



SOCIETE GENERALE GROUP

PRESS RELEASE

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Kleinwort Hambros announces winners of Emerging Artist Prize 2021

Initiative provides a platform to support and raise the profile of rising talent in UK contemporary art

Kleinwort Hambros is pleased to announce Shawanda Corbett, Ayo Akingbade and Olu Ogunnaike as the winners of its second *Emerging Artist Prize*, which recognises the work of contemporary artists from across the UK.

Three finalists were rewarded the *Emerging Artist Prize* this year out of fifteen candidates, in recognition of the wealth of talent amongst this year's finalists, and to widen the financial support for young UK artists in what is a challenging economic and social environment.

The winners were selected by a jury of five prestigious names from the UK art scene composed of Fiona Bradley, Aurélie Deplus, Andrew Nairne, Sarah Brown and Melanie Keen. The winners were chosen for having a body of work that showed significant originality and compelling visions.

Oxford based winner Shawanda Corbett practices in ceramics and is researching how Artificial Intelligence can facilitate craft theory in her studio practice. London based Ayo Akingbade focuses predominantly on moving image, addressing notions of urbanism, power and stance, and Olu Ogunnaike, also from London, explores the parallels between humans and trees, looking at questions of provenance, history and identity.

Sarah Brown, Jury member and Principle Keeper of Leeds Art Gallery, said: "Ayo Akingbade, Shawanda Corbett and Olu Ogunnaike stood out from an incredibly competitive long list. Their work encompasses a broad media from film, ceramics, painting, installation to performance and sculpture, and addressed questions from provenance, history to post-colonial narrative with such intelligence, urgency and compelling visions, that each artist's voice was confident, unique and personal. We recognised that each of their practice was at a critical stage and this award is pivotal to their development."

Aurélie Deplus, Jury member and Head of Contemporary Art Collection and Cultural Projects at Societe Generale, added: "It was a pleasure to discover this amazing selection of mature and self-committed emerging artists and their media, and to work alongside other jury members to study each winners' body of work. I would like to thank all the artists and personally applaud the laureates."

Mouhammed Choukeir, CEO of Kleinwort Hambros, commented: “We are delighted to celebrate three winners this year out of such a talented and thriving community of artists living and working across the UK today.

“What’s more, we are proud that we have been able to extend our support for young artists in what is a challenging time for the art community. The initiative demonstrates our commitment to supporting our communities in the UK regions and strengthens our ambition of being the leading responsible bank for client service and expertise.”

The *Emerging Artist Prize* was produced for the second time in collaboration with international art consultant, Katie Kennedy Perez. It seeks to acknowledge and celebrate the next generation of artists who have been active on the art scene and whose career would benefit from the visibility and financial support. The candidates are British nationals or UK based, 35 years or under, with a body of work that shows significant originality and coherence.

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Notes to Editors:

High-resolution photos of winners are available on request.

Winner biographies:

Ayo Akingbade

Born in London, 1994. Lives and works in London.

Ayo Akingbade is an artist, director and writer from London. She works predominantly with moving image, addressing notions of urbanism, power and stance. She has exhibited and screened widely, including presentations at Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival (2020); ‘This is England’, Somerset House Studios, London (2019); ‘Building Space’, South London Gallery (2019); ‘In formation’, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, (2018); and ‘Imagination Is Power: Be Realistic, Ask the Impossible’, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, (2018); as well as Birkbeck University (2020), and Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo (2020) amongst others.

Akingbade graduated with a BA in Film Practice from London College of Communication and is due to graduate with a postgraduate diploma in Fine Art from Royal Academy Schools in 2021.

Forthcoming exhibitions include: ‘A Glittering City’, Whitechapel Gallery (2021), ‘An Infinity of Traces’ Lisson Gallery (2021) and ‘No News Today’, Coventry Biennial (2021).

Olu Ogunnaike

Born in London, 1986. Lives and works in London.

Taking trees as repositories of memory within the places and communities in which they grow, Olu cites wood as a marker of possible encounters: between past and present; between people and the spaces they inhabit. He is interested in the parallels that can be drawn between humans and trees, tracing the moment a tree is uprooted from one geographical setting and placed in another, where it might be transformed. This story – of the composite and accumulative nature of our identities– is inextricably linked to community, labour and the transaction of exchange.

Beyond a human perspective of linear time, trees have offered Olu a route to looking at questions of provenance and history that surpass current ideas around recolonising history and human narratives.

Forthcoming projects include the Royal Academy of Arts Degree Show, as well as exhibitions with Timothy Taylor, New York, the Museum Folkwang, Essen and the Halle Für Kunst Steiermark, Graz.

Olu obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Fine Art from the Royal Academy, London, in 2020 and a BA Hons in Fine Art Critical Practice from the University of Brighton in 2013.

Shawanda Corbett

Born in New York, 1989. Lives and works in Oxford.

Shawanda Corbett's studio practice background is in ceramics (vessel making). The craft principles, fundamentals and discipline in ceramics are applied to other mediums, such as dance theatre production (live performance and film performance). This technique is called craft theory. Currently, she is researching how Artificial Intelligence can facilitate craft theory in her studio practice.

Corbett is currently pursuing her practice-led doctoral degree in Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Art and Wadham College, University of Oxford. Her research redefines Donna Haraway's cyborg theory, or the cybernetic organism, as anything mechanical that enhances an individual's life. The research also focuses on the relationship between human beings and technology created with Artificial Intelligence. This is approached through the science fiction genre in film and literature but from a perspective of a differently abled-body (cyborg) woman of colour, so this includes texts, film (visual representation), music in African American history/African history and Artificial Intelligence history.

Her first solo exhibition, Neighbourhood Garden, was held at the Corvi-Mora Gallery in London (2020). She described the exhibit as a revisit of her family's history as southern African Americans living between Mississippi and New York. The work challenged the history of African American tropes without reducing her subjects to their physical bodies by focusing on the individual's personality, daily activity or place of residence.

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