

News Release

THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2021

National Portrait Gallery Announces Shortlist for Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2021

2021 exhibition will open at Cromwell Place arts hub, South Kensington in November



Images L-R: *David* by Katya Ilina © Katya Ilina; Yuki San from the series *Hakanai Sonzai* by Pierre-Elie de Pibrac © Pierre-Elie de Pibrac; *Merna Beasley, Kurtijar Woman* from the series *Tribute to Indigenous Stock Women* by David Prichard © David Prichard

Three international photographers have been shortlisted for the *Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2021*, the prestigious photography award organised by the National Portrait Gallery, London. The shortlisted works will be displayed in the ***Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2021*** exhibition at **Cromwell Place**, a new arts hub in South Kensington, London from the **10 November 2021 until 2 January 2022**, while the Gallery's building in St Martin's Place is closed for major redevelopment works.

Selected by a panel of judges from 5,392 entries from 2,215 photographers, the shortlisted photographers are:

- **Katya Ilina** for her portrait *David*, which examines body positivity in masculinity and celebrates gender in its fluid physical form.
- **Pierre-Elie de Pibrac** for his series of portraits *Hakanai Sonzai*, taken in some of Japan's most troubled regions and focusing on people who exhibited fortitude in the face of adversity.
- **David Prichard** for *Tribute to Indigenous Stock Women*, his series of portraits of First Nation women who have spent most of their working lives as stock women on cattle stations in Queensland, Australia.

The annual *Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize*, now celebrating fourteen years under Taylor Wessing's sponsorship, is one of the most prestigious photography awards in the world and

showcases new work submitted by some of the most exciting contemporary photographers. The winner of the first prize will receive £15,000. The second prize-winner receives £3,000 and the third prize £2,000. The winner will be announced on **Monday 8 November 2021**.

The following photographs have been shortlisted for the *Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2021*.

Katya Ilina for the portrait *David*



David by Katya Ilina © Katya Ilina

Born in the Russian city of Perm in 1990, Katya Ilina bought her first camera as a teenager during a summer exchange in small-town Montana where she encountered the local cowboy culture. Since then, she has spent several years working and exhibiting in Europe and Asia, and is now studying for a BFA in Image Arts: Photography Studies at Ryerson University in Toronto.

Ilina's entry, *David*, is taken from a series of portraits that celebrates positive body image and questions notions of masculinity and femininity by highlighting their fluidity. Themes of identity and gender expression are central to Ilina's work, and the series, entitled *Rosemary & Thyme*, subverts time-honoured tropes of representation in Western art by depicting male sitters in poses traditionally found in portraits of females.

'From Velázquez to Ingres, painters have portrayed men in positions of power, or as muscular heroes in battle, whereas females are often pictured naked and reclining, communicating softness, weakness and openness to gaze,' explains Ilina. 'I wanted to borrow the so-called feminine body language from those paintings and juxtapose it with male sitters. Being physically and emotionally strong still dominates Western ideologies and expectations of "real men", but it's important that contemporary men have the right to be vulnerable and gentle, and not feel ashamed of that.'

Pierre-Elie de Pibrac for the series *Hakanai Sonzai*



Top L-R: Miyashita San, Sanae San and Sudo San from the series *Hakanai Sonzai* by Pierre-Elie de Pibrac © Pierre-Elie de Pibrac
Bottom L-R: Kishita San, Takuya San and Yuki San from the series *Hakanai Sonzai* by Pierre-Elie de Pibrac © Pierre-Elie de Pibrac

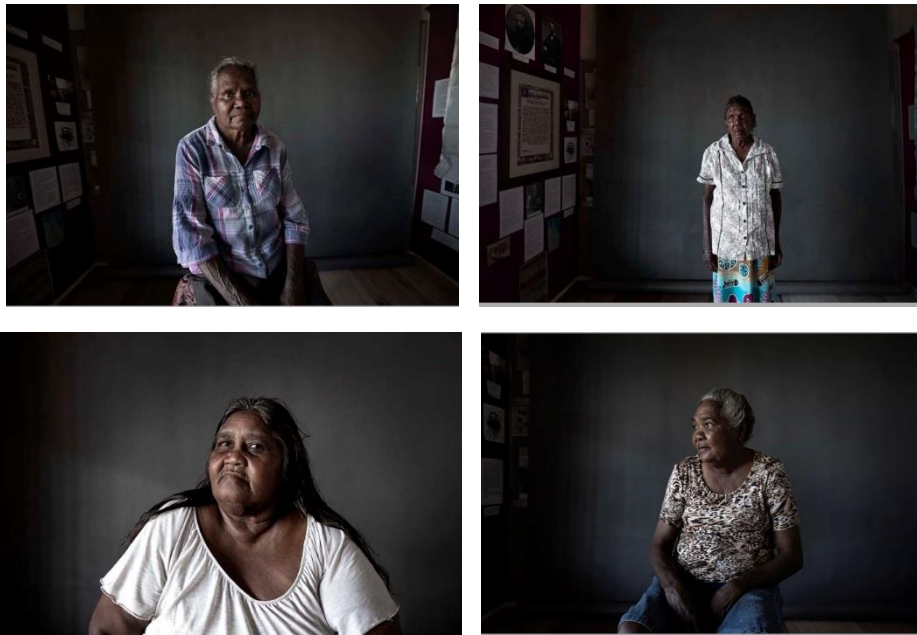
Pierre-Elie de Pibrac was born in Paris, France in 1983. Pibrac graduated from business school in 2009 only to turn his back on a lucrative future in finance when his first photographic portraits, taken on a trip to Myanmar, received immediate recognition. He has since become a much celebrated and prolific visual artist, exhibiting widely and publishing several monographs.

Pibrac's shortlisted large-format portraits were taken in Japan, where he spent eight months accompanied by his wife and children. Travelling to the country's most troubled regions, he focused his lens on people who exhibited fortitude in the face of adversity. In Fukushima, he photographed residents still exiled from their contaminated homes following the nuclear meltdown a decade ago. Other portraits were taken in the former mining town Yubari, once known as the country's capital of coal, now devastated by colliery closures and depopulation.

'Each portrait emanates from long discussions I had with my subjects about a painful event in their lives,' he says. 'In all the pictures I forbid any movement, as if they are trapped by their surroundings with no visible escape' says Pibrac.

The series title, *Hakanai Sonzai*, translates as 'I, myself, feel like an ephemeral creature'. It reflects Pibrac's belief that his sitters' forbearance is rooted in a national culture of fatality and awareness of impermanence.

David Prichard for the series *Tribute to Indigenous Stock Women*



Top L-R Shirley Mary Ann McPherson, *Kurtijar Woman*; Gloria Campbell, *Kurtijar Woman* from the series *Tribute to Indigenous Stock Women* by David Prichard © David Prichard

Bottom L-R Mildred Burns, *Gkuthaarn Woman*; Merna Beasley, *Kurtijar Woman* from the series *Tribute to Indigenous Stock Women* by David Prichard © David Prichard

Sydney-based photographer, David Prichard's entry is a series of portraits of First Nation women who spent most of their working lives as stock women on cattle stations in Far North Queensland. Their physically demanding work involved a range of duties, from cooking and other homestead chores to maintaining the welfare of the livestock, often on horseback.

Born in Sydney, Australia in 1966, Prichard has documented indigenous peoples for much of his career, and was commissioned to create the series by Normanton council in Queensland following a well-received 2019 exhibition that showcased First Nation rodeo riders in the region. The cultural and social history of stock women has gone almost completely unrecorded, and Prichard welcomed the opportunity to help their voices be heard.

'Any level of investigation into Australian history reveals the years of trauma that indigenous people have suffered,' Prichard says. 'One can only imagine what stock women endured, living in remote areas, in a world dominated by white colonial culture and law. I wanted to produce portraits that were dignified, strong and beautiful, and worthy to represent these women today and into the future.'

The prize-winning photographs and those selected for inclusion in the exhibition were chosen from 5,392 submissions entered by 2,215 photographers from 62 countries. A total of 55 portraits from 26 artists have been selected for display in the *Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2021* exhibition.

Judged anonymously, the diversity of styles in the exhibition reflects the international mix of entries as well as photographers' individual and varied approaches to the genre of portraiture. Photographers were again encouraged to submit works as a series in addition to stand-alone portraits.

This year's judging panel was chaired by National Portrait Gallery Director, Dr Nicholas Cullinan, who was joined by curator Mariama Attah from the Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool; photographer and Chair of the Southbank Centre, Misan Harriman; curator and writer, Dr Susan Bright, and National Portrait Gallery Senior Curator, Photographs, Magda Keaney.

Quotes

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director National Portrait Gallery said: "Congratulations to all the shortlisted artists. Once again, the competition has attracted entries from across the world and this year's shortlist of all international photographers demonstrates the continued global appeal of the Prize. I am delighted that we are able to display the prize-winning works and the exhibition selection at Cromwell Place and we look forward to welcoming both new and returning visitors to the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize."

Shane Gleghorn, Managing Partner at Taylor Wessing, said: "The desire for inspiring images has only increased during the pandemic, and the National Portrait Gallery has enabled a growing number of artists from an ever expanding range of countries to participate in the prize. This exhibition is replete with striking images that speak to the inner qualities of resilience, patience and persistence. Taylor Wessing is delighted that this powerful collection can be viewed by the widest possible audience, both online and with the return of a physical exhibition this year."

TAYLOR WESSING PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT PRIZE 2021 at [Cromwell Place](#)

10 November 2021 until 2 January 2022*

Supported by Taylor Wessing

www.npg.org.uk/photoprize

**For press information contact: Laura McKechan, Senior Communications Manager,
Email: lmckechan@npg.org.uk Tel: +44 (0)7855 768750.**

Notes to Editors:

Exhibiting Photographers

Kymara Akinpelumi

Todd Antony

Delali Ayivi

Hady Barry

Alexander Beer

Polly Braden

Sadie Catt

Tino Chiwariro

Pierre-Elie de Pibrac

Tori Ferenc

Lauren Forster

Katya Ilina

Philippa James

Priya Kambli

Tony Kearney

Jenny Lewis

Kois Miah

Fumi Nagasaka

Olufemi David Olaiya

David Prichard

Aisha Seriki

Christian Sinibaldi

Donavon Smallwood

Joseph P Smith

Lisa Sorgini

Anastasia Taylor-Lind

National Portrait Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery was founded in 1856 to encourage through portraiture the appreciation and understanding of the people who have made and are making British history and culture. Today it promotes engagement with portraiture in all media to a wide-ranging public by conserving, growing and sharing the world's largest collection of portraits.

www.npg.org.uk

Inspiring People

Inspiring People is the National Portrait Gallery's biggest ever development since the building in St Martin's Place opened in 1896. The project, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund will see a transformed National Portrait Gallery, including a comprehensive re-display and re-interpretation of the Gallery's Collection from the Tudors to now across 40 refurbished galleries, combined with a complete refurbishment of the building, restoring historic features, creating a new and more welcoming visitor entrance and public forecourt on the building's North Façade, and enhancing the Gallery's accessibility.

The designs by Jamie Fobert Architects, working in partnership with Purcell, will also see the return of the Gallery's East Wing to public use as the new Weston Wing, including restoring the original gallery spaces, the creation of new retail and catering facilities and its own dedicated entrance at street level; and a new Learning Centre for visitors of all ages with studios, breakout spaces and high quality practical facilities. The Gallery's existing entrance will also remain, with new step-free access.

In order to complete the project efficiently and to safeguard visitors, members of staff and the Collection, the Gallery in St Martin's Place has temporarily closed to the public from 29 June 2020 until spring 2023, while essential building works take place. During this time the Gallery is continuing to share its unique Collection of portraits with the nation in a major programme of activities across the UK.

Taylor Wessing is a global law firm that serves the world's most innovative people and businesses. Deeply embedded within our sectors, we work closely together with our clients to crack complex problems, enabling ideas and aspirations to thrive. Creative thinking is at the heart of our culture and we see art as an important instrument of change. Together with our people and community partners, we seek to challenge expectation and create extraordinary results.

Cromwell Place

Cromwell Place is a Membership organisation offering a first-of-its-kind exhibition and working space in central London, located in the heart of South Kensington's museum district and housed within five Grade II listed townhouses.

Designed in 1858 by Sir Charles James Ffoulkes, the buildings contain 14 unique gallery spaces, permanent and shared offices, hot desks, meeting rooms and viewing rooms, and the Club Room. Additional services include access to Temporary Admission and Custom Warehouse Status.

Cromwell Place is home to some of the world's most exciting galleries, collectors, dealers and advisors: with specialities ranging from Antiquities and Old Masters through to Contemporary Art. Membership is open to those who can demonstrate a high standard of curatorial and professional competence.