

News Release

MONDAY 11 JUNE 2018

PORTRAIT OF ARTIST'S MOTHER WINS BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2018



Lily Cole in the BP Portrait Award 2018 exhibition. Photograph by Jorge Herrera; *An Angel At My Table* by Miriam Escofet © Miriam Escofet; First Prize Winner of the BP Portrait Award 2018 Miriam Escofet with her portrait, *An Angel At My Table*. Photograph by Jorge Herrera.

The winner of the *BP Portrait Award 2018* was announced this evening at the National Portrait Gallery, London. The prestigious first prize - in the 29th year of BP's sponsorship of the competition - was won by London based artist, **Miriam Escofet** for *An Angel at my Table*, a portrait of her mother drinking tea.

The winning portrait was selected from 2,667 entries from 88 countries, submitted for judging anonymously by a panel which included journalist Rosie Millard and artist Glenn Brown. The judges were particularly struck by the constraint and intimacy of Escofet's composition, evoking both the inner stillness of her subject and the idea of the Universal Mother. Commenting on the portrait, Rosie Millard said 'The crisp tablecloth and china are rendered so beautifully – and then you see that one of the plates and a winged sculpture on the table appear to be moving which adds a surreal quality to the portrait. It is also a very sensitive depiction of an elderly sitter.'

Lily Cole presented Miriam Escofet with £35,000 and a commission, at the National Portrait Gallery Trustees' discretion, worth £7,000 (agreed between the National Portrait Gallery and the artist). Born in Barcelona, Escofet moved to the UK in 1979 when she was twelve. She has previously been selected four times for the *BP Portrait Award* exhibition. Escofet's paintings are classically inspired, encompassing still life, allegory, imaginary composition and portraiture.

The portrait can be seen at the National Portrait Gallery from Thursday 14 June when the *BP Portrait Award 2018* exhibition opens to the public. Admission to the exhibition is free.

The second prize of £12,000 went to American painter, **Felicia Forte**, for *Time Traveller, Matthew Napping*, depicting her boyfriend Matthew asleep in bed. The judges were particularly impressed by the artist's bold use of colour, creating a painting that exudes atmosphere while also being distinctly intimate and personal.

The third prize of £10,000 went to Chinese artist, **Zhu Tongyao** for *Simone* his portrait of his neighbours' child from his time staying in Florence. The judges appreciated how the work combined the tradition of Renaissance portraiture with the sitter's modern style that conveyed a compelling portrayal of a youth on the cusp of adulthood.

The **BP Young Artist Award** of £9,000 for the work of a selected entrant aged between 18 and 30 has been won by 28 year-old Suffolk based artist **Ania Hobson** for *A Portrait of two Female Painters* a portrait of the artist with her sister in law. The judges liked the handling of paint and directness in this work, capturing an interesting air of mystery around the relationship of the two young women.

The winner of the **BP Travel Award 2018**, an annual prize to enable artists to work in a different environment on a project related to portraiture, was Robert Seidel for his proposal to travel along the route of the river Danube by train, boat and bike to connect with people and make portraits in the regions through which the river passes. The prize of £8,000 is open to applications from any of this year's *BP Portrait Award*-exhibited artists, except the prize-winners.

First Prize

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.'

Second Prize



Time Traveller, Matthew Napping by Felicia Forte © Felicia Forte; **Second Prize Winner Felicia Forte with her portrait, *Time Traveller, Matthew Napping*.**
Photograph by Jorge Herrera.

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 summer 2017 in residence at Redbull House of Art in Detroit.

Third Prize



Simone by Zhu Tongyao © Zhu Tongyao; **Third Prize Winner Zhu Tongyao with his portrait, *Simone***. Photograph by Jorge Herrera.

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.'

BP Young Artist Award



A Portrait of two Female Painters by Ania Hobson © Ania Hobson; **Young Artist Award Winner Ania Hobson with her portrait, *A Portrait of two Female Painters***. Photograph by Jorge Herrera.

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 viewer's eye to map the portrait and convey a feeling of confidence and creative energy which celebrates female painters today.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Chair of the Judges and Director of the National Portrait Gallery, London, says: 'Many congratulations to all the artists in the exhibition and in particular to the prize winners. This has been another year of outstanding entries to the *BP Portrait Award*, representing the very best of contemporary portrait painting. It is a privilege to chair the judging process and I would like to thank all the artists who decided to enter the 2018 competition. I hope visitors will enjoy this year's selection of works.'

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. Congratulations to Miriam Escofet and all of this year's prize-winning artists. BP is a major supporter of UK arts and culture, and we are extremely proud of the continued success of this award programme and we look forward to seeing the exhibition in London, Wolverhampton, Edinburgh and Winchester throughout the year."

2018 will mark the Portrait Award's 39th year at the National Portrait Gallery and 29th year of sponsorship by BP. 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. 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 *BP Portrait Award 2018* exhibition will run at the National Portrait Gallery, London, from Thursday 14 June to Sunday 23 September 2018.

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**, Head of Collection Displays (Victorian to Contemporary) and Senior Curator, 20th-Century Collections, 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.

The judging panel for the *BP Travel Award 2018* included **Rosie Broadley**, Head of Collection Displays (Victorian to Contemporary) and Senior Curator, 20th-Century Collections, National Portrait Gallery; **Benjamin Sullivan**, Artist and winner of the *BP Portrait Award 2017*, **Tony Wheeler**, Co-Founder of Lonely Planet and **Des Violaris**, Director, UK Arts & Culture, BP.

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), Winchester Discovery Centre (March – June 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 since 2010. 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), United States (8), Spain (4), Germany (2), Netherlands (2), Scotland (2), Australia (1), China (1), France (1), Ireland (1), Italy (1), Poland (1), Taiwan (1), 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: Olivia Rickman, olivia@oliviarickman.com 07779727073
National Portrait Gallery, Press Office, 020 7321 6620 lmckechan@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/arts

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	Churchieh 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	

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:** 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