

First judges announced for the fifth edition of the VIA Arts Prize

The VIA Arts Prize has announced the names of the first four judges on this year's high-profile judging panel. The prestigious prize, now in its fifth year, seeks to deepen cultural awareness of Latin American, Spanish and Portuguese arts and cultures in the UK. All UK-based artists of any nationality are invited to submit an original artwork inspired by Ibero-American arts and culture.

The judges are

- James Nicholls, Chairman of Maddox Gallery Group
- Dr Sarah Demelo, Art Historian Curator of the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America
- Sofia Fan, Manager of Visual Arts at Itaú Cultural in Brazil
- Vanessa Carlos, Director of the Carlos/Ishikawa gallery

Further names will be announced shortly.

James Nicholls is the Chairman of the Maddox Gallery Group. He is Art Critic and presenter for London Live TV and presenter of the prime-time programme 'The Queen's Paintings' from Buckingham Palace. Nicholls has also been the Art Expert presenter for British Airways inflight for six years, and a contributor on art to a numerous international publications, television and radio programmes. He is a Patron of The Royal Academy of Arts, The National Portrait Gallery and The Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Dr Sarah Demelo is an art historian and the Curator of the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA), the largest such collection in public hands in Europe. Over the past twenty years, she has worked with numerous museums and collections in the UK and Canada, organising exhibitions on Latin American art and, more recently, modern and contemporary British art.

Sofia Fan is the current Manager of Visual Arts at Itaú Cultural in Brazil. Itaú Cultural has one of the largest and most impressive collections of Latin American art in the world. Fan is also part of the selection committee for Rumos, one of the largest and longest standing programmes in Brazil conducting cultural research and cataloguing manifestations in visual arts, film, dance, literature, theatre, and music. She also oversees the Visual Arts department in the organisation of exhibitions by artists such as Lygia Clark, Helio Oiticica and Oscar Niemeyer. Other key exhibitions under her management include *Calder and Brazilian art* and *Occupation Paulo Mendes da Rocha*.

Vanessa Carlos is the Director of the Carlos/Ishikawa gallery, whose programme focuses on international artists including Oscar Murillo, Korakrit Arunanondchai and Pilvi Takala, who demonstrate multi-disciplinary and innovative practices. Carlos, who featured in Apollo's '40 under 40', founded Condo in 2016. Condo is a not-for-profit collaborative initiative encouraging galleries in cities across the world to stage exhibitions in each other's spaces. This allows galleries to showcase their artists to new audiences, an innovative response to the difficulties of showing artists internationally. The project has expanded to New York, Shanghai, Mexico City and São Paulo.

Now in its fifth year, the VIA Arts Prize Call for Entries is open until Monday 30 September. An exhibition of 30 shortlisted works will be held at the Embassy of Brazil in November. The jury of high-profile personalities from the Arts world make the final selection of winning entries at the opening of the exhibition. Prizes provided by Itaú, are awarded to the Jury's first (£5,000) and second (£2,000) choices. The VIA Arts Prize winner is also awarded a solo show at the Embassy of Brazil, running concurrently to the shortlisted artists' show in the subsequent year.

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

All judges are available for interview and comment.

The Call for Entries is open until 23:59 on Monday 30 September 2019 by filling out the submission form on the website www.viaartsprize.org.

Notes to Editors

ABOUT ITAÚ

Itaú is the largest financial conglomerate in Latin America, with operations in 19 countries throughout the Americas, Asia and Europe. It is a universal bank with a range of services and products serving the most varied client profiles – both individuals and companies of all sizes, from major international groups to local micro-entrepreneurs. It has almost 50,000 ATMs and 5,000 full-service branches in Latin America. With the purpose of encouraging people's transformation power, Itaú is recognised for its governance practices and management, which is focused on the generation shared value to its employees, customers, shareholders and society.

Itaú BBA is the Wholesale and Investment division of Itaú, and the largest corporate and investment bank in Latin America. Itaú BBA International offers wholesale, investment, and institutional treasury banking activities and services to institutional investors and clients, based out of headquarters in London and with offices in Paris, Madrid, Frankfurt, Lisbon and Dubai. Further information: www.italy.com.br/itaubba-en/

For further information please contact Phoebe Ruffels, phoebe.ruffels@damsonpr.com or 020 7812 0645