

14.04.2021

The 2021 Sovereign Asian Art Prize Shortlist and Charity Auction Announced



Image: *Saudade*, Rithika Merchant (Finalist, The 2021 Sovereign Asian Art Prize)
Courtesy of the artist and The Sovereign Art Foundation

Hong Kong – The Sovereign Art Foundation (SAF) today announces the names of 30 mid-career artists shortlisted as finalists for The 2021 Sovereign Asian Art Prize, the 17th edition of Asia’s most prestigious prize for contemporary artists.

Finalists in the running for this year’s Prize hail from 17 countries and regions across Asia-Pacific, of which Australia has the strongest representation with 5 artists shortlisted, followed by India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and South Korea with 3 artists each. Amongst the finalists, 28 artists have been shortlisted for the first time.

This year, The Prize also achieved a record breaking 744 entries from 30 countries and regions in Asia-Pacific. A total of 83 independent arts professionals – 32 of them new to the nominating board for 2021 and comprising curators and academics who work closely with artists in their respective regions – nominated 344 mid-career artists into The Prize. The 30 finalists were shortlisted by a panel of four world-class art specialists, namely: writer, curator, and museum director **David Elliott**; journalist and author **Georgina Adam**; abstract artist **Zhang Enli**; and art critic **John McDonald**. **Nancy Lee**, Chairman of Friends of Hong Kong Museum of Art, will join the panel as a Hong Kong representative for the final round of judging.



The Sovereign Art Foundation

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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. The winner of the Grand Prize, along with the winners of the 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 late May 2021.

The finalists' artworks will be presented to the public at 9 Queen's Road Central, Central, Hong Kong from 5 – 16 May 2021. The artworks will then be exhibited at Art Central at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from 20 – 23 May 2021. Visitors to both exhibitions will be invited to cast a vote for their favourite artist to win the Public Vote Prize. The exhibitions will be accompanied by an educational programme presented in collaboration with The Prize's Educational Partner, K11 Art Foundation.

The shortlisted artworks are now available for bidding via an online auction at www.saapauction.com. All proceeds will be split evenly between the artists and [charitable programmes](#) for disadvantaged children in Asia.

Private exhibition tours and other bespoke events are available to private groups, institutions and corporates. Interested parties should contact art@SovereignArtFoundation.com.

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

"As was the case in the previous year, the winner of The 2021 Sovereign Asian Art Prize will be chosen from the largest submission ever. The growing number of entries for The Prize ensures a high calibre and wide range of work in the final; I have no doubt that what we will see in this exhibition will reflect a diverse creativity and energy. Many congratulations to all those who have participated, as well as to the international team of judges and nominators, who have worked extremely hard to ensure that the entries this year reflect not only the quality but also a diversity of approaches. Apart from Australia, India, Pakistan, Philippines, and South Korea that have been strongly represented in the finalist list, the rest of the artists – coming from areas that stretch from Iran to Kyrgyzstan or from Thailand to Japan – represent a broad range of different approaches and traditions as well as strong reactions to their changing social and political contexts. "

Howard Bilton, Founder and Chairman of SAF, said:

"This is yet another extremely strong group of artworks from some of the very best mid-career artists working across Asia-Pacific today, recommended to The Prize by our expert nominators, who have no commercial interest in the work. By offering the works at auction, we hope to give our supporters the opportunity to buy investment-quality art, whilst raising money for charity. Funds raised from the sale of these artworks will be equally shared between the artists and charitable programmes for disadvantaged children, in particular, our locally-based Make It Better (MIB) programme, an initiative that supports children from low-income backgrounds and with special educational needs in Hong Kong.

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 - a gap that needs to be narrowed but has only been worsened by the current pandemic. [Results of a study](#) conducted by The University of Hong Kong indicate that the MIB programme has a significant positive impact on participating children. We hope that our generous supporters will once again help us raise enough to make a difference in their lives."

END



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The 2021 Sovereign Asian Art Prize Finalists Exhibition

Presented by: The Sovereign Art Foundation
[Click here](#) for full list of participating artists.

Venue Partner: 9 Queen's Road Central | Chelsfield Asia | L Catterton
Education Partner: K11 Art Foundation
Partner: Art Central Hong Kong
Auction Partner: Christie's Hong Kong
Media Partner: VOGUE Hong Kong
Media Partner: CoBo Social
Cultural Partner: Sutton
Digital Partner: Ocula

Visiting Information

Venue: Shop G08-G09, Ground Floor, 9 Queen's Road Central, Central, Hong Kong
Press Preview: 4 May 2021
Exhibition period: 5 – 16 May 2021
Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 11am–7pm
Saturday – Sunday & Public Holiday, 11am–8pm
Exhibition admission: Free

Venue: Art Central, The Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Press Preview: 19 May 2021
Exhibition period: 20 – 23 May 2021
Opening hours: Thursday – Friday, 2 – 8pm
Saturday, 11 – 7pm
Sunday, 11 – 6pm
Exhibition admission: Registration required, [click here](#) for more information

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Press Kit

Please see overleaf for full list of 2021 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.*

Facebook: SovereignAsianArtPrize

Instagram: @sovereignasianartprize

#SovereignArtFoundation #SAAP2021



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Shortlisted Artist	Artwork Title	Country/Region	Nominator
Amol K Patil	<i>Gaze under your skin</i>	India	Jeebesh Bagchi, Kerstin Winking
Chen Chien-jung	<i>Aircraft 31</i>	Taiwan	Li-Chen Loh
Cian Dayrit	<i>Psidium Esse Perniciosius</i>	Philippines	Erin Gleeson
Cyrus Tang	<i>Remembering me when the sun goes down - Power Cables</i>	Australia	Pamela Kember, Rachel Marsden
Doyeon Gwon	<i>BUKHANSAN #White Mouth</i>	South Korea	JeongMee Yoon, Mihee Ahn
Fahim Rao	<i>The Shadow of Murgha Punishment</i>	Pakistan	Adeel uz Zafar
Gan Chin Lee	<i>The time to live and the time to die III</i>	Malaysia	Rahel Joseph
Greg Semu	<i>The Death of Captain Cook and other Colonial Catastrophes</i>	Australia	Gene Sherman
Gyungsu An	<i>Protruding monument</i>	South Korea	Mihee Ahn
Hayley Millar Baker	<i>Untitled (Taming)</i>	Australia	Liz Nowell
Intiaj Rasel	<i>Journey by Bus</i>	Bangladesh	Tayeba Begum Lipi
Jihyun Park	<i>Thomson#103</i>	South Korea	JeongMee Yoon
Kawayan De Guia	<i>Tank</i>	Philippines	Victoria 'Boots' Herrera
Koralegedara Pushpakumara	<i>Illusively beautiful but extremely horrific</i>	Sri Lanka	Godwin Constantine, Pradeep Thalawatta
Li Binyuan	<i>Tilted Portrait</i>	Mainland China	Zhenhua Li
Maiko Sugano	<i>Life Drawing</i>	Japan	Previous Finalist
Mamali Shafahi	<i>Heirloom Velvet</i>	Iran	Hamidreza Pejman
Mamoona Riaz	<i>Like Clockwork III</i>	Pakistan	Zahra Khan
Maria Waseem	<i>The Rupture</i>	Pakistan	Waseem Ahmed
Nandita Mukand	<i>Collapsing Evolving 2</i>	Singapore	Suzanna Chew, Tanya Amador
Nino Sarabutra	<i>WHAT WILL YOU LEAVE BEHIND?</i>	Thailand	Tanya Amador
Rithika Merchant	<i>Saudade</i>	India	Kriti Sood
Ross Taylor	<i>Ember</i>	Australia	Claire Richardson
Shaarbek Amankul	<i>Lenin stands - Lenin fell down</i>	Kyrgyzstan	Natalia Muravjeva
Shailesh BR	<i>Pepper Boat</i>	India	Kriti Sood
Sreymao Sao	<i>Party</i>	Cambodia	Meta Moeng
Valerie Ng	<i>River Terrain</i>	Singapore	Previous Finalist
Vic Balanon	<i>Black Thursday</i>	Philippines	Victoria 'Boots' Herrera
Wong Chun Hei	<i>Virtual Travelling by Reading</i>	Hong Kong	Leona Yu
Zoe Young	<i>Sunday Avo</i>	Australia	Nina Miall



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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

Sovereign

Sovereign began in Gibraltar in 1987 and has since grown into one of the largest independent corporate and trust service providers in the world. Sovereign currently manages over 20,000 clients that include companies, entrepreneurs, private investors or high net worth individuals and their families and have assets under administration in excess of US\$10 billion.

Sovereign Corporate Services – offers company formation and management across all major jurisdictions, together with the necessary support to assist companies of all sizes to establish and sustain operations successfully.

Sovereign Private Client Services – provides trustee services, wealth management and succession planning to internationally mobile families and entrepreneurs.

Sovereign Retirement Planning – devises and administers individual and corporate international pension schemes that offer choice, transparency and portability across multiple jurisdictions.

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Sovereign has established a network of offices or agents in all major international finance centres, allowing clients to access a global service from a local point of delivery and holds appropriate authorisations in all jurisdictions that require it to be licensed.

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