

News Release

Monday 9 April 2018

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY ANNOUNCES SHORTLIST FOR *BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2018*



An Angel At My Table by Miriam Escofet © Miriam Escofet; **Time Traveller, Matthew Napping** by Felicia Forte © Felicia Forte; **A Portrait of two Female Painters** by Ania Hobson © Ania Hobson; **Simone** by Zhu Tongyao © Zhu Tongyao;

Four artists have been shortlisted for the *BP Portrait Award 2018* at the National Portrait Gallery, London, which will be presented on 11 June 2018, it was announced today, Monday 9 April 2018. The shortlisted portraits were selected from 2,667 entries from 88 countries, submitted for judging anonymously by a panel which included journalist and broadcaster Rosie Millard and artist Glenn Brown.

The four portraits in the running for the First Prize are Miriam Escofet's portrait of her mother, *An Angel At My Table*; *Time Traveller, Matthew Napping* by Felicia Forte which shows her partner Matthew DeJong asleep in bed; Ania Hobson's *A Portrait Of two Female Painters*, depicting the artist and her sister in law, Stevie Dix, and Zhu Tongyao's portrait of his Italian neighbour, *Simone*.

This is the first time all the artists have been shortlisted for First Prize in the *BP Portrait Award*. Miriam Escofet has been selected four times for previous *BP Portrait Award* exhibitions, Felicia Forte was selected for the 2015 exhibition and Ania Hobson was selected for exhibition in 2017. This is the first time Tongyao Zhu has entered the competition.

The *BP Portrait Award*, one of the most important platforms for portrait painters, has a first prize of £35,000, making it one of the largest for any global arts competition. The winner also receives, at the Gallery's discretion, a commission worth £7,000 (agreed between the National Portrait Gallery and the artist). The second prize winner receives £12,000 and a third prize of £10,000 is also awarded. The *BP Young Artist Award*, with a prize of £9,000 goes to one selected artist aged between 18 and 30.

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 prize winners will be announced on the evening of Monday 11 June

2018. The *BP Portrait Award 2018* exhibition will run at the National Portrait Gallery, London, from Thursday 14 June to Sunday 23 September 2018.

Shortlisted artists:

Miriam Escofet (30.05.1967) for *An Angel At My Table* (1000mm x 700mm, oil on linen over panel)

Miriam Escofet was born in Barcelona and moved to the UK in 1979. Escofet graduated from Brighton School of Art in 1990, where she studied 3D Design, and began painting soon after. This is the fifth time Escofet has been selected for the *BP Portrait Award* exhibition. She has also been regularly selected for The Royal Society of Portrait Painters annual exhibitions and was awarded the Burke's Peerage Foundation Prize for Classically Inspired Portraiture in 2015.

An Angel At My Table shows Escofet's elderly mother sat at her kitchen table surrounded by tea crockery. The painting suggests a sense of space, perspective and time which conveys the sitter's inner stillness and calm. Escofet says she was also conscious whilst painting that she wanted to 'transmit an idea of the Universal Mother, who is at the centre of our psyche and emotional world.'

Felicia Forte (28.12.1979) for *Time Traveller, Matthew Napping*, (1830mm x 1830mm, oil on linen)

Felicia Forte studied at the California Art Institute and The Art Students League of New York. Her work has been seen in numerous exhibitions in the USA. Forte was Artist-in-Residence at de Young Museum of Fine Art, San Francisco and her work *Self-Portrait, Melting Point* was selected for the *BP Portrait Award 2015* exhibition.

Time Traveller, Matthew Napping finds Forte's sweetheart Matthew DeJong asleep on a sweltering summer's day in Detroit. Forte says she was struck by the beautiful contrasts in the scene - the 'cool light from the window meeting intense red light from the bedside lamp and the loneliness of the sleeper amidst the festive colours.' The portrait was the culmination of a body of new work made in residence summer 2017 at Redbull House of Art in Detroit.

Ania Hobson (05.04.1990) for *A Portrait of two Female Painters* (1600 x 1200, oil on canvas)

Ania Hobson undertook a degree in fine art at the University of Suffolk followed by short courses at the Prince's Drawing School and Florence Academy of Art. Her work has been seen in group exhibitions in the UK and the annual exhibitions of the Society of Women Artists and the Royal Society of Portrait Painters. Her self-portrait, *Ania*, was selected for the *BP Portrait Award 2017* exhibition.

A Portrait of two Female Painters, depicts the artist with her sister in law Stevie Dix and explores the relationship between the two of them as painters working in the studio together. Hobson used an upward perspective to allow the viewers eye to map the portrait and convey a feeling of confidence and creative energy which celebrates female painters today.

Zhu Tongyao (15.4.1988) for *Simone* (540mm x 460mm, oil on canvas)

Zhu Tongyao was born in Jinan, Shandong and attended China Central Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts of Florence. Tongyao has exhibited in Italy and China and in 2015 was awarded first prize in the Florence Biennale - International exhibition of contemporary art. This is the first time Tongyao has entered the *BP Portrait Award*.

Simone was painted while Tongyao was studying in Italy. The portrait depicts Simone, the child of the artist's neighbours who took care of Tongyao during his stay. The painting shows Simone with a joyful expression on his face reflecting the peace that his family brought to him. The work captures a moment when the boy sat down and the sunlight fell on his face, which Tongyao says 'recalled my cherished memory of happy time spent with his family.'

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Chair of the Judges and Director of the National Portrait Gallery, London, says: “The *BP Portrait Award* exhibition is an annual celebration of contemporary painted portraiture by artists of all ages from across the world and continues to attract submissions from the medium’s best practitioners. Judging anonymously requires each panel member to address precisely what they believe makes an outstanding portrait, weighing up the relative importance of technique, likeness, narrative, structure and the overall impact of a work through a lively process of debate and discussion so I want to thank my fellow judges for that. I am delighted with this year’s shortlist and the final selection of works for the exhibition and congratulate all the artists involved.”

Ms Des Violaris, Director UK Arts and Culture BP, says: “The BP Portrait Award has established itself as one of the most important platforms for portraiture in the world, and with the value of the prizes increasing across all categories this year it is also one of the largest of any global arts competition. BP is a major supporter of UK arts and culture, and we are extremely proud of the continued success of this award programme and its associated exhibition. Congratulations to all of this year’s artists who will showcase their work in London, Wolverhampton and Edinburgh.”

The prize winners and exhibition were selected by a judging panel chaired by **Dr Nicholas Cullinan**, Director, National Portrait Gallery. The full panel included **Dr Caroline Bressey**, Cultural and Historical Geographer, University College, London; **Rosie Broadley**, Curator, 19th-Century Portraits, National Portrait Gallery; **Glenn Brown**, Artist; **Rosie Millard**, Journalist and Broadcaster and **Des Violaris**, Director, UK Arts & Culture, BP.

To enter, artists were invited to upload a photograph of their finished painting to the *BP Portrait Award* website, which were considered by the judges in the first round of the competition. 215 entrants were successful in this round and invited to hand-deliver or courier their work to a venue in London for the second round of judging. From this 48 works were selected for the *BP Portrait Award 2018* exhibition.

One of the 48 exhibited artists will receive the *BP Travel Award 2018* an annual award of £7,000, which allows artists to experience working in a different environment on a project related to portraiture. The resulting portraits are shown in the following year’s exhibition. The winner of the *BP Travel Award 2018* is announced at the award ceremony on Monday 11 June 2018.

BP TRAVEL AWARD 2017

The *BP Travel Award 2017* was won by **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. The resulting work will be displayed in the *BP Portrait Award 2018* exhibition.

CATALOGUE

A fully illustrated catalogue featuring all forty-eight selected works will accompany the exhibition. The catalogue also includes an essay by curator and judge Rosie Broadley, an illustrated interview with the BP Travel Award 2017 winner and interviews with the prize winners. The catalogue, priced at £9.99, will be published on 14 June 2018.

TOUR

Wolverhampton Art Gallery (13 October – 2 December 2018) and Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh (15 Dec 2018 - 10 March 2019).

BP PORTRAIT AWARD: NEXT GENERATION is an exciting project offering free opportunities for young people to learn from BP Portrait artists and develop their creative skills around portraiture. For the ninth year, young people will take inspiration from the exhibition and work on creating their own portraits, working from life. The Gallery offers one and three day art workshops culminating in the Young People’s Private View – an after-hours event exclusively for young people to meet and enjoy the exhibition, listen to DJs and take part in art workshops. The event is co-curated and hosted by the Gallery’s Youth Forum. *BP Portrait Award: Next Generation* also features a Gallery display showcasing the portraits created by talented young people from the previous year’s project together with a film highlighting the project. The project also includes regional art workshops for young people to meet and work

with BP Portrait Award artists. *BP Portrait Award: Next Generation* has so far engaged over 3,700 young people in art projects. More details of 2018 programmes www.npg.org.uk/bpNextgeneration

BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2018

OVERALL FIGURES Total entrants 2,667 from 88 countries (UK Entries 25, International Entries 23)

EXHIBITION FIGURES (48 SELECTED FROM TOTAL ENTRY)

England (22), Australia (1), China (1), France (1), Germany (2), Ireland (1), Italy (1), Netherlands (2), Poland (1), Scotland (2), Spain (4), Taiwan (1), United States (8), Wales (1)

BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2018

14 June to 23 September 2018 at the National Portrait Gallery, London www.npg.org.uk

Admission Free

npg.org.uk/BP or 020 7321 6600 #BPPortrait

Press View: Wednesday 13 June 2018 10.00-12.00

For further press information, please contact: Laura McKechnan, Senior Communications Manager, National Portrait Gallery, 020 7321 6620 lmckechnan@npg.org.uk

For images, please go to: www.npg.org.uk/press

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10.00 – 18.00 (Gallery closure commences at 17.50) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10.00 – 21.00 (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **Website** www.npg.org.uk

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 over 50 years. BP's investment in long term partnerships with the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Royal Opera House, and the Royal Shakespeare Company represent one of the most significant long-term corporate investments in UK arts and culture www.bp.com

LIST OF BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2018 EXHIBITED ARTISTS

Alastair Adams	Peter James Field	Monika Polak
Annalisa Avancini	Jack Freeman	Megan Roodenrys
Oliver Bedeman	Nathan Ford	Nikita Sacha
Michael Bergt	Felicia Forte	Jesús María Sáez de VicuñaOchoa
Simon Thomas Braiden	Vanessa Garwood	Robert Seidel
Shona Chew	Huey Glynn-Jones	Bernardo Siciliano
Jamie Coreth	Seçil Güven	Liesel Thomas
Meghan Cox	Ania Hobson	Zhu Tongyao
Éva Csányi-Hurskin	Chunchieh Huang	René Tweehuysen
JJ Delvine	Mark H. Lawrence	Fermin G. Villaescusa
Phoebe Dickinson	Antonio Lara Luque	Conor Walton
Rebecca Driffield	John McCarthy	Antony Williams
Gaela Erwin	Shawn McGovern	Paula Wilson
Miriam Escofet	Miguel Ángel Moya	Neale Worley
Samantha Fellows	Laura Nardo	Zack Zdrale
Hugo Fergusson	Alvin Ong	
	Massimiliano Pironti	