



Artworks reflecting the issues of today

PREVIEW

York's annual Aesthetica Art Prize has produced another crop of outstanding contemporary artworks. **Yvette Huddleston** reports.

LAST week saw the opening of the annual Aesthetica Art Prize Show at York St Mary's. Now in its eighth year, the prize is an internationally acclaimed award that recognises excellence in contemporary art from all over the world.

Over 3,500 entries were received from sixty countries, with eight pieces shortlisted for the exhibition and a further 92 longlisted. The winner is awarded £5,000, courtesy of its main sponsor Hiscox. "The standard is really high and the work is very diverse and wide-ranging," says Whitney Hintz one of the judges for this year's prize and curator of the corporate art collection for Hiscox. "There are traditional and more conceptual pieces. There is a strong political element this year with the theme of globalisation running through most of the works – they are pieces that reflect what is going on in society today."

The categories represented are photographic and digital art, 3D design and sculpture, painting and drawing, and video, installation and performance. One of the pieces is a sound sculpture *Requiem* by Australian artist Julian day which comprises four synthesizers connected by steel bars pressing on keys, creating an atmospheric soundscape. "The aim of the prize is to give artists working in every medium an opportunity," says Hintz. "Sound art is not something you see that often, so it is great to give a more challenging medium like that a platform."

The medieval church of St Mary's lends its own character to an unusual setting for displaying contemporary

FREE TALKS PLAN FOR EXHIBITION

THIS year's longlist features 92 artists from countries including France, Germany, India, China, Japan, Malaysia, America and the UK. The shortlist and the longlist (100 artists) will be published in the *Aesthetica Art Prize Anthology* available at the exhibition, online and at UK galleries.

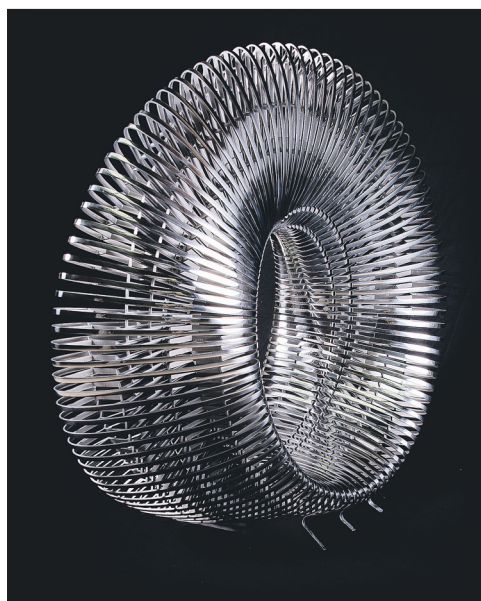
There is a series of free lunchtime talks throughout the run of the exhibition, with featured speakers including artists John Keane and Marcus Lyon.

■ The Aesthetica Art Prize Show is at York St Mary's until May 31, Thursday to Monday, 10am-4pm. Free admission. www.yorkstmarys.org.uk

artwork. "It is an unconventional space," says Hintz. "But it is interesting because the architecture and the history of the building enter into the space. And it adds another layer. It is a nice extra element."

The main prize-winning entry *Fear (2012-13)* by British artist John Keane draws on imagery from the Moscow show trials which took place in Russia during the violent and suppressive Stalinist era in the 1930s. In the exhibition there are four large-scale portraits from Keane's *Fear* series which powerfully capture the pervading sense of terror at the time using mug shots of arrested victims.

Keane was appointed as the official British war artist during the first Gulf War in 1991 and has gone on to explore significant political



ARTWORKS: One of the pictures in John Keane's *Fear* series, top, Owen Waterhouse's *Mobius 1.00*, above left, and Suzanne Moody's *Tokyo cityscape*. All on display in the Aesthetica Art Prize show.

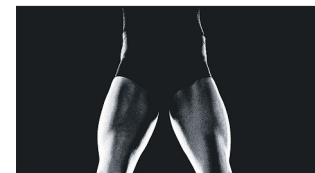
questions of the modern age. The rest of the work on display includes winner of the £1,000 student prize Suzanne Mooney's *Tokyo cityscapes Come Away, O (2013)* and *Tokyo Summit (2012)*; a selection of Marcus Lyon's photographs from his *Exodus (2010-14)* collection inspired by human resilience in extreme circumstances; Sheffield-based sculptor Owen Waterhouse's *Mobius*

1.00 (2014) which marks the centenary of the discovery of stainless steel in his home city; and conceptual installation artist Vera Drebusch's work *Preservation (2012)* which explores the notion of territory with a collection of jars containing fruits grown in the grounds of foreign embassies in Bonn. The installation *The Cloud is more than Air and Water (2014)* by Matt Parker looks at the complexities of

our digital world while Saliha Elhoussaini's *Interdependence (2014)* is a series of drawings that reflect on the order and disorder of Chaos Theory and the interconnectedness of the natural and the man-made.

"The work of all the artists is so accomplished," says Hintz. "And what is so good about this prize is that its outreach is so far-ranging. It brings an international selection of contemporary art to York."

BRIEFLY



Pictures capture the art of ballet

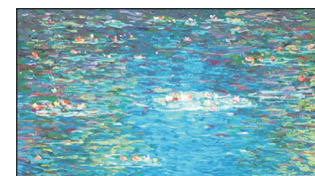
A photographer has swapped footballers for ballerinas as his subjects.

Justin Lee is a Leeds-based photographer and his first full-length show *Avant* looks behind the scenes of ballet.

He was given privileged access to rehearsals at Northern Ballet and the exhibition illustrates the dancers' dedication and professionalism.

Lee is best known for taking photos of footballers, TV stars and celebrities. The show is at Leeds Gallery Munro House, until April 7.

For details visit www.leedsgallery.com/exhibitions/



Renowned forger with new art show

THE work of world renowned art forger John Myatt is to be displayed in a newly curated exhibition of original and hand-signed limited editions.

Myatt spent a year in prison for his involvement in the forgeries of almost 200 art works and his copies of Alberto Giacometti and Jean Dubuffet fooled critics and collectors alike.

You can see his work at Wall to Wall Gallery, Redbrick in Batley from today, until April 13.

For more details about opening times visit www.redbrickmill.co.uk.



Artist throws open his studio doors

A North Yorkshire landscape artist is inviting people into his studio for a chat.

Chris Geall works as a full-time landscape artist depicting the dramatic land and seascapes of North Yorkshire.

He uses a distinctive large palette knife and oil on canvas to capture his work, which also includes woodland scenes, autumn and bluebell paintings.

You can find his studio, Geall Gallery and Artisan cafe in Grosmont which is six miles outside Whitby.

For further details visit www.chrisgeall.com.