

News Release

Monday 29 April 2019

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY ANNOUNCES SHORTLIST FOR *BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2019*



Sophie and Carla by Emma Hopkins, 2019 © Emma Hopkins; *Quo Vadis?* by Massimiliano Pironti, 2018 © Massimiliano Pironti; *The Crown* by Carl-Martin Sandvold, 2019 © Carl-Martin Sandvold; *Imara in her Winter Coat* by Charlie Schaffer, 2019 © Charlie Schaffer

Four artists have been shortlisted for the *BP Portrait Award 2019* at the National Portrait Gallery, London, which will be presented on 10 June 2019, it was announced today, Monday 29 April 2019. The shortlisted portraits were selected from 2,538 entries from 84 countries, submitted for judging anonymously by a panel which included writer and presenter Gaylene Gould, artist Gary Hume and curator Zoé Whitley. 2019 will mark the *Portrait Award's* 40th year at the National Portrait Gallery and 30th year of sponsorship by BP.

The four portraits in the running for the First Prize are Emma Hopkins' portrait of her friend Sophie and her pet dog Carla, *Sophie and Carla*; *Quo Vadis?* by Massimiliano Pironti, which shows the artist's 95 year old grandmother Vincenza Pesoli in her kitchen; Carl-Martin Sandvold's self-portrait, *The Crown*, and Charlie Schaffer's portrait of his close friend, *Imara in her Winter Coat*.

This is the first time any of the artists have been shortlisted for First Prize in the *BP Portrait Award* and is the first time Emma Hopkins, Carl-Martin Sandvold and Charlie Schaffer have entered the competition. Massimiliano Pironti was selected in 2018 where he exhibited a painting of a fellow dancer.

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.

The highly successful *Award* 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 10 June 2019.

The *BP Portrait Award 2019* exhibition will run at the National Portrait Gallery, London, from Thursday 13 June to Sunday 20 October 2019.

Shortlisted artists:

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."

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

Massimiliano Pironti was born in Colleferro, 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."

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."

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.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Chair of the Judges and Director of the National Portrait Gallery, London, says: “Each year, the *BP Portrait Award* showcases exceptional works of contemporary painted portraiture and this year’s exhibition, which marks thirty years of BP sponsorship, is no different. *The Award* has become one of the most prestigious portrait prizes internationally and the works selected represent some of the best examples of the genre. My fellow judges and I assessed the paintings in terms of their technique, quality and what they disclose of the artist’s own approach to the subject and how this resonates with the viewer. My congratulations to this year’s shortlisted artists for their exceptional and inspiring works.”

Ms Des Violaris, Director UK Arts & Culture & Paralympics BP, says: “I am extremely proud that BP has supported a competition of this calibre for thirty years, during that time the competition has given many artists the opportunity to create art in the hope of exhibiting at the internationally renowned National Portrait Gallery. Throughout the judging process I have loved seeing different themes emerge. The *BP Portrait Award* is the National Portrait Gallery’s most popular show and I look forward to seeing the forty-four portraits on display.”

The prize winners and exhibition were selected 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.

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 (March 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 and images, please contact: Billy Ward, Communications Assistant, National Portrait Gallery, 020 7321 6435 bward@npg.org.uk

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

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