

09 March 2017

## SYNGENTA PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD 2017 WINNERS ANNOUNCED

British-Chinese Photographer **Yan Wang Preston** wins Professional Commission for her long term project 'Forest'

Irish Photographer **Kenneth O'Halloran** wins the Open Competition for his photograph 'Rice Farmer, Sanwougou Lalle, Togo,' 2015



Left: Yan Wang Preston *Forest #6*, 2011, courtesy and copyright the photographer  
Right: Kenneth O'Halloran *Rice Farmer, Sanwougou Lalle, Togo*, 2015, courtesy and copyright the photographer

Last night at Somerset House in London, the winners of the Syngenta Photography Award 2017 were announced.

The winner of the Professional Commission category is British-Chinese artist and photographer **Yan Wang Preston**. Dublin-based, Irish photographer **Kenneth O' Halloran** has been selected as the winner of the Open Competition.

Yan Wang Preston was chosen by an international jury chaired by writer and photographer William A. Ewing. Responding to this year's theme, Grow-Conserve, her long-term project, 'Forest,' explores the relationship between urbanisation and nature, particularly in relation to China's urban forests. The conflicts between the rapid growth of our cities, and the protection of existing ecologies is a central issue in the project. Preston has received US\$15,000 as a cash prize, and up to US\$25,000 to fulfil her proposal. The commission will allow Preston to expand and complete the project, which looks specifically at the tree-dealing business in mainland China.

The second prize, of US\$10,000 has been awarded to San Francisco based photographer Lucas Foglia for his project 'Frontcountry,' exploring some of the least populated areas of the United States. Third prize, of US\$5,000 has been awarded to Claudia Jaguaribe, for her project 'The Library Series', following her work photographing the Brazilian rainforests.

The winner of this year's Open Competition is Dublin-based Kenneth O'Halloran, who has received US\$5,000. His winning photograph depicts rice production in Tonte, Togo. His series considers the challenge of global food security, exploring man's relationship with the land in a number of countries in

Africa. In second place is Matt Hamon (Montana, USA), who received US\$3,000 for his image of an Epona woman nursing her infant son in the corner of a meat processing shed in Yellowstone Park, Montana; and in third place is Robin Friend (UK) who received \$2,000 for his image of a disused slate mine in North Wales, which now serves as a landfill for products the mine once supplied.

The winning photographs are exhibited alongside a curated selection of compelling images from the competition first at Somerset House (9 March – 28 March 2017) and thereafter at various international venues.

William A. Ewing, chair of the judging panel said:

*“I was impressed and heartened, as was the entire jury, to see the extraordinary range of well-thought through projects submitted this year, not to mention the high quality of the photography. Narrowing the field in both categories of the competitions to the top projects was not an easy task. We found many of the proposals extremely creative in their approach, and the choice of imagery submitted was equally thoughtful. It was also heartening to see how, taken together, the submissions showed a deeply-felt conviction that photography could make a difference in considerations of vital significance to all of us.”*

#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **The Syngenta Photography Award:**

Launched in 2012, the Syngenta Photography Award was created to stimulate dialogue around key global challenges and to establish an important platform to explore issues of global significance through photography.

For the **Professional Commission**, professional photographers were invited to submit a series of 5–10 compelling images relating to the theme, accompanied by a creative project proposal of a maximum of 500 words exploring the theme in a more in-depth way, for a commission worth up to US\$25,000. Three prizes were awarded in the Professional Commission category: first prize: US\$15,000, plus up to US\$25,000 for the commission project; second prize: US\$10,000; third prize: US\$5,000.

The **Open Competition** was open to all photographers 18 years or older whether amateur, professional or student. Photographers were invited to submit between 1-3 thought-provoking and captivating images exploring the theme of Grow-Conserve. The jury members awarded three prizes in the Open Competition category: First prize: US\$5,000; Second prize: US\$3,000; Third prize: US\$2,000.

##### **Jury Members:**

The Jury for the Professional Commission was chaired by **William E. Ewing** (Canada) and included **Touria El Glaoui** (Morocco), Curator and Founder of 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair; **Ekaterina Inozemtseva** (Russia), Chief Curator at the Multimedia Art Museum in Moscow; **Karen Irvine** (USA), Curator and Associate Director of the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago; **Marcus Lyon** (UK), photographer; **Weiwei Wang** (China), Curator at Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai; **Maria Wills Londoño** (Colombia), Researcher, curator and specialist in contemporary art.

The Jury for the Open Competition included photographers **Emily Graham** (UK), **Marcus Lyon** (UK) and **Mimi Mollica** (Italy) and was chaired by **William E. Ewing** (Canada).

##### **Winning Artists 2017**

**Yan Wang Preston** is a British-Chinese photographer. Preston's work has won international awards and been shown in prestigious venues around the world. Her series 'Mother River' won the Shiseido Photographer Prize at the Three Shadows Photography Annual Award in Beijing, China (2016), has been nominated for the Prix Pictet Award (2015 and 2016), and won the Reviewers Choice Award at FORMAT Portfolio Review in Derby, England (2014). It has been shown as part of the Dubai Photo

Exhibition (2016), at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) and in three large-scale solo shows at Chongqing China Three Gorges Museum, Wuhan Art Museum and the Swatch Art Peace Hotel in Shanghai. Her series 'Forest' won the third prize of the Curator's Choice Award at CENTER in Santa Fe, USA in 2012, and was shortlisted for the Renaissance Photography Prize in 2013. Her work is in the collection of the Wuhan Art Museum, China and a number of private collections.

**Kenneth O'Halloran** was born in the West of Ireland and is a graduate of the Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Dún Laoghaire, Dublin. He holds a Masters in Fine Art Photography from The University of Ulster, Belfast. O'Halloran's work has appeared in magazines such as The New York Times Magazine, The Sunday Times Magazine, Le Monde, TIME and FT Weekend Magazine. His work has been recognized by World Press, American Photography, Alliance Francaise, and the Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize. He is also a winner of the Terry O'Neill Photography Award. O'Halloran lives and works in Dublin.

#### **About Syngenta:**

Syngenta is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources. Through world class science and innovative crop solutions, our 28,000 people in over 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown. We are committed to rescuing land from degradation, enhancing biodiversity and revitalizing rural communities. To learn more visit [www.syngenta.com](http://www.syngenta.com) and [www.goodgrowthplan.com](http://www.goodgrowthplan.com).

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#### **About Somerset House:**

A unique part of the London cultural scene, Somerset House is an historic building where surprising and original work comes to life. From its 18<sup>th</sup>-century origins, Somerset House has been a centre for debate and discussion – an intellectual powerhouse for the nation. Somerset House is today a key cultural destination in London in which to experience a broad range of artistic activity, engage with artists, designers and makers and be a part of a major creative forum – an environment that is relaxed, welcoming, and inspirational to visit while providing a stimulating workplace for the cultural and creative industries.

Since its opening in 2000, Somerset House has built up a distinctive outdoor public programme including Skate, concerts, an open-air film season and a diverse range of temporary exhibitions throughout the site focusing on contemporary culture, with an extensive learning programme attached. In October 2016, Somerset House launched Somerset House Studios, a new experimental workspace connecting artists, makers and thinkers with audiences. The Studios provide a platform for new creative projects and collaboration, promoting work that pushes bold ideas, engages with urgent issues and pioneers new technologies. Somerset House is also one of the biggest community of creative organisations in London including The Courtauld Gallery and Institute of Art, King's College London Cultural Institute and over 100 other creative businesses. It currently attracts approximately 3.4 million visitors every year. [www.somersethouse.org.uk](http://www.somersethouse.org.uk)

#### **Exhibition Information:**

Dates: 9 March – 28 March 2017

Opening hours: Saturday – Tuesday: 10.00 – 18.00

Wednesday – Friday: 11.00 – 20.00

Address: West Wing Galleries, Somerset House, Strand, London, WC2R 1LA

Admission: Free

#### **Press Contact:**

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