

ATTN: Arts and Culture desks, Arts magazine editors

For Immediate Release

Contact: Adela Kamaragoda, [+852 6773 8528](tel:+85267738528), adela@justicecentre.org.hk

Activism through art: Call for entries for the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize 2015

Justice Centre Hong Kong is pleased to announce the call for entries for the charity's annual Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize. Now in its third year, the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize is a platform for Hong Kong-based artists to explore human rights through the visual arts and to raise awareness of these issues amongst new audiences.

Last year, the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize attracted over 40 entries from Hong Kong-based artists originating from countries as diverse as the Philippines, UK, Australia, USA, Hong Kong, South Africa and India. The entries were shortlisted to sixteen pieces by a panel of 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.

Among those shortlisted for the Prize were Marc Standing, Xyza Cruz Bacani, Siddharth Choudhary, Stefan Irvine and Ringo Cheung.

The Prize was won by Katie Vajda for her piece, *Can you see me yet?* which is a series of two photographs examining the neglect, abuse and obscurity of domestic workers within Hong Kong's social fabric. Katie was awarded the Prize at a one-night-only exhibition and charity auction at Sundaram Tagore Gallery on Hollywood Road last December, on International Human Rights Day (December 10), with over 300 people in attendance.

Vajda, with a background in media and marketing, is currently completing her Bachelor's in Fine Arts (photography) at Hong Kong Art School. After being awarded the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize, Katie and her work have been featured in Oriental Daily and Surface Asia magazine, and in February 2015 Katie went on to have a solo photography exhibition of her show "20 Girls" at Hong Kong Arts Centre.

Katie Vajda said:

"Winning the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize was a wonderful moment for me, a strong validation of both my work and the pressing issues surrounding it. It was also a great honour to be amongst a group of artists making such powerful, socially and politically motivated, art in Hong Kong."

Xyza Cruz Bacani, a former domestic worker, was awarded the Justice Centre Choice Award for her photograph *BURN*, depicting a domestic worker whose back was burnt after a pan of soup fell on her, and was denied medical attention by her employer.

Xyza Cruz Bacani said:

"Through this Prize I could plant seeds of awareness among the public, so they can't ignore the abuse that happens behind closed doors. By raising awareness, slowly we can bring about change. I would encourage artists to enter the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize as it is a way of focusing on the issues they care about, and making them mainstream. These issues are underreported and unknown, so it is important to raise awareness of them."

Xyza says her life has “turned 180 degrees” in the past six months, as she left her employment as a domestic worker, and has worked on photography projects she cares about, such as [#SharedPasts](#), a photography and story-telling project in collaboration with Justice Centre, documenting the stories of current refugees and descendents of refugees currently in Hong Kong. She was awarded a Hamdan International Photography Award in Dubai in March, and in May she travelled to New York after being offered a Magnum Foundation Human Rights Fellowship to study at New York University.

The winner of the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize this year will be announced and shortlisted artworks will be sold at a charity auction in December 2015. The winner will also be awarded HK\$ 30,000 to support their work. Shortlisted artists are respectfully requested to donate their artwork to Justice Centre Hong Kong so all funds raised from the auction will go towards the charity’s work to protect the rights of refugees and survivors of human trafficking. Entries will be judged by an eminent panel of prominent art experts and human rights specialists.

Artists can enter the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize at www.justicecentre.org.hk/artsprize.

Deadline for entries is 11:59pm on Sunday September 20, 2015.

Adela Kamaragoda of Justice Centre Hong Kong said:

“This is the only arts prize of its kind in Hong Kong, and through it, I hope we can give artists a platform to put the spotlight on issues they are passionate about that affect the rights of Hong Kongers and those further afield.”

Ends/

Notes to Editors:

High resolution images of the artwork shortlisted last year for the Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize 2014 are available [here](#).

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 human trafficking. www.justicecentre.org.hk