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Amateur and professional artists celebrate as National Open Art reveals its 2015 finalists

Amateur and established artists from all corners of the UK and Ireland are celebrating after being selected as finalists in this year's National Open Art competition.

The final 133 artworks, selected from nearly 4000 entries by judges Hughie O' Donoghue RA, David Lister, Rebecca Hossack, Vanessa Branson and Amanda Harman, will now appear at NOA's Winter Exhibition at the Royal College of Art in October (21 Oct – 1 Nov) where this year's prize winners will be announced.

Harry Borden, one of the UK's most acclaimed portrait photographers, has been selected for his C-type print, *Kenny – 20 Years of Farming. Dreamboat* and *Dreamscape*, two hand-coloured etchings by renowned illustrator Carolyn Gowdy, whose work has changed the look of British book, magazine and poster illustration over the past 20 years, will also feature.

Mixed media artist Charlie Calder-Potts, who submitted work to the competition inspired by her time in Afghanistan as an official British Army war artist, has two pieces selected. One of which, *I am the gate that fears no fall*, is created out of scrap metal brought back from a 'warthog' tank in Helmand province.

A print by Marcus Lyon, an award winning photographer and founder of the multidisciplinary art studio Glassworks, has also been selected as has work by portrait painter Kevin M.A. Cunningham, British-born Tamil artist Reginald S Aloysius and Mackie, winner of the Fine Art Award in NOA's 2014 competition.

Strongly represented up-and-coming artists include Mandy Payne, whose selected piece *Everything of Value Has Been Removed* comes from her three-year exploration of Park Hill in Sheffield, a Grade II listed council estate which is part abandoned and part regenerated. Bristol Street Artist Jack Tierney has also made it to NOA's 2015 final for his oil painting *The Last Known Portrait of Ferdinand Marcos*.

Other rising names include Brighton-based artist Lauren Alderslade, who has been selected for her painting *Plenty of Fish* – a comment on the modern dating game – fine artist Ben Snowden, photographer Isla Jones, and contemporary landscape painter John Hainsworth.

The diverse regional spread of the finalists is clear – with 27 artworks from artists in South East England, 16 from artists in South West England, 11 from artists in Northern England, 11 from artists in the Midlands, seven from artists in the East of England, five from artists in Scotland, four from artists in Ireland, two from artists in Northern Ireland and two from artists in Wales. The remaining pieces are from London-based artists.

NOA 2015 judge Hughie O' Donoghue RA said: "Judging thousands of art works is a challenge, but the experience is essentially a privileged glimpse of the creative energy at work in Britain and Ireland today. I'm impressed with the strength and diversity of the submissions. What comes through for me is a sense of invention and a seriousness of intent, sometimes along with irreverence and humour. It's a healthy picture of the art in these Islands."

Also exhibiting will be 18-year-old Kaye Song whose piece *Asleep*, which she created as part of her A-level artwork, won a place at the NOA's Winter Exhibition after being voted for by members of the public in NOA's first ever World Vote.

Neil Lawson-Baker, Chairman of NOA, said: "After 19 years of the National Open Art Competition, the artists keep surprising me. The work from this year's finalists is hugely diverse. The artists themselves come from all corners of the UK and Ireland and are at varying stages in their own artistic lives, but what unites each of them is an ability to communicate to the world through art. These pieces are inspiring, sometimes challenging, and of huge credit to those who have created them."

The finalists are vying for a range of prizes totalling more than £60,000, which will be announced on 21 and 23 October at the RCA. These include the NOA15 *Fine Art Award for the Best Artist* and the NOA15 *Best Young Artist*, both of which carry a prize of £5,000, and the *NOA 15 Best Emerging Artist*, which carries a £1,000 prize. A prize for the best artwork in each medium will also be given. For the first time in the competition's history, this includes a moving image category and a category for work submitted by artists aged under 15.

This year's winners will be exhibited at Pallant House Gallery, Chichester in December.

All entries to this year's competition are for sale and proceeds for each piece will be divided between the artist, NOA, and The House of Fairytales, a charity that helps children and young people engage with art.

National Open Art's Winter Exhibition takes place at the Royal College of Art between 21 October – 1 November and is free to enter. For more information visit www.thenationalopenartcompetition.com.

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Click [here](#) to download images of the final 133 artworks to accompany this press release only. Please credit the artist of any image used.

For further information, interviews or images, please contact Hester Phillips at Cut Through PR: hester@cutthroughpr.com / 07786926907.

Notes

The headline sponsor for 2015 is LONDON WALL PARTNERS.

As well as the 133 static pieces being exhibited, an additional six pieces of artwork from NOA's children competition and six moving image pieces will be exhibited.

Described by Young British Artist Gavin Turk as "the best open art competition in the UK", NOA's annual competition is held in high regard across the visual art world for the calibre of the work submitted.

NOA maintains its own collection, consisting of donated works by established and emerging artists who have submitted work to the NOA competition. This year NOA will hold exhibitions in London, Chichester, Brighton, Arundel and Harrogate.

Proceeds of sales from the NOA collection and competition go to helping NOA continue its mission to encourage artistic achievement and to NOA's chosen charity, The House of Fairytales, which helps children and young people engage with art.

NOA's long-term ambitions are to establish a fund for artists' education grants; to help provide affordable art studios; to provide bursaries and career support for artists and to encourage donations for traveling scholarships.

NOA was founded by the Duke of Richmond at Goodwood and is now presided over by the Duke of Norfolk. Its patron is Ronnie Wood and its Vice Presidents are

Daniel Hodson, Michael Smith and Gavin Turk. It is run by the Chichester Art Trust, a not-for-profit Arts charity. No 1067096.