



Northumbria graduate and keen art collector Mr Wee Teng Woon, of the Woon Foundation

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Woon prize winner opens first solo exhibition

The 2017 winner of one of the art world's most generous awards is to launch her first solo exhibition next month.

Joy Labinjo was awarded the prestigious Woon Art Prize earlier this year. Jointly hosted by Northumbria University and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, the award includes a £20,000 fellowship, including 12-months studio space in the Woon Tai Jee studio at BALTIC 39 in Newcastle.

Labinjo's exhibition *Belonging* will open at Morely Gallery in London in January, as part of a new programme that aims to challenge the status quo, encouraging reflection and debate on our increasingly complex times.

Her paintings draw on her British-Nigerian heritage and examine the complex relationship between identity, race and culture. In *Belonging*, Labinjo invites the viewer to step into large-scale canvases saturated with colours, patterns and people, reconfigured from her family photograph albums.

Labinjo is the fifth winner of the Woon Art Prize, which was established by the Woon Foundation, made up of Northumbria graduate and keen art collector Mr Wee Teng Woon and his three brothers.

Since its launch the award has attracted some of the UK's most exciting artists, including Holly Hendry, who took up residence in the Woon Tai Jee Studio in 2013 and, four years later, staged her first major UK institutional exhibition, *Wrot*, at BALTIC. Holly was invited to become a judge for the 2017 prize.

Entries for the 2018/19 Woon Art Prize will open in early 2018, with final year undergraduate art students studying in the UK invited to apply. For more information, please visit <http://www.baltic39.com/woonprize/>

Belonging runs from 11 January to 10 February 2018 at Morley Gallery, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7HT. For more information please visit <https://www.morleycollege.ac.uk/the-gallery>

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