



Northumbria graduate Mr Wee Teng Woon, who established the Woon Foundation Art & Sculpture Prize along with his three brothers.

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## And the winner is...

**The winner of this year's Woon Art Prize has been announced by Northumbria University, Newcastle, and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.**

Final year art student Joy Labinjo has won the £20,000 first prize award and will now take up a 12-month fellowship in the Woon Tai Jee studio at BALTIC 39 in Newcastle. The fellowship includes studio space and mentoring from staff from both institutions as well as a final exhibition with catalogue at the end of 12 months.

One of the UK's most generous arts awards, The Woon Foundation Painting & Sculpture Prize, jointly hosted by Northumbria and BALTIC, offers an exceptional prize fund of £40,000 for student artists. Now in its fifth year, it includes a £20,000 first prize package and two generous runner-up prizes of £9,000 and £6,000.

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[Woon Art Prize 2017 winner announced](#) from [Northumbria University](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Woon Prize 2017 winner Joy said: “It is amazing to have such a fantastic opportunity. I was so surprised when my name was called out and rather embarrassingly burst into tears. It doesn't feel real just yet, but it feels great knowing that many people believe in you and want to support you.

“I had intended to carry on painting after graduation but that would most likely have been with a full-time job, painting as and when. I worked a lot during my time at university and still managed to pull it off, but it was pretty draining. Additionally my work is quite large and large-scale painting is what I find most enjoyable.

“Recently a lot of people have said that they like my work but it would be great if it was smaller. Now that I've won the fellowship I don't necessarily have to work and can focus my time and energy into continuing my practise. It is also such a blessing as I don't have to commercialise my work and can carry on working large scale and now have the opportunity to decide what

kind of artist I want to be.”

Joy, who is a final year art student at Newcastle University, added: “I am so happy to be able to carry on my practise in such a great environment and with great mentors. My work has developed a lot over the past year and I am very much looking forward after a year of extended support.”

Liam Fallon was named as the £9,000 second prize winner while Kione Grandison received the £6,000 third prize.

Sarah Munro, Director of BALTIC, said: “For a third consecutive year BALTIC has had the privilege of selecting, presenting and awarding emerging graduating artists from across the UK as a partner in the Woon Foundation Painting & Sculpture Prize. This prize enables BALTIC to not only continue witnessing artistic practice of graduates at that vital early stage of their careers, but in ensuring – with our partner Northumbria University – we crucially contribute to their talent development.

“The hard work and dedication of all Woon Prize applicants means that we recognise all ten shortlisted artists as winners. They should rightfully be enormously proud of their place in the exhibition at BALTIC 39 and we will watch their progression with keen interest. Congratulations are extended to Kione Grandison (third prize), Liam Fallon (second prize) and Joy Labinjo who was awarded the £20,000 Woon Tai Jee Fellowship. Thanks must go to the Woon Foundation for their generous and ongoing commitment to this initiative.”

The prize-winners were announced at a Woon 2017 exhibition preview on 29 June at BALTIC 39 featuring work from all 10 of the shortlisted student artists. The shortlist for this year’s prize was selected by a panel of judges including Laurence Sillars, BALTIC Chief Curator; Hilary Lloyd, artist and Turner Prize-nominee; Holly Hendry, artist and inaugural recipient of Woon Foundation Prize; and chaired by Christine Borland, Turner Prize-nominated artist and Northumbria Professor.

Professor Borland, who teaches in Northumbria’s Arts department and who chaired this year’s judging panel, said: “The judges were delighted with the strength of practice represented in the applications for this year’s Woon Prize exhibition; the confidence and optimism expressed in the shortlisted works don’t immediately betray the jittery contemporary zeitgeist. We are pleased

to be presenting artists from across the country, who deserve congratulations for enabling such a vibrant exhibition.”

Mr Wee Teng Woon, a Northumbria graduate and keen art collector, along with his three brothers established the Woon Foundation Art & Sculpture Prize. The competition was launched in 2012 and has since attracted some of the UK’s most exciting artists. The first winning recipient of the Woon Foundation Prize was Holly Hendry who took up residence in the Woon Tai Jee Studio at BALTIC 39 in 2013. Just four short years on and Holly staged her [first major UK institutional exhibition](#), Wrot, at BALTIC earlier this year and became one of the judges for this year’s prize.

Northumbria and BALTIC jointly award and present the The Woon Foundation Prize for Painting and Sculpture as an important part of the successful strategic partnership between the two organisations. Northumbria offers a range of course in the Arts. To find out more sign up for one of our upcoming Open Days or go to: [www.northumbria.ac.uk/arts](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/arts). For more about BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art and the Woon Prize go to: <http://www.baltic39.com/woonprize/>

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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