



## VIA Arts Prize sponsored by Itaú - Winner Announced 8 November 2017

The VIA Arts Prize sponsored by Itaú was delighted to announce the winner of the 2017 edition at Monday night's award ceremony at the Embassy of Brazil.

Choosing from a broad body of works, the prestigious judging panel consisting of Alastair Smart, Jonathan Anderson and Edwin Low, Dr Michael Asbury, Aaron Cezar and Silvia Montes chose a winner and runner up who truly embodied this year's theme of dialogues and clearly incorporated their inspiration from Latin America.

The 2017 winner of the VIA Arts Prize sponsored by Itaú, is British artist Susan Phillips with her porcelain sculpture entitled no.42-2015. The simple white sculpture, which draws on planar form and geometric abstraction, is inspired by Latin American Neo Concrete Art. The 1959 manifesto of this movement rejected the concept of the artwork as an 'object' and supported the notion that art can only be fully understood through a direct phenomenological approach. Phillips looked to the work of Amilcar de Castro and Lygia Clark to explore void space in sculpture and its interaction with the environment through light.

The judges found that "Phillips skillfully highlighted the dialogue between form and shape and the relationships between art and its surroundings. The artist's understanding of Latin American art, architecture and art theory were also clearly visible in her piece. The piece entitled no.42-2015 is an outstanding work, which will now feature permanently in the Embassy of Brazil's art collection."

This year's runner up was Brazilian artist Rafael D'Alo's analog photograph entitled Belo Monte Incidental number 65. His evocative image features a traditional Amazonian boat, submerged in muddied waters and was taken in the Brazilian town of Altamira on the River Xingu. An area originally populated by indigenous groups, the region has recently experienced an overwhelming migration of workers due to the construction of the Belo Monte dam. D'Alo's work seeks to analyse the relationship between man versus nature and how the environment is reshaped by the same culture it helps to produce.

The judges noted "D'Alo's striking piece has clear connotations of the destruction of the environment and ingenious communities across the Amazonian region. The artist manages to capture this pivotal yet still unknown dialogue between man and the environment and the catastrophic effects we have on such fragile eco-systems."

Susan Phillips as winner of the prize receives £5,000 and Rafael D'Alo receives £2,000 as runner up. The money is generously donated by VIA Arts Prize sponsors Itaú.

The exhibition of the top thirty works will run from Tuesday 7 November to Thursday 23 November at the Sala Brasil gallery, Embassy of Brasil, 14 -16 Cockspur Street, London, SW1Y 5BL. Please note that the exhibition will be closed on Friday 17 November.

There is still time to vote for the People's Choice Winner by placing a vote in the ballot box at the entrance to the exhibition. The winner of the people's vote will be announced at the closing of the exhibition on Thursday 23 November.

The VIA Arts Prize, sponsored by Itaú, is organised by the Embassy of Brazil in London and the Association of Cultural Attachés of Latin America, Spain and Portugal (ACALASP), and proudly supported by People's Palace Projects (Queen Mary University of London) and the Instituto Cervantes.

Ana E. González, President of ACALASP, says "We're proud to be organising the VIA Arts Prize, sponsored by Itaú, which in our eyes sees the very best of UK talent inspired by Latin America and Iberia, and in particular their arts, to create original works. It further strengthens creativity and links between our regions and the UK. Art, as an international language, is used in an attempt to break down cultural barriers and encourage partnerships between countries."

Our next Call for Entries will open in Spring 2018. Please follow [www.viaartsprize.org](http://www.viaartsprize.org) for all news.

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