

Asia's premiere art prize announces finalists

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Asia's most prestigious art award has announced the finalists for its 2010 edition, with 30 of the region's artists now in the running for the US\$25,000 (18,381 euros) first prize.

The Sovereign Asian Art Prize will be announced on March 16, with the finalists' work being exhibited at the Rotunda in Hong Kong's Exchange Square, Central, from February 21-26.

The general public can do their part by voting online for the US\$1,000 (€735) Schoeni public prize.

Among those artists in the running are Hong Kong's Tang Kwok Hin, who produces "photographs of intricate imaginary landscapes, using ready-made elements taken from print and electronic media and product labels," according to organizers, and Macau's Wong Cheng Pou, whose painting are inspired by China's Song Dynasty.

Since first being established by the Sovereign Art Foundation in 2003, the Asian Art Award has established itself as the region's most sought-after art prize.

"The award puts the best of Asian art in front of the general public," Howard Bilton, chairman of the Sovereign Art Foundation, told Relaxnews. "There are plenty of single-artist shows around but nothing that brings all these artists together."

Collectors too benefit from the fact that the entries are first vetted by two sets of art experts - at the entry and nomination stages, he says.

"And the award helps the career of the artists, who are all mid-career artists well known at home but not internationally. It also channels funds raised back into arts in Asia."

The Asian Art Prize features pieces covering all forms of 2D media, and organizers say this year's entries "demonstrated the exciting range of practices occurring within these mediums."

The finalists were taken from 400 nominated entries, selected by the award's judges David Elliott, Fumio Nanjo, Graham Sheffield, Tan Boon Hui, David Tang and Xu Bing.

The Sovereign Art Foundation keeps the winning entry each year and the remaining 29 works are auctioned with 50 percent of proceeds going to the artist and the other 50 percent to charities.

This year, that will include charities working with children in M'Lop Tapang in Cambodia and Kalki in India that are using the arts as rehabilitation and therapy and a new partnership with the Christina Noble Children's Foundation in Vietnam.

2010 Sovereign Asian Art Prize

March 16

Four Seasons Hotel, Hong Kong

<http://www.sovereignartfoundation.com>

Vote online: <http://www.sovereignartfoundation.com/art-prizes/asia/gallery/?year=2010>

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