

The Big Draw

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The Big Draw in partnership with The Pilgrim Trust and The Guild of St. George.

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PRESS RELEASE: The John Ruskin Prize 2015 shortlist announced

The Big Draw today named the 30 artists shortlisted for The John Ruskin Prize 2015. The award ceremony and exhibition will be held at The New Art Gallery Walsall in the new year and will be accompanied by a programme linking to the V&A's historic 'Recording Britain' collection.

The shortlisted artists are: Dominic Negus, Hilary Powell, Julian Bovis, Nathan Ford, Michelle Heron, Michael Johnson, Nettie Wakefield, Sally Cutler, Susie Hamilton, Stephanie Grainger, Joe Munro, Teresa Robertson, Julia Midgley, Graham Martin, David Borrington, Duncan Wood, Jessie Brennan, Peter Haugh, Timothy Betjeman, Tanya Wood, Anne Guest, Oliver Jones, Myles Linley, Cherry Pickles, Georgia Wisbey, Emily Vanns, Emma Wilde, Laura Oldfield Ford, Robin Sukatorn, Tony Kenyon.

About the shortlist

The shortlisted works responded to the theme *Recording Britain Now: Society*, and reveal an abundant range of techniques and social commentary, often focusing on physical or emotional isolation, with some suggestions of hope. Julia Midgley's reportage drawings of military hospitals remind us of the impact of the Syrian air strikes vote in sharp contrast to Susie Hamilton's observations from the sidelines, which provide morphed interpretations of everyday supermarket scenes.

Portraiture is featured more heavily than in previous years. Oliver Jones presents a photorealist pastel commentary on cosmetic plastic surgery titled '3 steps to looking younger looking skin', while Sally Cutler's series of linocut portraits celebrates the diversity of British society. Topical depictions of the Skipchen Food Ambulance and a Jeremy Corbyn rally in Manchester are also part of the selection.

About The John Ruskin Prize

With support from The Pilgrim Trust and The Guild of St. George, The John Ruskin Prize award totals £8,000, with the winner receiving £5,000, the runner-up £2,000, and a new £1,000 student prize. The Prize was established in 2012 to support emerging British artists. It aims to uphold Ruskin's belief that drawing helps us see the world and its fragility more clearly. In the same way that 75 years ago *Recording Britain* sought to map familiar townscapes and countryside under threat from World War 2 and over-development, the Prize is an invitation to engage with a society in rapid transition.

An free exhibition of work by the shortlisted artists will run from 26 February – 17 April 2016 at The New Art Gallery Walsall, followed by a London showing at The Electrician's Shop Gallery, Trinity Buoy Wharf in May 2016. The Prize winners will be announced at the private view on 25 February 2016.

The members of The John Ruskin Prize 2015 jury are **Adam Dant** (Artist), **Gill Saunders** (Senior Curator of Prints, Victoria & Albert Museum), **Stephen Snoddy** (Director, The New Art Gallery Walsall), and **Sue Grayson Ford** (President & Founder, The Big Draw).

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#ruskinprize

Notes to editor

1. Exhibition - *Recording Britain Now: Society*

Recording Britain Now: Society is free and will run from 26 February – 17 April 2016 at The New Art Gallery Walsall, Gallery Square, Walsall, WS2 8LG. Open: 10am - 5pm Tuesday to Saturday, Sundays 12noon - 4pm. Closed Mondays and Bank Holidays. Train and bus stations are within 5 minutes walk.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of talks and events linking with the V&A's 'Recording Britain' collection and all shortlisted artists will be included in a catalogue featuring both collections.

2. The New The New Art Gallery Walsall (NAGW) opened in February 2000 to national acclaim. Designed by Caruso St John Architects as an inspirational piece of architecture, the Gallery houses the renowned Garman Ryan Collection and delivers a dynamic programme of contemporary exhibitions and artists' projects. Through the programme, NAGW seeks to build and develop diverse audiences for contemporary art and to provide a range of opportunities for living artists. As an art gallery of outstanding excellence, NAGW seeks to disseminate its work as widely as possible, thus drawing national and international attention to Walsall and its achievements.

3. The Big Draw is an arts education charity, which raises the profile of visual literacy and the value of drawing as a tool for thought, creativity, social and cultural engagement. The Big Draw was launched in 2000 by the Guild of St George, a small charity founded by John Ruskin in 1871. In addition to running The John Ruskin Prize and a visual literacy programme, the charity is the founder and driving force behind the world's biggest drawing festival, The Big Draw.

4. The John Ruskin Prize was inaugurated in 2012 by The Guild of St. George and The Campaign for Drawing (now The Big Draw). **The John Ruskin Prize** has established itself as a showcase for emerging talent and more established artists across the UK. The John Ruskin Prize 2015 encouraged artists to respond to the theme, *Recording Britain Now: Society*, by focusing on prevalent contemporary social issues. Similar to the way that 75 years ago *Recording Britain* mapped familiar townscapes and countryside under threat, this was an invitation to engage with a society in rapid transition, and offered today's artists the opportunity to join the ranks of well-known earlier commentators on the state of the nation.

The 1st John Ruskin Prize exhibition, *A New Look at Nature*, was successfully shown in Brantwood, Ruskin's former Lake District home. The 2nd, *Recording Britain Now*, was shown in Sheffield's Millennium Gallery for five months accompanying the V&A tour of *Recording Britain*. In November 2014 it had a second showing at London's Trinity Buoy Wharf, now the home of The Big Draw..