

Draft 3

Globalisation and immigration inform *Coloured Export*:
Brazilian artist Antonio Társis wins the VIA Arts Prize 2019

Fruit boxes from London street markets and a comment on immigration and globalisation are the source of inspiration for this year's VIA Arts Prize winner.

Antonio Társis has won the prestigious VIA Arts Prize 2019, sponsored by Itaú. The Brazilian artist's work, a collage entitled *Coloured Export*, uses remnants of fruit boxes collected from London street markets in Dalston, Whitechapel and Peckham.

The Brazilian-born Társis extracts fragments, colours and information printed on banana, orange, mango and lemon fruit boxes to develop these abstract and minimalist compositions using a paper collage technique. The boxes arrive in London in large containers and ships, exported from countries including Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Venezuela, Egypt, Uganda, India and Bangladesh. Despite being created as collage, the artist refers to painting and the possibilities offered by colour, using the painterly aspect to address topical issues.

As part of the self-taught artist's creative and research process, Társis travelled around London, recycling materials of all kinds, reproducing and recontextualizing compositions such as photographs, collages and installations.

Társis (b. 1995 in Salvador, Bahia) attended the Free Courses of the Museum of Modern Art, Bahia, 2015, and Parque Lage School of Visual Arts, RJ, 2017. He exhibited at Art Rio and received the 5th EDP Award of the Tomie Ohtake Institute, SP, 2016 and attended the conference Echoes Goethe-Institut, Berlin in 2019. He developed visual research during nine months in London about the Gold Cycle in Brazil and Relations with England and has received the Akademie Schloss solitude fellowship for 2020 in Stuttgart, Germany.

Társis receives £5,000 and a solo show at the Embassy of Brazil alongside the 2020 edition of VIA.

Alexandre Canonico (b. 1974 in Brazil) was named as this year's runner up with his sculpture *3 Stops, White Board and Strap*.

The work from the RA exhibitor enters into a dialogue with the legacy of constructive art in Brazil that characterises Concrete and Neoconcrete art, with which it shares geometric abstraction, form and an apparent suppression of narrative content. The work is created from readymade industrial materials, while Concrete and Neoconcrete artists, although influenced by the surge of industrialisation of the 1940s and 1950s, worked with traditional mediums such as painting and sculpture.

The title *3 Stops White Board and Strap* is a straightforward description of the materials and structure presented in the work, but the artist's directness is not reflected in the piece, whose status constantly oscillates between drawing and sculpture, figurative and abstract.

The artist says his work is influenced by the principles of architectural language and the legacy of early 20th century's geometrical abstraction. The drawings and sculptures are characterised by experimental methods that highlight the transition between spatial representation and physical expression of the objects. The materials used are industrialised and widely available - steel pipe, rubber, MDF, wood, washers, screws and nails for example. Formally the works have a simple resolution and an economy of gestures that operate in the interaction between the parts and/ or materials that constitute the piece.

Canonico was born in Pirassununga, Brazil 1974. His CV includes the postgraduate Programme, Royal Academy Schools, London: 2017-2020 Degree in Architecture and Town Planning at Faculdade de Belas

Artes de São Paulo, 1999 Recent Shows "Buraco" Galeria Marílias Razuk - SP, Brazil (solo) 2019 "Standstill" Kubik Gallery - Porto, Portugal (duo with Paul Barlow), 2019 "Premiums Interim Projects 2019" Royal Academy of Arts - London, UK (group) "Serpent and Shadow" Royal Academy of Arts, curated by Martin Westwood - London, UK 2018.

The Judge's Special Commendation has been awarded to Estabrak Al-Ansari for her work *Viver* from her body of work *Brazilians Under Water*. The artist aims to make visible hidden and submerged cultural discourses within our world via the physical matter of water. Brazilian currents are often moody, with its waters vastly changing from region to region. The artist's work explores the relationship between the body and oneself, poking at questions relevant to our existence, and are often fueled by the concepts of existing in places in which humans cannot exist in for long periods of time.

Al-Ansari has been named one of 'five incredible underwater artists' by BBC's 'Pursuit of Beauty: Art Beneath the Waves' podcast, BBC Radio 2018. Previous works have been showcased in such places as New York, Dubai and Berlin, along the way exhibiting at Royal Academy of Arts, & TATE Britain, London, UK. Al-Ansari is based in London. She is originally from Iraq, born in Iran and raised in London, after coming to the UK with her family as a child refugee.

The VIA Arts Prize is an annual award in London, hosted by the Embassy of Brazil, and seeks to deepen cultural awareness of Latin American, Spanish and Portuguese arts and cultures in the UK. The Prize is open to all artists living in the UK, of any nationality, to submit an original artwork specifically inspired by Ibero-American arts and culture. Cecilia Santamarina de Orive, Chairwoman of ACALASP and the Cultural Attaché to the Embassy of Guatemala in London says:

"This 5th edition of the VIA Arts Prize showcases a diverse and high caliber selection of works inspired by the richness of Latin American and Iberian culture. Antonio Társis touches on these cultural ties between Latin America and the UK through this extraordinary and powerful collage, using recycled materials found on the streets of London. It encapsulates the ethos of the Prize and the dialogue between the UK and the Latin American and Iberian nations perfectly."

The winning entries were chosen by a prestigious judging panel including:

- Fernando Casasempere, sculptor
- Frances Reynolds, entrepreneur and philanthropist
- 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
- Vanessa Carlos, Director of the Carlos/Ishikawa Gallery
- Andrea Harrari, Director of jaggedart

Chosen from 402 applications, the shortlisted works will be on display in London at the Embassy of Brazil's Sala Brasil from Wednesday 13 November until Wednesday 11 December 2019. Exceptionally, the exhibition will be closed from 25 to 27 November. The exhibition is free to visit from Monday to Friday between 10am and 6pm.

A further programme of public events will be announced in due course.

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.

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www.viaartsprize.org | Social : @ViaArtsPrize #ViaArtsPrize

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Opening hours: Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm from Wednesday 13 November until Wednesday 11 December 2019.

Notes to Editors

ABOUT ACALASP

The Association of Cultural Attachés from the Embassies of Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal is a non-profit organisation that promotes these cultures within the UK. They run cross-cultural initiatives, events and competitions to provide freelance artists across all disciplines with creative opportunities, which simultaneously help to raise the profile of their Ibero-American home nations.

ABOUT ITAÚ

Itaú is one of the largest financial conglomerates in the world, with operations in 21 countries throughout the Americas, Asia and Europe. It is a universal bank with a range of services and products serving the most varied client profile – both individuals and companies of all sizes, from major transnational groups to local micro-entrepreneurs. It has 26,000 ATMs and points of service and 5,000 full-service branches in Latin America. Itaú is recognised for its governance practices and management, which is focused on the generation of economic, social and environmental value.

Itaú BBA is the Wholesale and Investment division of Itaú, and the largest corporate and investment bank in Latin America. Itau 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: itau.com.br/itaubba-en/

ABOUT INSTITUTO CERVANTES

Instituto Cervantes is the official Spanish Language and Cultural centre. Founded in 1991 by the Spanish Government, Instituto Cervantes' mission is to promote Spanish language teaching and promote the cultures of Spanish speaking countries. Further information: londres.cervantes.es/en

ABOUT PEOPLE'S PALACE PROJECTS

People's Palace Projects seeks to ask how the arts can bring about positive social change through participatory arts projects, performances, educational initiatives and debates. The institution brings artists, activists, academics and audiences together for projects that address a wide range of social justice and human rights issues. Based in the East End of London (Queen Mary University of London), they have worked with a wide range of local communities, in partnership with a range of arts organizations and artists across England and Wales with a legacy of international collaborative projects in West Africa, South America and Eastern Europe. For the past two decades they have maintained a special focus on strengthening cultural links between Brazil and the UK. Further information: peoplespalaceprojects.org.uk

ABOUT THE SALA BRASIL

Sala Brasil occupies the magnificent Grade II listed former ticket hall of the White Star Line on the ground floor of the Brazilian Embassy in London. The space is dedicated to promoting Brazilian culture in all formats, modern and contemporary art, architecture, design, music, theatre, literature and dance. The hall is decorated with frescos and ornamentation which reveal its original ties with shipping and international trade and is the main venue for temporary Brazil-themed art exhibitions, throughout the year, giving the public an opportunity to experience the quality and diversity of Brazilian art.