

Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition 2017

A Showcase of Excellence in Contemporary Art

The **fifth Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition** takes place from **26 May to 10 September at York Art Gallery**. A platform for innovation and originality, the presentation invites audiences to engage with captivating projects from some of today's leading artists.

From individual narratives to global concerns, the artworks comment on contemporary culture and explore themes such as globalisation, perceptions of space and alienation in the digital age. The shortlist includes 16 artists who hail from diverse locations such as Austria, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Mexico, the USA and the UK. Utilising a range of media, they work within the categories of Photographic & Digital Art; Painting, Drawing & Mixed Media; Three Dimensional Design & Sculpture and Video, Installation & Performance.

Artists include **Adam Basanta**, selected for his **installation** *Curtain (white)*. Basanta uses readymade commercial technologies and communication devices, arranging these objects in ways which disrupt their economic functions and testing their potential as instruments of personal or mass communication. In *Curtain (white)*, Basanta considers the ubiquitous white earbud headphone, an everyday device that creates an interior environment in which one can retreat from the external world. Within this personalised bubble, the headphones function as a visual "do not disturb" sign. The work plays on this notion by producing a three-metre-long "curtain" which sections the gallery space, both visually and sonically.

In **photography**, **Judith Jones** presents *Rendezvous* from her *Twilight* series. In this collection, Jones examines the dialect between the outside and inside, commenting on the contrasts of private and public spaces. The "blue hour" of twilight takes us through the transition between day and night, maintaining an uncanny sense of unease. Documenting this fragile time frame presents a magical, filmic space that at once intrigues and fascinates, yet also evokes a lingering sense of fear.

Shadowplay by **breadedEscalope** is an **interactive light installation**, and the result of the artists' experimentations with a certain type of void. By interacting with the state of darkness or "nothingness", the artists discovered that the qualities of shadow are an actual material that can be manipulated and utilised, shifting into an emotionally affective clock. The viewer becomes the most essential component; when they touch the wall in the ring's centre, the clock dims all the lights. Two spots appear that illuminate the index finger and cast two shadows that resemble the hands of a clock.

The exhibition also features **Stephen Johnston's painting** *Limes in Jar*. The artist's recent ventures have focused on reinterpreting still life: food slowly decaying in glass jars, burnt bottles, deconstructed cakes in jars, a bowl full of roadkill. These vivid images deal with the subject of mortality and reveal how Johnston sees all still life as a comment on death.

Other shortlisted artists are: Adam Niklewicz, Alinka Echeverría, Dylan Martinez, Emmanuelle Moureaux, Jasmina Cibic, Julio Bittencourt, Lesley Hilling, Maryam Tafakory, Sara Morawetz, Stanza, Toby Dye and Webb-Ellis.

Cherie Federico, Director of Aesthetica, says: “The 2017 shortlist includes 16 captivating projects that are relevant and innovative, responding to current issues and themes in our world today. Many of the artists are attending the Exhibition Private View, exhibition talks programme at the Future Now Symposium giving visitors a unique opportunity to investigate their works further and explore current trends and developments in the art world and wider visual culture.”

The [Judging Panel](#) will be selecting the winners of the Main Prize and the Student Prize, announced at the Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition Private View on 25 May. The panel comprises influential art figures, including curators, directors and artists whose expertise span all media. They are: **Whitney Hintz**, Independent Advisor and Curator of the [Hiscox Collection](#); **Alistair Payne**, Head, School of Fine Art, [Glasgow School of Art](#); **Olivier Richon**, Photography Lecturer, [Royal College of Art](#); **Reyahn King**, Chief Executive, [York Museums Trust](#); **Jonathan Watkins**, Director, [Ikon Gallery](#); **Susanna Brown**, Curator of Photographs, [V&A](#); **Rachel Ara**, [Artist](#), Aesthetica Art Prize Winner 2016; **Eleanor Clayton**, Curator, [The Hepworth Wakefield](#); **Cherie Federico**, Co-founder & Managing Director of [Aesthetica](#).

A group of shortlisted artists will be delivering a talk at York Art Gallery from 12:30 on 26 May, providing an opportunity to hear directly from leading practitioners working across the globe. There will also be a chance to connect with Webb-Ellis who will be leading a talk about their work in film, video and performance on 10 August at York Art Gallery. The special event Meet the Artists, which is part of the **Future Now Symposium**, is also a chance to connect with the shortlist and longlist. This event is free to attend with a Symposium pass; however, booking is essential.

Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition, 26 May – 10 September, York Art Gallery, Exhibition Square, York YO1 7EW.

For more information on the exhibition and talks programme, visit www.aestheticamagazine.com/art-prize/exhibition-2017

For opening times and admission details, visit www.yorkartgallery.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

1. Hosted by Aesthetica Magazine, the Aesthetica Art Prize is a celebration of excellence in art from across the world. Entries are open until 31 August 2017. www.aestheticamagazine.com/artprize [@AestheticaMag](https://www.facebook.com/aestheticamagazine)
2. The **Judging Panel** enhances its position in the industry, bringing together specialists from leading cultural institutions. Judges: **Whitney Hintz**, Independent Advisor and Curator of the Hiscox Collection; **Alistair Payne**, Head, School of Fine Art, Glasgow School of Art; **Olivier Richon**, Photography Lecturer, Royal College of Art; **Reyahn King**, Chief Executive, York Museums Trust; **Jonathan Watkins**, Director, Ikon Gallery; **Susanna Brown**, Curator of Photographs, V&A; **Rachel Ara**, Artist, Aesthetica Art Prize Winner 2016; **Eleanor Clayton**, Curator, The Hepworth Wakefield; **Cherie Federico**, Co-founder & Managing Director of Aesthetica. To see Judges' biographies, visit www.aestheticamagazine.com/art-prize/judging-panel
3. The award attracts thousands of entries in a range of innovative media from locations as diverse as Australia, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA. Previous finalists include [John Keane](#), former official British war artist, currently represented

by Flowers Gallery in London; Julia Vogl, shortlisted for Saatchi Gallery and Channel 4's New Sensations; Ingrid Hu, former designer at the Lubetkin-winning Heatherwick Studio; Marcus Jansen, a leading modern expressionist; and Bernat Millet, shortlisted for National Portrait Gallery's Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize.

4. **Sponsors and Partners:** Hiscox, York St John University, Virgin Trains, Arts Council England, V&A, The Hepworth Wakefield, Ikon, York Museums Trust, Prestel, Winsor & Newton.
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6. *Future Now, 100 Contemporary Artists* will be available to purchase at the exhibition and online: www.aestheticmagazine.com/shop