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## **First Woon Art Prize winner reflects on her year-long fellowship**

Surrounded by deceptively soft-looking solid sculptures, empty moulds and pastel-coloured plaster columns, Holly Hendry is hard at work in her BALTIC 39 studio.

The studio on Newcastle's High Bridge has been her artistic workshop for one year since becoming the first winner of the Woon Foundation Painting and Sculpture Art Prize. The competition offers £40,000 in prizes, equal in value to Britain's biggest art award, the Turner Prize.

Launched in 2012 by Northumbria University, Newcastle, and sponsored by Singaporean businessman and Northumbria alumni Wee Teng Woon, the Woon Foundation Painting and Sculpture Art Prize is open to all final year Fine Art students studying in the UK. The award was created to provide opportunities for young students to develop their art, offering direct links with industry through Northumbria's partnership with BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead.



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

Holly, a graduate of London's prestigious Slade School of Art, walked away with the first prize Woon Tai Jee Fellowship in the inaugural competition earning her a £20,000 bursary, studio space in the BxNU Institute of Contemporary Art at BALTIC 39 and mentoring from BALTIC professor, Christine Borland.

This month, examples of her art practice will be installed in Northumbria University's Gallery North as part of her solo exhibition, entitled *Hollow Bodies*, marking the end of her fellowship.

Looking back at her year-long opportunity Holly, 24, said: "It's been a really productive year; really busy. I've been able to engage in the art world in so many ways.

"As most of my work is commissioned and built at specific sites, I've used the studio as a place for thinking about and testing new ideas as well as research. My work has been exhibited at public shows across the country and recently

further afield in the UAE.”

Since winning the prestigious award and studio space in BALTIC 39, Holly has exhibited work in Northumbria’s Gallery North, as part of the Woon Prize exhibition in 2013, and will present her solo show there from 24 September. Her work has also been displayed at The Royal Standard in Liverpool, The Bank Gallery in Whitechapel, London, the BALTIC 39 open studios event, and in Ruskin Square, Croydon. She was also included in The Catlin Guide 2014 – an annual publication that highlights the talents of just 40 graduating UK artists.

One of Holly’s installations, entitled *The March Project*, was exhibited in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation, the sculpture is influenced by traditional Arabic architectural techniques and plays with the old and new forms of air conditioning, addressing air as a life system that is processed through buildings and bodies.

Holly credits the Woon Art Prize for providing her with a unique opportunity and platform for her art.

She said: “Winning the Woon Foundation Art Prize has opened up a lot of doors in terms of people taking another look at your work. Funding and studio space has allowed me to be free from the constraints of money or time usually faced by graduates and has given me time to develop my practice. As a new artist, to be given support, time and space is a real privilege.

“Being part of BALTIC 39 is a great experience. It’s good to meet the people involved in making exhibitions and events happen: the artists and the installation and production process of various shows. It’s been really interesting to see behind the scenes.

“I’ve also been able to use Northumbria University library and workshop facilities, which is brilliant to have access to.”

The Woon Tai Jee Fellowship is named after Mr Woon’s late father and earns the recipient a £20,000 bursary, use of the Woon Tai Jee studio space in the BxNU Institute of Contemporary Art at BALTIC 39 and mentoring from BALTIC Professor and Turner Prize-nominated artist Christine Borland.

The second prize, worth £9,000 is named after Mr Woon's late mother Lim Ai Fang, and the third, worth £6,000, is named after his father's late second wife Cheong Kam Hee. Judges can bestow additional consolation prizes worth a total of £5,000.

Ten fine art graduates have now been shortlisted in this year's competition. Their artwork is currently on exhibition in Gallery North. The winner will be announced on 16 September.

Holly, who starts a Masters course at the Royal College of Arts in London later this month, says that her upcoming exhibition at Gallery North will build on themes that thread through her previous works.

*"Hollow Bodies* explores how humans navigate spaces; the notion of touch and the senses. How we relate to objects and spaces we exist in and come into contact with," she said. "It draws on themes of the body and architecture in a general sense, but also has influences ranging from classical statuary to building work and the making process itself. I hope that it plays with that tension between structures being built up or crumbling away, on the verge of collapsing or expanding."

She added: "It's been amazing having this time to concentrate on my work and the masters course is the right step for me, as I'm keen to carry on working productively like I have been able to do this year and put my practice into a critical context again.

"I'll miss Newcastle but it's nice to have a network of people up here; that element of keeping connected to Newcastle is really important to me."

For more information about Holly's exhibition at Gallery North, Sandyford Road, visit <http://gn.northumbria.ac.uk>. More details about her art can be found at [www.hollyhendry.com](http://www.hollyhendry.com).

To find out more about The Woon Foundation Painting and Sculpture Art Prize, visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/woonartprize](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/woonartprize). This year's winner will be announced on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

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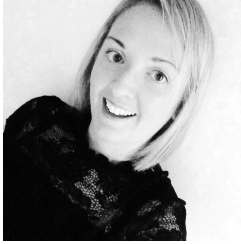


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