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Press Release

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Five shortlisted artists announced for the 9th edition of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women 2022– 2024

The Whitechapel Gallery, Collezione Maramotti and Max Mara are delighted to announce the five shortlisted artists for the ninth edition of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women:

Rebecca Bellantoni, Bhajan Hunjan, Onyeka Igwe, Zinzi Minott and Dominique White. This weekend the artists travelled to Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy, for the announcement as well as to celebrate the opening of the major artwork *The Age/L'Età*, by the eighth winner of the prize, **Emma Talbot.** *The Age/L'Età* tours from the Whitechapel Gallery where it was unveiled this summer.

Artists were shortlisted by a judging panel consisting of gallerist Rozsa Farkas, artist Claudette Johnson, writer Derica Shields and collector Maria Sukkar. Typically hosted by Whitechapel Gallery's Director, the jury of the 2022-24 edition was chaired by the Prize's guest curator Bina von Stauffenberg. The winner will be announced in Spring 2023.

The Max Mara Art Prize for Women, in collaboration with Whitechapel Gallery is a biannual award established in 2005. It is the only visual art prize of its kind and aims to promote and support artists identifying as women based in the UK, enabling them to develop their potential with the gift of time and space. The winner is awarded a six-month Italian residency tailored to fit the artist and her winning proposal for the Prize. During the residency, which is organised by Collezione Maramotti, the artist has the opportunity to realise an ambitious new project which is presented in major solo exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, UK and at Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy, which then acquires it.

On behalf of the judging panel, Bina von Stauffenberg, chair of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women jury, said: "Today, as women's rights continue to be challenged, it could not be more urgent or relevant to ensure that women artists are championed, and heard on the world stage. For more than a decade, this unique prize has successfully enabled women-identifying artists at different stages of their careers to develop their potential in extraordinary ways. Through a six-month Italian residency and the resources to create a major new commission, it offers critical time, space and support."

The shortlisted artists for the Max Mara Art Prize for Women 2022-24 are:

Rebecca Bellantoni (b.1981)

Rebecca Bellantoni is a London-based artist who draws from everyday occurrences and abstracts them. Investigating, through the layered lens of Black women's writing (fiction and nonfiction), metaphysics, comparative theology, philosophy, religion and spirituality and the aesthetics of them; she gently prises apart the concept of the accepted/expected 'real' and the experiential 'real'; looking at how these removed borders may offer meditative experiences and portals to self, collective reasoning and healing thought and action.

Bellantoni's current research and making project *C.R.Y: Concrete Regenerative Yearnings*, thinks about the city, its multiple worlds, its materials (industrial and natural), in relation to the psyche, soul and body of the city dweller. Her research is inspired by Katherine McKittrick's idea of Black women's geography, created through the negotiations of space, place and lived experience and Edouard Glissant's writing on the role of the landscape and built environment on the psyche and cultural production of a colonised people. Her practice is wide ranging and encompasses moving image, installation, performance, photography, textiles, printmaking, sculpture, sound-text and ceramics.

Recent works have been presented at/with *In the house of my love*, Brent Biennial (London, UK, 2022); *Frieze live* (London, UK, 2021); *Aggregates*, Ausstellungsraum Klingental (Basel, Switzerland, 2021); *Coalition of Care*, PUBLICs (Helsinki, Finland, 2019); *La Manutention*, Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France, 2019; in collaboration with Rowdy SS).

Bhajan Hunjan (b. 1956)

Bhajan Hunjan arrived in the UK to train as a painter and printmaker and after graduation from Reading University and the Slade School of Art, became associated with the politics and figurative work of the emerging Black British Art Movement. Since then she has developed a very individual visual language of free-floating lines, symbolic colours and shapes, repetition and script motifs that draw upon both her Sikh heritage and fine art abstraction to encourage viewers to reflect on social, spiritual and emotional environments.

Hunjan works extensively on public art commissions often in concrete, metal and stone. These are always created through community consultation for site specific spaces, and often in collaboration with other artists and local women's groups. Significant external projects include *St Paul's Way* (Tower Hamlets, London, UK, 2012); the *Town Square* (Slough, UK, 2008); *Peepul Centre Floorscape* (Leicester, UK, 2005). Recent projects include installation inside the Exbury Egg (2021), made during her stay in Thamesmead as part of Bow Arts Artists community in Thamesmead. She is also a committed artist educator working with young people and families to create site specific temporary and permanent installations.

Currently Bhajan is Artist in Residence on the Maria Lucia Cattani Project and Runnymede Explore/Stories Project with the National Trust.

Onyeka Igwe (b. 1986)

Onyeka Igwe is an artist and researcher working between cinema and installation, born and based in London, UK. Through her work, Igwe is animated by the question 'how do we live together?' with particular interest in the ways the sensorial, spatial and non-canonical ways of knowing can provide answers to this question. She uses embodiment, archives, narration and text to create structural 'figure-of-eights', a form that exposes a multiplicity of narratives.

Igwe's works have been shown in the UK and internationally at film festivals and galleries. Solo exhibitions include *The Miracle on George Green*, The High Line (New York, USA, 2022); *a so-called archive*, LUX (London, UK, 2021); *THE REAL STORY IS WHAT'S IN THAT ROOM*, Mercer Union (Toronto, Canada, 2021); *There Were Two Brothers*, Jerwood Arts (London, UK, 2019) and *Corrections*, with Aliya Pabani, Trinity Square Video (Toronto, Canada, 2018). Recent group exhibitions include *Echoes*, Haus der Kunst (Munich, Germany, 2022); *Reconfigured*, Timothy Taylor (New York, USA, 2021); *Archives of Resistance*, Neue Galerie (Innsbruck, Austria, 2021); *New Labor Movements*, McEvoy Foundation for the Arts (San Francisco, USA, 2021), and *Production Series*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin, Germany, 2020).

The artist has forthcoming commissions with The Common Guild, FLAMIN Productions and is collaborating with Huw Lemmey on his exhibition at Studio Voltaire, London. She was awarded the New Cinema Award at Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival in 2019 (UK), the 2020 Arts Foundation Fellowship Award for Experimental Film (UK), the 2021 Foundwork Artist Prize (USA) and has been nominated for the 2022 Jarman Award (UK).

Zinzi Minott (b.1986)

Zinzi Minott's work focuses on the relationship between dance, bodies and politics. Minott explores how dance is perceived through the prisms of race, queer culture, gender and class. She is specifically interested in the place of Black women's body within the form.

As a dancer and filmmaker, she seeks to complicate the boundaries of dance, seeing her live performance, filmic explorations, prints and objects as different, but connected manifestations of dance and body based outcomes and modes of inquiry.

Minott is interested in ideas of broken narrative, disturbed lineage, and how the use of the glitch can help us to consider notions of racism one experiences through the span of a Black life. She is specifically interested in telling Caribbean stories and highlighting the histories of those enslaved during The Atlantic Slave Trade and the resulting migration of the Windrush Generation.

She is a Laban alumnus, the first dancer to be Artist in residence at both Serpentine Gallery (London, UK, 2018) and Tate (London, UK, 2017) respectively. She received The Continuous commission for 2020-2022 (UK), The Jerwood Live Work Award in 2020 (UK), and won The Adrian Howells Award for 2019/2020 (UK). She was recently nominated for the Live Art award- Shortlist LIVE 2022 (Finland).

Dominique White (b. 1993)

Dominique White weaves together the theories of Black Subjectivity, Afro-pessimism and Hydrarchy with the nautical myths of Black Diaspora into a term she defines as the Shipwreck(ed); a reflexive verb and state of being. White's sculptures, or beacons, prophesy the emergence of the Stateless; "a [Black] future that hasn't yet happened, but must." (Campt 2017 in Yussof 2018).

White lives between Marseille and Essex and she often works nomadically. Recent solo exhibitions and presentations include: *Statements*, ArtBasel (Basel, Switzerland, 2022); *The Cinders of the Wreck*, Triangle (Astérides, Marseille, France, 2022); *Hydra Decapita*, VEDA (Florence, Italy, 2021-2022); and *Blackness in Democracy's Graveyard*, UKS (Oslo, Norway, 2021). Recent group exhibitions include *Afterimage* at MAXXI L'Aquila (Italy, L'Aquila, 2022-2023); *Love* at Bold Tendencies (London, UK, 2022); *Techno Worlds* at Art Quarter Budapest, commissioned by Goethe-Institut (Travelling) (2021-2025).

White was awarded the Roger Pailhas Prize (Art-O-Rama, France) in 2019 in conjunction with her solo presentation with VEDA and has received awards from Artangel (UK) and the Henry Moore Foundation (UK) in 2020. White was in residency at Sagrada Mercancía (Chile), Triangle France – Astérides (France) and La Becque (Switzerland) in 2020 and 2021.

Notes to editors

- The **Max Mara Art Prize for Women**, in collaboration with Whitechapel Gallery is a biannual award established in 2005. It is the only visual art prize for women-identifying artists in the UK and aims to promote and nurture female artists, enabling them to develop their potential with the gift of time and space. The prize is open to women-identifying artists living and working in the United Kingdom who have not previously had a major solo survey exhibition. The partners of the prize are Max Mara, Whitechapel Gallery, and Collezione Maramotti who collaborate on each phase of the prize. For each edition a jury, chaired by Whitechapel Gallery Director, and including a gallerist, critic, artist and collector, agree on a shortlist of artists before the winner is decided based on the artists' proposals. The winner is awarded a six-month Italian residency tailored to fit the artist and her winning proposal for the Prize. During the residency, which is organised by Collezione Maramotti, the artist has the opportunity to realise an ambitious new project which is presented in major solo exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery in London and at Collezione Maramotti in Reggio Emilia, Italy, which then acquires it. The Max Mara Art Prize for Women was awarded the British Council Arts & Business International Award in 2007 and has enabled winning artists to take major steps in their careers.

Previous winners of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women are:

- **Emma Talbot (2019 – 22)** – Talbot (b. 1969, Stourbridge) installation *The Age / L'Età* comprises animation, free-hanging painted silk panels, three-dimensional work and drawings. The new work explores themes of representation and ageing, power and governance, and attitudes towards nature. For the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, Talbot imagines a future environment where humankind encounters the disastrous consequences of late capitalism and must look towards more ancient and holistic ways of crafting and belonging – that rethink ancient power structures and celebrate the natural world – in order to survive. Her work has participated to *The Milk of Dreams* at the 59th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Cecilia Alemani.
 - **Helen Cammock (2017 – 19)** – Cammock (b. 1970) presented a film, a series of vinyl cut prints, a screenprinted frieze and an artist's book interweaving women's stories of loss and resilience with seventeenth-century Baroque music by female composers, exploring the concept of lament in women's lives across histories and geographies in her exhibition *Che si può fare*. Since winning the Max Mara Art Prize for Women she was awarded the Turner Prize 2019 together with Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Oscar Murillo and Tai Shani.
 - **Emma Hart (2015 – 17)** – Hart's (b. 1974) large-scale installation *Mamma Mia!* (2016) consists of a family of large ceramic heads, whose interior space is filled with vivid patterns, designed and hand-painted by Hart after researching the designs and practice of the Italian tradition of maiolica pottery. This project represents the culmination of an investigation into pattern, from visual patterns to patterns of psychological behaviour.
 - **Corin Sworn (2013 – 15)** – Sworn (b.1976) created a work drawing from the Commedia dell'Arte improvised plays originating in 16th century Italy, where they continue to be of great cultural importance. Her installation titled *Silent Sticks* consists in a dramatic stage set with props, costumes, sound and video elements. She was awarded the Leverhulme Prize 2015 which recognises the achievement of outstanding researchers whose work has already attracted international recognition and whose future career is exceptionally promising.
 - **Laure Prouvost (2011 – 13)** – Prouvost (b. 1978) created an ambitious large-scale installation for her Max Mara Art Prize exhibition *Farfromwords*, inspired by the aesthetic and sensuous pleasures of Italy and plays on the historic idea of visiting the Mediterranean for inspiration. In 2013 she was awarded the Turner Prize. Her project *Deep See Blue Surrounding You* was presented in the French pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale.
 - **Andrea Büttner (2009 – 11)** – Büttner (b. 1972) *The Poverty of Riches* explored the intersection of religion, art and the condition of the artist in the contemporary world. Including woodcuts, cloths, photographs and objects she transformed the exhibition space into a space of contemplation. Part of her project was included in the Whitechapel Gallery's landmark exhibition *Adventures of the Black Square* in 2015.
 - **Hannah Rickards (2007 – 09)** – The prize enabled Rickards (b. 1979) to realise *No, there was no red.*, an ambitious two-screen film she had been researching before winning the Prize. She was also awarded the Leverhulme Prize in 2015 and had a major exhibition at Modern Art Oxford in 2014.
 - **Margaret Salmon (2005 – 07)** – Salmon (b. 1975) travelled to Italy and created *Ninna Nanna*, a triptych of black and white films exploring themes of motherhood. She went on to exhibit at the Venice Biennale in 2007.
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- **The Max Mara Fashion Group** was founded in 1951 by Achille Maramotti and is now run by the next generation. It is one of the largest women's ready-to-wear companies in the world, with more than 2,500 stores in more than 100 different countries. www.maxmara.com
 - **Collezione Maramotti** is a private contemporary art collection which opened to visitors in 2007; it is located in the historical headquarters of the Max Mara company in Reggio Emilia. It includes a permanent exhibition of more than 200 works from 1950 to 2019, while regularly presenting new projects and commissions from international mid-career and emergent artists. www.collezionemaramotti.org

- For over a century the **Whitechapel Gallery** has premiered world-class artists from modern masters to contemporaries. The Gallery is renowned for showcasing emerging and established female artists and has presented major solo exhibitions of Barbara Hepworth (1955), Eva Hesse (1979), Frida Kahlo (1982), Nan Goldin (2002), Sophie Calle (2009), Gillian Wearing (2012) and Sarah Lucas (2013). The Gallery is a touchstone for modern and contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter. www.whitechapelgallery.org

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