, the growing number of submissions ensures a high calibre and wide range of work by the finalists, and I have no doubt that this exhibition will present a stimulating and revealing picture of art in Asia today."

The shortlisted artworks are offered for sale through auction by [Christie's Hong Kong](#), with selected works available to purchase online and at the exhibition. Proceeds will be split evenly between the artists and SAF, where they will be used to fund charitable programmes for disadvantaged children.

Howard Bilton, Founder and Chairman of SAF, said:

"This group of artworks may be the strongest we have ever had. We ask nominators to send us the very best mid-career artists working in their country today, this guarantees artwork of extraordinary quality and means that instead of asking for donations, we can give our supporters an opportunity to buy investment-quality art. Most of the funds raised from the sale of these artworks will be applied locally towards our Make It Better (MIB) programme - an initiative that supports children from low-income backgrounds and with special educational needs in Hong Kong – adding to a substantial grant received from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in 2017, and allowing us to build further on this valuable work."

We are surprised and a little outraged that in one of the richest cities in the world, one person in every five lives below the official government poverty line. There is huge wealth disparity in Hong Kong and this gap needs to be narrowed. We cannot solve this problem on our own, but that will not stop us from trying to make things better. Results of a study conducted by The University of Hong Kong indicate that the MIB programme has a significant positive impact on the children who take part. We hope that our generous supporters will share our beliefs and once again help us raise enough to make a difference."

The Prize will be supported by a programme of events taking place in May this year, including an exhibition, an art forum and live auction, and further details on this programme will be announced soon. For now, the public can view the artworks, register interest and vote for their favourite online at [SovereignArtFoundation.com](#).

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Press Kit

Please see overleaf for full list of 2020 finalists, artworks and nominators.

[Click here](#) to view and download a full press kit with high-resolution artwork images, bios, portraits and factsheet. *All images please credit the artist and The Sovereign Art Foundation.*

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Shortlisted Artist	Artwork Title	Country	Nominator
Alex Seton	<i>Oilstone 05_Corrosion</i>	Australia	Mikala Tai
Alexandr Ugay	<i>Obscuration #8</i>	Kazakhstan	Vladislav Sludskiy
Almagul Menlibayeva	<i>Caspian Palms</i>	Kazakhstan	Rachel Ritz-Volloch, Natalia Muravjeva
Amritah Sen	<i>Myths from Modern Bengal</i>	India	Previous Finalist
Anniketyni Madian	<i>Begarasi #3</i>	Malaysia	Previous Finalist
Bui Cong Khanh	<i>Plastic Hearts</i>	Vietnam	Previous Finalist
Chui Pui-chee	<i>Nine Abysses IV</i>	Hong Kong	Previous Finalist
Deden Hendan Durahman	<i>Look//After; Cityscapes #02</i>	Indonesia	Rifky Effendy
Du Kun	<i>Nian Nujiao, Broken Rainbow After the Rain</i>	China	Gary Mok
Evgeny Boikov	<i>Politburo Fashion. Fall-Winter 1980</i>	Kyrgyzstan	Previous Finalist
Hee Jeong Jang	<i>Study for Rainbow White</i>	South Korea	Previous Finalist
Hyundoo Park	<i>Goodbye Stranger #10</i>	South Korea	Gun Soo Choi
Joyce Ho	<i>Osmosis</i>	Taiwan	Gene Sherman
Kanak Chanpa	<i>Her Solitude</i>	Bangladesh	Md. Muniruzzaman, Rajeeb and Nadia Samdani
Katsumi Hayakawa	<i>Blue Reflection Lines</i>	Japan	Previous Finalist
Lim Soo Sik	<i>Chaekgado 442 (Sister Library)</i>	South Korea	Gun Soo Choi
Made Wiguna Valasara	<i>Daily parade</i>	Indonesia	Rifky Effendy, Sally Texania
MAP Office	<i>The Book of Waves</i>	Hong Kong	Previous Finalist
Nge Lay	<i>Endless Story # Jogja 2</i>	Myanmar	Previous Finalist
Nicola Anthony	<i>Poetry Net (I)</i>	Singapore	Suzzana Chew, Previous Finalist
Peggy Chan	<i>Specimen Tree Series (No. 1-6)</i>	Hong Kong	Previous Finalist
Rachel Cheung Wai-sze	<i>From Functionality to Abstraction 2</i>	Hong Kong	Kurt Chan
Rakib Ahmed	<i>Affirmative Negative</i>	Bangladesh	Previous Finalist
Rushdi Anwar	<i>Placeless Burden; Towards Uncertainty</i>	Thailand	Kittima Chareeprasit
Saba Qizilbash	<i>Inbezelment</i>	Pakistan	Naiza Khan
Sachin George Sebastian	<i>Untitled (Metropolis and City Planners)</i>	India	Kriti Sood
Sarah Choo Jing	<i>Accelerated Intimacy (Matthew and Brenda)</i>	Singapore	Previous Finalist
Sokchanlina Lim	<i>Wrapped Future II</i>	Cambodia	Serey Siv
Tao Xinglin	<i>Outdoor Sports No.6</i>	China	Cheng Xiaobei
Taufik Ermas	<i>Drowning in Silence before Midnight #3</i>	Indonesia	Sally Texania
Thyitar	<i>Marriage</i>	Myanmar	Aye Ko



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Editors Notes

The Sovereign Art Foundation

The Sovereign Art Foundation (SAF) is a charitable organisation that was founded in 2003 with a well-defined twin focus: to recognise the growing wealth of contemporary art talent in Asia and bring the proven benefits of expressive arts to disadvantaged children.

In the same year, SAF launched The Sovereign Asian Art Prize, now recognised as the most established and prestigious annual art award in Asia-Pacific. The Prize increases the international exposure of artists in the region, whilst raising funds by auctioning shortlisted artworks and sharing proceeds equally between the participating artists and SAF. SAF uses these proceeds to fund programmes that support disadvantaged children using expressive arts. This model has so far raised over US\$9 million for artists and charities worldwide.

In 2013, SAF launched Make It Better (MIB), an initiative that supports children from low-income backgrounds and with special educational needs in Hong Kong. MIB works in local schools and community centres to offer children a programme of expressive arts workshops designed to build self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness and interpersonal skills. SAF also supports teachers, social workers and caregivers of these children by introducing them to the therapeutic benefits of art.

SovereignArtFoundation.com

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