

ATTN: Arts Editors, Feature and News Desks

For Immediate Release

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Challenging human trafficking and slavery through art Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize. Call for entries

The 2nd Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize is open for entries from visual artists on the theme of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Established in 2013, the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize is a platform for artists working in the region to explore human rights through the visual arts and to raise awareness of human rights issues amongst new audiences.

Organised by Justice Centre Hong Kong, the theme of this year's Prize is modern slavery and human trafficking and the competition is open to practising Hong Kong-based artists. Entries will be judged by an eminent panel of prominent art experts and human rights specialists, including: Kacey Wong, leading Hong Kong-based contemporary visual artist and activist; Claire Hsu, co-founder and Director of Asia Art Archive; and Judge Kevin Zervos, a judge of the High Court in Hong Kong.

Shortlisted entries will be exhibited in the prestigious Sundaram Tagore Gallery on Hollywood Road. The winner of the 2014 Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize will be announced and the winning piece auctioned by Christie's in a live auction on the evening of Wednesday December 10, International Human Rights Day. The winner will also be awarded HK\$ 30,000 to support their work. Other shortlisted works will be sold on the night through silent auction, with all funds going to support Justice Centre Hong Kong's work to protect the rights of refugees and survivors of modern slavery.

Artists can enter the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize by downloading the application form at www.justicecentre.org.hk/artsprize. Deadline for entries is 6pm on Wednesday November 5, 2014.

Last year, the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize attracted over 50 entries and had over 300 people attend the one-night-only exhibition and charity auction at Sundaram Tagore. The Prize was won by [Elva Lai](#) for her piece, "Family Photo Album: Washing", a series of photos telling the stories of migrants who came to Hong Kong from mainland China in the 1960s.

After winning the award, Elva Lai was offered an artist-in-residence in Provence, France, where she and fellow artist-in-residence [Szelit Cheung](#) created a stone path along the hillside using only their hands, connecting local villages and people through art.

Her winning piece formed a part of her Master of Fine Arts research project at Chinese University Hong Kong (CUHK) and was featured as part of a solo exhibition at the school called "A Hundred Thousand Whys", from July to August 2014.

Elva Lai was more recently awarded the Talent Development Scholarship by the Hong Kong Government and the Reaching Out Award by CUHK.

Elva Lai said:

“The Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize was the first art prize I won in a public competition. It really encouraged my project about recent migrant history of Hong Kong, a project I’m still working on now.”

“The prize had such a positive impact on my career as an artist. I did the residency in France. After completing that residency, I made two new artworks which will be part of the Asia Digital Art Invitational show in Spain this November.”

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

“The Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize is a great opportunity for artists to have their work judged by distinguished members of the art community and human rights specialists, to exhibit their work at the Sundaram Tagore Gallery, but also to engage with one of the biggest human rights issues in the world today.”

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. We want to raise this issue amongst the Hong Kong public.”

Claire Hsu, Executive Director of Asia Art Archive, said:

“While we in Hong Kong may think that the plight of refugees, human rights violations, human trafficking and modern day slavery are the concerns of other geographies, it is essential that we acknowledge that they are very real issues in our city, and understand that as a society and as human beings, it is something that we need to address together.”

I believe in the potential of artists to address and raise awareness of issues that many societies find difficult to discuss or deal with. While the immediate effects of art on society may not always be apparent, what the arts does - like nothing else - is open up a very different kind of space for the discussion and imagination of an alternate future. While artists can help us to challenge preconceptions and offer different perspectives from which to view these issues, the real change needs to come in a shift in attitude about benefiting the common good.”

Ends/

Notes to Editors:

Listings Info:

What: Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize. Justice Centre Hong Kong’s annual art prize 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: 3109

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Lo-res images of 2013 winning piece ‘Family Photo Album: Washing’ and artist Elva Lai are available at https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0BzQiUQr01KT_V2hpTWITTUFiT3M&usp=sharing

Please contact adela@justicecentre.org.hk for hi-res files.

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.