

ATTN: Arts Editors, News Desks, Feature Editors, Picture Editors

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All sixteen shortlisted works, with information about the artists and the pieces, can be previewed at www.justicecentre.org.hk/artsprize

Exploitation of Hong Kong's domestic workers dominates shortlist for Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize.

A domestic worker who moonlights as a photographer and fifteen other artists from seven countries have been shortlisted for the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize, Justice Centre Hong Kong announced today (Tuesday), on International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

Established in 2013 and organised by Justice Centre Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize aims to harness the power of the visual arts to promote awareness, provoke dialogue, inspire action and ultimately, bring about change in the area of human rights.

This year, artists were invited to submit works on the theme of modern slavery and human trafficking. Over 40 entries from Hong-based artists originating from countries as diverse as the Philippines, UK, Australia, USA, Hong Kong, South Africa and India were shortlisted to sixteen pieces by an eminent panel of prominent art experts and human rights specialists, including: Umbrella Movement artist and activist Kacey Wong; Claire Hsu, founder and director of Asia Art Archive; and Judge Kevin Zervos, a judge of the High Court in Hong Kong.

The shortlisted pieces, which include painting, photography, video, digital and mixed media works, will be exhibited and the winners announced on the night of Wednesday December 10, International Human Rights Day, at an exhibition and Christie's auction at Sundaram Tagore Gallery on Hollywood Road. The overall winner will be awarded HK\$ 30, 000. All artists have generously donated their works to Justice Centre Hong Kong and all funds raised on the night will go to support their work to protect the rights of refugees and survivors of modern slavery.

Xyza Cruz Bacani is a 27-year old domestic worker in Hong Kong who moonlights as a documentary photographer. Her piece *Burn* documents an anonymised domestic worker who received third degree burns to her back when she was scalded by hot soup left on a shoe rack by her employer.

Bacani says of the work:

“This case is about Maria, a domestic worker who got third degree burns on her back and arms from hot boiling soup that her employer put on the shoe rack. Her employer did not give her proper medical treatment, made her work in pain and kicked her out of her job even with her sufferings. A modern slave in a first world city fighting for her rights hoping to get the justice she deserves someday.”

Being a domestic worker herself, Bacani says she can relate to the exploitation that is happening to the domestic workers of Hong Kong and is currently doing a long term project on the abuse of domestic workers.

The theme of domestic work in Hong Kong runs through a number of the pieces including: ***Helping Hands*** (Rob Godden); ***Can you see me yet?*** (Katie Vajda) and ***Human Exports*** (Stefan Irvine). Other pieces explore issues such as the global sex trade, the fashion industry, cocoa production and Japanese ‘Comfort Women’.

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The public can pre-bid online at this link from one week before the event, **Wednesday December 3.**

Aleta Miller, Executive Director of Justice Centre Hong Kong, said:

“The exploitation and abuse of domestic workers has hit the headlines in Hong Kong over this past year with the much-publicised cases of Erwiana Sulistyarningsih and Kartika Puspitasari. It is not surprising that this issue has been reflected in a number of the pieces shortlisted for the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize, which invited works on the theme of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Modern slavery and human trafficking is on our doorstep: as an important regional hub and both a destination and transit territory for human trafficking, Hong Kong is currently failing to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Through the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize, we want to use art to raise this issue amongst the Hong Kong public, inspire action and ultimately, bring about change in the area of human trafficking and exploitation.”

Notes to Editors:

The full shortlist in alphabetical order is as follows:

Xyza Bacani, *BURN*

Justo Cascante III, *Norwegian Wood*

Tiff Chan and Shawn Griffin, *Bless the souls who made our clothes*

Ringo Cheung, *Standing in the Pink*

Siddharth Choudhary, *My Family*

Rob Godden, *Helping Hands*

Stefan Irvine, *Human Exports*

KyoKaruna, *Embodying the Doll and the Worker*

Ellen Leung, *78*

Parry Chin Tang Ling, *Best Before*

Mike Sakas, *peace, Untitled*

Marc Standing, *Seeker*

Enders Wong Sum, *A Piece of Meat*

Katie Vajda, *Can you see me yet?*

Tyler Whitlock, *Untitled*

RiK Yu, *A Somatic Dialogue*

Listings Info:

What: Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize. Justice Centre Hong Kong's annual event to engage the Hong Kong Arts community and public in human rights.

When: Wednesday December 10, 2014, International Human Rights Day, 7-10pm.

Where: Sundaram Tagore Gallery, 57-59 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong.

Enquiries and information:

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For access to hi-res images, please contact aideen@justicecentre.org.hk.

Justice Centre Hong Kong is a non-profit human rights organisation working fearlessly to protect the rights of Hong Kong's most vulnerable forced migrants - refugees, other people seeking protection and survivors of modern slavery. Launched in 2014, Justice Centre Hong Kong was formerly Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre (HKRAC) which, over a period of seven years, helped more than 2,000 refugee men, women and children on the road to a new life. www.justicecentre.org.hk.