

Press Release

Tuesday, 28 November 2017

***BP PORTRAIT AWARD* PRIZE MONEY INCREASED AS NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY CALLS FOR ENTRIES FOR 2018**



(from left): Benjamin Sullivan First Prize Winner of the *BP Portrait Award 2017*, with his portrait *Breech!*; Second Prize Winner Thomas Ehretsmann, with his wife Caroline Ehretsmann and portrait *Double Portrait*; Third Prize Winner Antony Williams with his portrait *Emma*
© Jorge Herrera (photographs)

All prize values for the *BP Portrait Award 2018* have been increased, making it one of the largest for any global arts competition, it was announced today, 28 November 2017, as the National Portrait Gallery invites entries for the *BP Portrait Award 2018*. The first prize for the *BP Portrait Award* is to increase from £30,000 to £35,000, with second prize rising to £12,000 (previously £10,000); third prize £10,000 (previously £8,000); the *BP Young Artist Award*, awarded to one selected artist aged between 18 and 30, £9,000 (previously £7,000), and the *BP Travel Award* £8,000 (previously £6,000).

To enter, artists are invited to upload a photograph of their finished painting to the *BP Portrait Award* website, which will be viewed anonymously by the judges in the first round of the competition. The entrants who are successful in this round will then be invited to hand-deliver or courier their work to a venue in London for the second round of judging and final exhibition selection.

Artists can enter at npg.org.uk/bp between now and **22 January 2018**. Full competition rules and guidance for digital submission can be found online. The *BP Portrait Award 2018* exhibition will run at the National Portrait Gallery from 14 June to 23 September 2018.

2018 will mark the Portrait Award's 39th year at the National Portrait Gallery and 29th year of sponsorship by BP. This highly successful annual event is aimed at encouraging artists over the age of eighteen to focus upon, and develop, the theme of portraiture in their work. The increasingly popular competition has a huge international reach, with the *BP Portrait Award 2017* receiving 2580 entries from 87 countries. The exhibition, which featured 53 paintings, was seen by 234,604 people at the National Portrait Gallery.

The *BP Portrait Award* is one of the most important platforms for portrait painters. The winner also receives, at the Gallery's discretion, a commission worth £7,000 (agreed between the National Portrait Gallery and the artist). All 2018 exhibitors will be eligible to submit a proposal for the *BP Travel Award 2018*. The aim of the award is to provide

the opportunity for an artist to experience working in a different environment, in Britain or abroad, on a project related to portraits. The artist chosen as the winner of the travel award will receive £8,000.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, London, says: 'We are pleased to be able to announce this substantial increase to the *BP Portrait Award* prize fund as we call for entries for the 2018 *Award*. The competition, recognised as the most prestigious in the field of portrait painting in the world, attracts some of the best practitioners of the genre. We're delighted that through the *Award* we are able to further support talented artists of all ages and from all parts of the globe to focus upon, and develop, the theme of portraiture in their work.'

Des Violaris, Director UK Arts and Culture BP, says: 'We are delighted with the increased prize fund for the *BP Portrait Award*, which each year helps to encourage and inspire thousands of portrait artists to capture the stories of people from every walk of life and in all corners of the world. The *BP Portrait Award* is one of the most important platforms for portrait painters and BP is proud to be supporting the *Award* for the twenty-ninth year. Our aim in supporting the *BP Portrait Award*, and other cultural activities in the UK, is to bring to as wide an audience as possible the very best in arts and culture.'

The current *BP Portrait Award 2017* exhibition tours to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery Exeter (4 October – 3 December 2017); Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh (16 December 2017 – 11 March 2018); Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens (24 March – 10 June 2018.)

First prize was won by Suffolk based artist, **Benjamin Sullivan** for *Breech!* a portrait of his wife Virginia breastfeeding their eight month old daughter. Second prize went to French painter and illustrator, **Thomas Ehretsmann**, for *Double Portrait*, depicting his pregnant wife Caroline. Third prize went to **Antony Williams** for *Emma* his portrait of model turned friend, Emma Bruce, completed in his studio in Chertsey. The **BP Young Artist Award** for the work of a selected entrant aged between 18 and 30 has been won by 26 year old New Zealand artist **Henry Christian-Slane** for *Gabi*, a portrait of his partner Gabi Lardies. The winner of the **BP Travel Award 2017** was **Casper White** for his proposal to create works about music fans in clubs and concert venues in Berlin and Mallorca, representing an often youth-related subculture that is not traditionally recorded in portrait paintings.

PUBLICATION

Entrants can order a special edition of the 2018 exhibition catalogue, featuring all the selected artists, and a note of thanks from the Director of the National Portrait Gallery. The special edition is only available to entrants and will not be available through the Gallery shops or online.

NOTES TO EDITORS

BP support for UK Arts & Culture: In the UK, BP is a major supporter of the arts with a programme that spans some 50 years. In that time over 50 million people have engaged and connected with cultural experiences supported by the company. BP's investment in long term partnerships with the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Opera House, and Tate Britain represent one of the most significant long-term corporate investments in UK arts and culture www.bp.com

- This international competition is open to everyone aged 18 and over in recognition of the outstanding and innovative work currently being produced by artists of all ages working in portraiture.
- The best way to register your entry for the BP Portrait Award 2018 is online at npg.org.uk/bp
- Full competition rules, collection/delivery points and details of the exhibition tour can be found online at npg.org.uk/bp
- Closing date for registration: 22 January 2018
- First Prize: A cash award of £35,000, plus, at the judges' discretion, a commission worth £7,000, to be agreed between the National Portrait Gallery and the artist.
- Second Prize: £12,000
- Third Prize: £10,000
- BP Young Artist Award: £9,000
- BP Travel Award 2014: £8,000
- All entrants aged between 18 and 30 will automatically be considered for both the *BP Young Artist Award* and the *BP Portrait Award*, but an individual cannot win both.
- The entry fee is £40.

For further Press information and image requests please contact: Laura McKechan, Senior Communications Manager, National Portrait Gallery Tel: 020 7321 6620 (not for publication) Email: lmckechan@npg.org.uk

Download press images: <https://we.tl/U579gielPk>

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London, WC2H 0HE. Opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10am – 6pm (Gallery closure commences at 5.50pm) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10am – 9pm (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **General information:** 020 7306 0055 **Website:** npg.org.uk