

News Release

MONDAY 10 JUNE 2019

TITIAN INSPIRED PORTRAIT WINS BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2019



First Prize Winner Charlie Schaffer with his portrait *Imara in her Winter Coat*. Photograph by Jorge Herrera; *Imara in her Winter Coat* by Charlie Schaffer, 2019
© Charlie Schaffer

The winner of the *BP Portrait Award 2019* was announced this evening at the National Portrait Gallery, London. The prestigious first prize was won by Brighton based artist, **Charlie Schaffer** for *Imara in her Winter Coat*, a portrait of his close friend.

The winning portrait was selected from 2,538 submissions from 84 countries. The judges admired the mannerist style of this portrait, which has a strong sense of a living presence in Schaffer's composition. The judges went on to say, 'the skilful depiction of a combination of several different textures including faux-fur, hair and skin are revealed by prolonged looking and together these produce an image that is traditional, but clearly contemporary.'

Sandi Toksvig presented Charlie Schaffer 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 London in 1992,

Schaffer studied at Central Saint Martins and then the University of Brighton where he graduated in 2014 with a degree in Fine Art. This is the first time he has been selected for the *BP Portrait Award* exhibition. Schaffer's practice is mainly concerned with the act of painting, and how the process that allows the painter and sitter to spend time with one another forms unique and intense relationships.

The portrait can be seen at the National Portrait Gallery from Thursday 13 June when the *BP Portrait Award 2019* exhibition opens to the public. Admission to the exhibition is free.

The second prize of £12,000 went to Norwegian painter, **Carl-Martin Sandvold**, for *The Crown*, a self-portrait in existential thought. The judges were particularly impressed by the assured handling of paint and keen observation, creating a portrait that had made a memorable impression, and lingered in the mind.

The third prize of £10,000 went to Italian artist, **Massimiliano Pironti**, for *Quo Vadis?*, a portrait of his maternal grandmother, Vincenza, a former miller and factory worker now aged ninety-five. The judges were captivated by the excellent depiction of the subject, in particular the sitter's hands in contrast with the surrounding textures including rubber, tiles and curtains.

The **BP Young Artist Award** of £9,000 for the work of a selected entrant aged between 18 and 30 has been won by 30 year-old Brighton based artist **Emma Hopkins** for *Sophie and Carla*, a portrait that depicts the photographer Sophie Mayanne and her pet dog. The judges liked the way negative space had been used in the portrait, and how the artist had refreshed the traditional depiction of the nude with an interesting mutual gaze between the artist and sitter.

The winner of the **BP Travel Award 2019**, an annual prize to enable artists to work in a different environment on a project related to portraiture, was Manu Kaur Saluja for her proposal to travel to the Golden Temple at Amritsar, India. Saluja intends to make portraits of the men and women from all walks of life who volunteer to work in the temple kitchens that operate year-round, providing meals to over 50,000 people free of charge, every day. 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

Charlie Schaffer (27.02.1992) for *Imara in her Winter Coat* (1200mm x 900mm, oil on canvas)

Originally from London, Schaffer studied at Central Saint Martins before graduating with a degree in Fine Art from the University of Brighton in 2014. He has gone on to win the Brian Botting Prize 'for an outstanding representation of the human figure' three times.

Schaffer's portrait *Imara in her Winter Coat* portrays Imara, an English Literature student he met after moving permanently to Brighton. Schaffer said: "She immediately struck me as someone who is uncompromisingly open and who wants to learn about anything and everything." Sittings for the portrait took place over four months, with Imara posing in her warmest winter coat to withstand the studio's cold conditions. Schaffer set out to paint only Imara's face, but subsequently added the coat after being inspired by Titian's *Portrait of Girolamo Fracastoro* in the National Gallery, London, with its pyramidal composition and the subject's similar attire.

Second Prize



The Crown by Carl-Martin Sandvold, 2019 © Carl-Martin Sandvold; **Second Prize Winner Carl-Martin Sandvold with his portrait The Crown.** Photography by Jorge Herrera

Carl-Martin Sandvold (18.06.1981) for *The Crown* (500mm x 400mm, oil on linen)

Carl-Martin Sandvold's practice began on the streets of Oslo, where he made urban street art during his teenage years. Beginning his training in Norway, he continued his studies at the Florence Academy of Art and the Grand Central Academy of Art in New York, before returning to Florence for a stint at the Charles H. Cecil Studios. Currently, Sandvold's studio is located on the site of Edvard Munch's former estate on the outskirts of Oslo.

Sandvold's self-portrait *The Crown* reflects his interest in 'the challenges of life, the strangeness of being alive and other existential issues'. Central to Sandvold's portraiture is the belief that we are all trying to reconcile the love of life with the knowledge of death, saying: "The crown symbolises the peak of power, achievement and material abundance. In this portrait, it suggests that none of these things really solve anything."

Third Prize



Third Prize Winner Massimiliano Pironti with his portrait *Quo Vadis?*. Photography by Jorge Herrera; *Quo Vadis?* by Massimiliano Pironti, 2018 © Massimiliano Pironti

Massimiliano Pironti (22.12.1981) for *Quo Vadis?* (900mm x 600mm, oil on aluminium)

Massimiliano Pironti was born in Colferro, a town south of Rome, Italy. Pironti taught himself oil painting as a teenager before attending an art school in Frosinone where he focused his attention on portraiture. Painting is not his sole occupation. At the age of sixteen, he began to dance professionally and is now well known in Italy for his performances in musical theatre, including *Cats* and *Saturday Night Fever*. Pironti currently lives in Germany where he has been appearing on stage in a long-running production of the Disney musical *Tarzan*.

Pironti's portrait *Quo Vadis?* depicts his maternal grandmother, Vincenza, a former miller and factory worker now aged ninety-five. Pironti made sketches and took photographs in the kitchen of his grandmother's home in the town of Gavignano, returning to his studio in Germany for the painting process. Pironti says: "My grandmother is an example of strength, dignity and authority. Every wrinkle tells her story and I wanted to capture her image to freeze time. This portrait is truly important to me. It touches emotional chords."

BP Young Artist Award



Sophie and Carla by Emma Hopkins, 2019 © Emma Hopkins; **BP Young Artist Award Winner Emma Hopkins with her portrait Sophie and Carla**. Photography by Jorge Herrera

Emma Hopkins (28.05.1989) for *Sophie and Carla* (1520mm x 920mm, oil on polyester)

Emma Hopkins was born in Brighton in 1989 and turned to portrait painting after graduating with a degree in Make-up and Prosthetics for Performance from the University of the Arts, London. Self-taught, Hopkins first exhibited her work in a staff show at the Chelsea Arts Club while working behind the bar, now she is a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters. Hopkins' expertise has fed directly into her painting, which focuses almost exclusively on nude portraits and studies of human flesh.

Hopkins' portrait *Sophie and Carla* depicts the photographer Sophie Mayanne and her pet dog Carla. Mayanne is known for *Behind the Scars*, a photography project about people's scars and the stories behind them. It is an interest that Hopkins shares, she says: "I want to understand as much as I can about what it means to be human. We are not just the clothed person we present to the world. We are the mind and body that we inhabit."

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 exceptional and inspiring entries to the *BP Portrait Award*, which represents the very best of contemporary portrait painting by artists of all ages, and from all over the world. It is a privilege to chair the judging process and I would like to thank all the artists who entered the 2019 competition. I hope visitors will enjoy the exciting range of styles and sitters in this year's exhibition.'

Ms Des Violaris, Director UK Arts and Culture BP, says: "The BP Portrait Award is one of the most important platforms for contemporary portraiture in the world. BP is one of the longest running supporters of UK arts and culture, and are proud to continue this legacy. We look forward to seeing the exhibition in London, and then Edinburgh and Belfast throughout the year. Congratulations to Charlie Schaffer and all of this year's prize winners."

2019 will mark the Portrait Award's 40th year at the National Portrait Gallery and 30th 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 2019* exhibition will run at the National Portrait Gallery, London, from Thursday 13 June to Sunday 20 October 2019.

The prize winners and exhibition were selected anonymously by a judging panel chaired by **Dr Nicholas Cullinan**, Director, National Portrait Gallery. The full panel included Head of Cinemas and Events at the BFI Southbank **Gaylene Gould**, artist **Gary Hume**, Chief Curator of the National Portrait Gallery **Alison Smith**, **Des Violaris**, Director, UK Arts & Culture, BP and **Zoé Whitley** Senior Curator of the Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London.

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. 290 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 44 works were selected for the *BP Portrait Award 2019* exhibition.

Shortlisted artists are invited to apply for the *BP Travel Award 2019*, an annual award of £8,000, 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 2019* is announced at the award ceremony on Monday 10 June 2019.

The judging panel for the *BP Travel Award 2019* included **Alison Smith**, Chief Curator of the National Portrait Gallery; **Miriam Escofet**, Artist and winner of the *BP Portrait Award 2018* and **Des Violaris**, Director, UK Arts & Culture, BP.

BP TRAVEL AWARD 2018

The winner of the *BP Travel Award 2018* 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 resulting work will be displayed alongside the *BP Portrait Award 2019* exhibition.

CATALOGUE

A fully illustrated catalogue featuring all forty-four selected works will accompany the exhibition. The catalogue also includes an essay by Christopher Baker, Director of European and Scottish Art and Portraiture for the National Galleries of Scotland, an illustrated interview with the *BP Travel Award 2018* winner, interviews with this year's prize winners and also interviews with previous prize winners. The catalogue, priced at £9.99, will be published on 13 June 2019.

TOUR

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh (7 December 2019 to 22 March 2020) and Ulster Museum, Belfast (April to June 2020).

BP PORTRAIT AWARD: NEXT GENERATION is an exciting project offering free opportunities for young people to learn from *BP Portrait Award* artists and develop their creative skills around portraiture. For the tenth 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 2019 programmes www.npg.org.uk/bpNextgeneration

BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2019

OVERALL FIGURES Total entrants 2,538 from 84 countries (UK Entries 20, International Entries 24)

EXHIBITION FIGURES (44 SELECTED FROM TOTAL ENTRY)

UK – 20

Australia – 2
France – 1
Turkey – 1
Germany – 2
Ireland – 2
United States – 8
Sweden – 2
Netherlands – 2
Italy – 1
Norway – 1
Taiwan – 1
Spain – 1

BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2019

13 June to 20 October 2019 at the National Portrait Gallery, London www.npg.org.uk

Admission Free

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

Press View: Wednesday 12 June 2019 10.00-12.00

For further press information, please contact: National Portrait Gallery, Press Office, 020 7321 6435
bward@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 2019 EXHIBITED ARTISTS

Didier Altmeyer
Jennifer Anderson
Jane Beharrell
Frances Bell
Fakhri Bohang
David Booth
Frances Borden
Simon Thomas Braiden
Iván Chacón
Sheng Chieh Chou
Bridget Cox
Denis Dalesio
Thomas Ehretsmann
David Eichenberg
Vanessa Garwood
Steven Higginson
Kyle Hooper
Emma Hopkins
Brendan H Johnston
Karen Kaapcke
Marco Krauwinkel
Scott Lancashire
Tedi Lena
Jeff Midghall
Keith Milow
Sarah Jane Moon
Daniel Nelis
Bas Nijenhuis

Britta Noresten
Tina Oršolić Dalessio
Miguel Angel Oyarbide
Mustafa Özel
Massimiliano Pironti
Helen Robinson
Luis Ruocco
Manu Saluja
Carl-Martin Sandvold
Ola Sarri
Charlie Schaffer
Elaine Speirs
Gandee Vasan
Natalie Voelker
Fiona White
Nigel Whittaker

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 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