

History of the Max Mara Prize for Women

Overview

The Max Mara Art Prize for Women reflects Max Mara's close relationship with the worlds both of women and art. It is a prestigious biennial award for emergent female-identifying artists, originated in 2005 from a collaboration between Max Mara Fashion Group and Whitechapel Gallery. Collezione Maramotti, home to a world-class contemporary art collection, joined as an additional partner in 2007.

The prize is open to female-identifying artists of any age, living and working in the United Kingdom, who have not previously had a major solo survey or exhibition.

It is the only visual art prize of its kind with the aim to promote and nurture women artists at a crucial stage in their careers through increased visibility, and the resources to develop an ambitious new work.

Rather than a single financial reward, the Max Mara Art Prize is premised on a unique format, which offers the winner a tailored residency programme in Italy, organized by Collezione Maramotti, designed to support and evolve her practice and to further develop a new body of work by providing the often much needed opportunities of time, space, creative and professional support. The resulting work is then presented at a major solo exhibition at both Whitechapel Gallery and Collezione Maramotti, which allows audiences in both places to fully engage with the artist, her work and its development. The final work is then acquired by Collezione Maramotti, completing the cycle of artist support. All three partners work collaboratively on each phase of the prize cycle sharing their particular expertise and resources to ensure maximum benefit to the winning artist and project.

The jury of the Prize - renewed at each edition - comprising art world specialists: a gallerist, critic, artist and collector, and chaired by the Whitechapel Gallery Director, submits a longlist of artists, from which a final shortlist of five is agreed, all of whom present a proposal for a new body of work, coherent with Italian culture and tradition. From the ninth edition (2022-2024) the Prize is curated by Gilane Tawadros, current director of Whitechapel Gallery, succeeding Iwona Blazwick's twenty-year directorship, who contributed to found and chaired the jury of the Prize from the first edition of 2005.

The winner, selected on the strength of her proposal and its connection to Italy, is announced at a special ceremony and awarded a six-month Italian residency as well as a dedicated exhibition, accompanied by a publication. The residency is uniquely tailored to fit the particular needs and

focus of the artist and her winning proposal. It is also itinerant, and each step is overseen by a tutor, who guides the artist in her researches, while helping her to connect with the Italian culture and local context. During each edition Collezione Maramotti is fully dedicated to discover new places where the artist can develop her project and to appoint new tutors that, at each step, support the artist and guide her in her discoveries.

Whitechapel is specifically involved in the curatorial and advisory sphere of the project, above all in the phases of appointing the jurors, selecting the artists, curating the exhibition and the catalogue related.



The Max Mara Art Prize for Women is both distinct and exceptional in recognising and supporting the creative process and was awarded the British Council Arts & Business International Award in 2007.

The next prize edition (2024-2026) will be its 10th edition anniversary and will confirm its status as a distinctive and invaluable resource for emergent women-identifying artists based in the UK.

Throughout its nearly twenty years history the Max Mara Art Prize for Women (MMAP) has been significant in shining a light on emergent female-identifying artists and giving them the time, guidance and resources to create new and extraordinary artworks that speak of - and to - the world around them.



First Edition: 2005 - 2007

WINNER: MARGARET SALMON - NINNA NANNA

The inaugural edition of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women was announced in June 2005 at the British Pavilion of the 51st Venice Art Biennale. The first shortlist was then announced in September 2005 as Anne Hardy, Donna Huddleston, Rachel Kneebone, Margaret Salmon and Anj Smith.

The prize was unanimously awarded to video artist Margaret Salmon by a panel of judges, chaired by Iwona Blazwick, former director of the Whitechapel Gallery and comprising Jennifer Higgie, editor of Frieze magazine; Victoria Miro, gallerist; Gillian Wearing, artist and laureate of the Turner Prize; and Anita Zabludowicz, collector and gallerist.

Margaret Salmon's six-month Italian residency was divided between the American Academy in Rome and the Pistoletto Foundation in Biella, where the artist completed her project. In January 2007, the work was exhibited at the Whitechapel Gallery in London.

ABOUT MARGARET SALMON

Born in Suffern, New York, in 1977. Lives and works in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. She began her career as a video artist at the age of twenty, while pursuing a BFA at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Her style of expression is cognizant of various moments in the history of cinema, from Neorealism, to New Wave and Cinema Verité. In 2007 she took part in the Venice Art Biennale and in the Berlin Biennale in 2010. She was also featured in individual exhibitions at Witte de With in Rotterdam and won the Vincent Prize in 2007.

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

Ninna Nanna is a video triptych, shot in 16mm in colour and black and white, and presents three young Italian mothers filmed in their homes while singing an endless lullaby, a 'ninna nanna', to their infants. The work celebrates the tenacity and grace of these women as they go about their daily lives, and draws attention to the gap between the iconography of motherhood and its reality.

Ninna Nanna is now part of the Collezione Maramotti and was selected by Robert Storr for the 52nd Venice Art Biennale. Margaret Salmon was also nominated for the coveted Vincent Prize.



Second Edition: 2007 - 2009

WINNER: HANNAH RICKARDS - NO, THERE WAS NO RED.

The launch of the second edition (2007-2009) of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, was announced on 8 June 2007 at the British Pavilion of the 52nd Venice Art Biennale. The panel of judges, chaired by Iwona Blazwick, director of Whitechapel Gallery, included Rachel Withers, art critic; Cornelia Grassi, gallerist; Cornelia Parker, artist; and Judith Greer, collector.

The shortlist was announced in October 2007 as Yasmeen Al Awadi, Georgie Hopton, Melanie Jackson, Lisa Peachey and Hannah Rickards.

Following the jury's review of the shortlisted artists' proposals, Hannah Rickards was announced as the winner at a special gala dinner held at the Italian Embassy in London in January 2008. The artist realised her project over the course of that year, during periods of residency at the American Academy in Rome and the Pistoletto Foundation in Biella. This residency, in addition to the financial provisions of the prize (also supported by the National Lottery, by way of Arts Council England) allowed her to dedicate over a year to researching and developing her new work, which was presented in London in 2009 at the recently expanded Whitechapel Gallery, and later in Reggio Emilia at Collezione Maramotti, which then went on to acquire the work.

ABOUT HANNAH RICKARDS

Born in Hammersmith, London, in 1979. Hannah Rickards lives and works in London. She completed a BA (Hons) in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 2002. Rickards – the youngest of the shortlisted artists – is a conceptual artist, and sound is the primary medium in which she works. Nature and artifice are closely intertwined in her work. Her sound installations often consist of the appropriation of a sound that occurs in nature, and then of its reinterpretation in terms of language or music. In 2015 she was awarded with the Leverhulme Prize (Visual and Performing Arts category), which recognises the achievement of outstanding researchers whose work has already attracted international recognition and whose future career is exceptionally promising.

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

Rickards' two-screen film – No, there was no red. – is based on spoken accounts of a mirage of a city seen to hover over Lake Michigan as the result of a rare atmospheric phenomenon of thermic inversion. The subjective differences, as well as the affinities, echoes and counterpoints of these reports form the core of the piece, allowing for an exploration of the ways in which this natural occurrence is experienced and described. Text is an integral part of Rickards' work, and reveals the influence of such early Conceptual artists as Douglas Huebler, Robert Barry and Lawrence Weiner.

The exhibition opened at Whitechapel Gallery, London: 5 - 23 September 2009 before touring to Collezione Maramotti: 24 October, 2009 - 31 October, 2010

The work was loaned to Modern Art Oxford in 2014 for the show Hannah Rickards. To enable me to fix my attention on any one of these symbols I was to imagine that I was looking at the colours as I might see them on a moving picture screen.



Third Edition: 2009 - 2011

WINNER: ANDREA BÜTTNER - THE POVERTY OF RICHES

The winner of the third edition (2009-2011) of the Prize was announced at Whitechapel Gallery on 23 March 2010. The panel of judges, chaired by Iwona Blazwick, included artist Fiona Banner, gallerist Alison Jacques, art collector Valeria Napoleone and art critic Polly Staple agreed a shortlist comprising Becky Beasley, Andrea Büttner and Elizabeth Price, and after considering their proposals announced Andrea Büttner as the recipient of the prize. The artist realised her project during a six-months residency in Italy in 2010, partly at the American Academy in Rome, partly at the Pistoletto Foundation in Biella, and also as the guest of a number of religious communities.

ABOUT ANDREA BÜTTNER

Born in Stuttgart in 1972. Lives and works in London and Frankfurt. After studying history and philosophy at Humboldt University in Berlin, she was awarded a PhD at Royal College of Art, London in 2009. She is the recipient of a number of awards and accolades including: Maria-Sibylla-Merian Prize, Kunststiftung Baden Württemberg Grant (2009), Cusanuswerk Scholarship (2005-2008) and Working Grant, Tyler Graphics (2006). She was shortlisted for the Turner Prize 2017. In 2017, she had solo shows at the Hammer Museum and at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art. She works in a variety of media (inclusive of woodcuts and pressed flowers) and is especially interested in themes in which art and religion intertwine and overlap. Büttner's work also investigates the potential dilemmas the artist faces within the space of the gallery and its powerful charge of expectations.

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

The Poverty of Riches is a project that explores the intersection of religion, art and the condition of the artist in the contemporary world. Andrea Büttner engages with Catholicism by way of a complex, multi-layered reflection on art. The artworks produced in the course of the project were inspired by the Italian religious communities in which she lived for a while, as well as by Giotto's frescoes, and a number of Arte Povera works at Collezione Maramotti. Her show transforms the exhibition space into a space of contemplation in which we look at works that represent elements of religious iconography, rendered in the traditional technique of woodcuts. Flanking such traditional imagery, we also find pieces of everyday cloth which the artist has retrieved from the uniforms of park guards, policemen and refuse collectors, and then stretched as though they were canvases, thus creating colourful "paintings." These works are part of Büttner's exploration of the symbolic uses of fabrics in Italian religious art. The Poverty of Riches opened at Whitechapel Gallery: 1 – 10 April 2011 before travelling to Collezione Maramotti: 12 November 2011 – 29 April 2012. Part of the project was loaned to Whitechapel Gallery in 2015 for the show Adventures of the Black Square: Abstract Art and Society 1915 – 2015.



Fourth Edition: 2011 - 2013

WINNER: LAURE PROUVOST - FARFROMWORDS

The fourth edition of the Prize shortlist boasted a distinguished shortlist comprising Spartacus Chetwynd, Christina Mackie, Avis Newman, Laure Prouvost and Emily Wardill.

The jury: artist Lisa Milroy; art collector Muriel Salem; gallerist Amanda Wilkinson, and writer and critic Gilda Williams, chaired by Iwona Blazwick, announced Laure Prouvost as the winner of the fourth Max Mara Art Prize for Women, at the Italian Embassy, London on 22 November 2011.

ABOUT LAURE PROUVOST

Born in Lille (France) in 1978. Lives and works in London. Prouvost studied at Central St Martins, London and then at Goldsmiths College, London. Her work is characterised by the employment of combination of media. Prouvost is an artist with an appetite for exploring different cultures and she seizes the artistic potential of her impressions to create gripping, narratively-rich films and installations. Her winning project was hugely inspired by her Italian residency, consolidating the sensuous and surreal in her work. After the Max Mara Art Prize, she went on to win the Turner Prize in 2013. She had solo exhibitions in many important international venues, among which Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis; Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Hangar Bicocca, Milan; High Line Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; MMK Frankfurt; CAPC Bordeaux; New Museum, New York; Tate Britain, London. She represented France in the 2019 Venice Biennale.

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

Laure Prouvost's project opens new horizons of meaning by blurring the connection between language and understanding. Her two-part installation Farfromwords: car mirrors eat raspberries when swimming through the sun, to swallow sweet smells is inspired by the aesthetic and sensuous pleasures of Italy and plays on the historic tradition of visiting the Mediterranean for inspiration. Farfromwords comprises a large-scale pavilion-like structure recalling a historical panorama: a circular space is interspersed with collaged elements, including photographic prints, paint and pairs of video monitors showing footage of moving heads and feet. This immersive environment leads to an idyllic inner space revealing a new film, Swallow (2013). The gentle rhythm of breathing accompanies surrealist imagery and shots of blue skies, ripe fruit and modern-day nymphs. By conveying visual and sensory pleasure through fragments of footage, the film alludes to events and encounters from the artist's Italian residency split between the city of Rome and rural Biella. The exhibition opened at Whitechapel Gallery on the 20 March until the 7 April 2013 before touring to Collezione Maramotti: 3 May – 3 November 2013.

The video Swallow was loaned for the show Résonance(s), Maison Particulière, Bruxelles, in 2014 and at the Museum Frieder Burda / Salon Berlin in 2018.



Fifth Edition: 2013 - 2015

WINNER: CORIN SWORN - SILENT STICKS

Corin Sworn was announced as the winner of the fifth Max Mara Art Prize for Women in January 2014 by a judging panel chaired by Whitechapel Gallery Director Iwona Blazwick and consisting of gallerist Pilar Corrias; collector Candida Gertler; artist Runa Islam and curator and writer Lisa Le Feuvre. Sworn was chosen from a shortlist comprising Beatrice Gibson, Melanie Gilligan, Judith Goddard and Philomene Pirecki.

Based on her winning proposal for the Prize, Sworn undertook a bespoke 6-month residency in Italy divided between Rome, Naples and Venice. Sworn spent the residency immersing herself in the culture of each city, studying traditional plays and meeting actors and experts in the Commedia dell'Arte. She also visited important architectural sites including Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio's Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, whose grand trompe-l'oeil stage set is the oldest in the world.

ABOUT CORIN SWORN

Corin Sworn was born in London in 1975, but subsequently raised in Vancouver (Canada); she now lives and works in Glasgow. She received a BA in Psychology from the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, a BFA at the Institute of Art & Design of Vancouver and an MFA at The Glasgow School of Art. Sworn creates films and installations deeply rooted in research, which weave together history with memories and fragments of true or imagined stories, often with a social-anthropological cut. Alongside Hannah Rickards, she was also awarded with the Leverhulme Prize in 2015 (Visual and Performing Arts category).

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

The large-scale installation Silent Sticks draws from the characters and tales of the Commedia dell'Arte, improvised plays from the 16th century that originated in Italy where they continue to be of great cultural importance. Featuring a dramatic stage set with props, costumes, sound and video elements, Silent Sticks evolved out of Sworn's Italian residency. The characters of la commedia have influenced artists and writers for hundreds of years, from Shakespeare and Marlowe to Goya and Picasso. Sworn was interested in how mistaken identity was frequently used as a literary device in early theatre productions. Actors in radically different guises, such as a woman dressed as a man, a master dressed as a servant or a lord as a beggar played with the perceived fixity of insignia and rank. Early actors and the characters they took on pointed to social freedoms and mobility but also anxieties around misrecognition and social instability. The work adapts a famous 16th century case of imposture in response to these themes. The installation features fragments of sound and video, and is built through sourced and handmade props and costumes derived from the text Scenarios of the Commedia Dell'Arte, by Flaminio Scala, an actor and manager of one of the most pre-eminent theatre companies of the renaissance. Sworn also researched the circulation of clothing of the time and collaborated with the Max Mara fashion house to produce costumes for

the work. Based on sketches of garments made by the artist, the detailed costumes included in the installation were developed by designers and skilled craftspeople at the Max Mara headquarters in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The exhibition opened at the Whitechapel Gallery: 20 May – 19 July 2015, and then at Collezione Maramotti: 3 October

2015 – 28 February 2016.



Sixth Edition: 2015 - 2017

WINNER: EMMA HART - MAMMA MIA!

Emma Hart was selected as the winner of the sixth Max Mara Art Prize for Women from a shortlist of fellow artists: Ruth Ewan, Ana Genoves, Tania Kovats and Phoebe Unwin.

The panel chaired by Iwona Blazwick OBE, Director of the Whitechapel Gallery, comprised Fiona Bradley, Director, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; Sarah Elson, Collector and Founder of Launch Pad, a commissioning series supporting emerging artists; Helen Sumpter, Editor, Art Quarterly; and Artist and Royal Academician Alison Wilding. Hart's project is the result of a six months bespoke residency which started in June 2016 and was divided between three Italian cities: Milan, Todi and Faenza.

ABOUT EMMA HART

Emma Hart lives and works in London. She received an MA in Fine Art from the Slade in 2004 and completed her PhD in Fine Art at Kingston University in 2013. In 2015 she was awarded a Paul Hamlyn Foundation award for Visual Art. Hart works capture the confusion, stress and nausea of everyday experience. Always in pursuit of real life and subjective feelings, she uses ceramics to create claustrophobic installations that engage the viewer physically and emotionally, as well as smaller works which despite their size demand attention. There are frequent verbal and visual spillages, and Hart's use of clay is often corporeal, forming approximate body parts that act as substitutes for human action and employment.

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

Emma Hart's large-scale installation titled Mamma Mia! presents a family of oversized ceramic heads, in dialogue with one another. Each sculpture is jug-like in shape: the spout mimics a nose and the opening a mouth. A significant part of the work was produced in Italy: realised by the artist in Faenza alongside ceramic artisans. Each sculpture is glazed, incorporating motifs, such as the speech bubble and the interior space of the heads is filled with vivid patterns, designed and hand-painted by Hart after researching the designs and practice of the Italian tradition of maiolica. Emma Hart's new work is the culmination of an investigation into patterns both visual and psychological and her artistic enquiry encompassed how the final design could rupture these areas and consider the ruminations between. The space between viewer and object is key, as ever in Hart's work, and is charged with the artist's particularly personal take on her experiences in Italy including the heat, light and colour, language and family dynamics in an unfamiliar setting. Hart's Exhibition was presented at Whitechapel Gallery: 12 July – 3 September 2017; and at Collezione Maramotti: 15 October 2017 – 18 February 2018

The whole project Mamma Mia! was loaned to the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, in 2018/2019.



Seventh Edition: 2017 - 2019

WINNER: HELEN CAMMOCK - CHE SI PUÒ FARE

London based artist Helen Cammock (b. 1970) was chosen as the winner of the 7th edition by a panel of expert judges comprising gallerist Vanessa Carlos, Carlos/Ishikawa, London; artist and previous recipient of the prize Laure Prouvost; collector Marcelle Joseph and art critic Rachel Spence, chaired by Iwona Blazwick OBE, Director of the Whitechapel Gallery. Cammock's fellow shortlisted artists were Céline Condorelli, Eloise Hawser, Athena Papadopoulos and Mandy El-Sayegh.

Cammock's bespoke residency began in May 2018 and was divided between six Italian cities Bologna, Florence, Venice, Rome, Palermo, and Reggio Emilia. A key focus was meeting with experts, scholars, associations, institutions and communities in areas of interest to Cammock, overseen by a local tutor for each area city.

ABOUT HELEN CAMMOCK

Helen Cammock was born to an English mother and Jamaican father in 1970s Britain. She received her B.A. in Hons Sociology at the University of Sussex and a BA in Hons (First Class) Photography at the University of Brighton. After that, she completed her MA in Photography at the Royal College of Art.

Cammock works across moving image, photography, writing, poetry, spoken word, song, performance, printmaking and installation. She is interested in histories, storytelling and the excavation, re-interpretation and re-presentation of lost, unheard and buried voices. She uses her own writing, literature, poetry, philosophical and other found texts, often mapping them onto social and political situations. Her artistic practice has developed out of her experiences working with individuals and communities and continued awareness of collective society. In 2019 she was listed as one of the most influential artists in the UK, and in the same year she won the Turner Prize, together with Oscar Murillo, Tai Shani and Lawrence Abu Hamdan.

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

Her winning proposal for the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, Che Si Può Fare focuses on an expression of lament. Reflecting a central aspect of her work; she explores the role of the voice and the feeling of mourning or loss, resilience and survival, across the political, historical, individual and collective. Cammock wanted to explore how emotion is expressed in Italian culture and society, with a particular focus on opera, classical and folk music, art, poetry, writing and dance. She explored hidden female voices across Italian histories, aiming to create through collage, layering and juxtaposition a collective lament reflective for our own time.

The finished work was first presented at the Whitechapel Gallery: 25 Jun - 1 Sep 2019, and then at Collezione Maramotti: 13 Oct 2019 - 8 Mar 2020.



Eighth Edition: 2019 - 2022

WINNER: EMMA TALBOT - THE AGE/L'ETÀ

London based artist, Emma Talbot (b. 1969, UK) was selected as the winner of the eighth Max Mara Art Prize for Women (2019) by a panel chaired by Iwona Blazwick OBE, Director of the Whitechapel Gallery, and comprising art world experts, gallerist Florence Ingleby, artist Chantal Joffe, collector Fatima Maleki and art critic Hettie Judah. The other shortlisted artists were: Allison Katz, Katie Schwab, Tai Shani, and Hanna Tuulikki.

The Age/L'Età was developed during her six months bespoke residency organised by Collezione Maramotti.

ABOUT EMMA TALBOT

Emma Talbot (born 1969, Stourbridge, Worcestershire) is an English artist who lives and works in Walthamstow, London. Talbot studied at the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design graduating with a BA Fine Art at (1991), followed by studies at the Royal College of Art, where she obtained an MA in Painting (1995), she was then a Rome Scholar at the British School, Rome, (1996).

In 2006 Talbot was widowed and has said that this experience has irrevocably influenced the nature of her work.

Talbot has also been selected for The Milk of Dreams at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Cecilia Alemani.

ABOUT THE AWARDED ARTWORK

For her winning Max Mara Art Prize for Women commission, Emma Talbot questions deeply rooted positions of power, governance, attitudes to nature and representations of women through an acutely personal lens. The work takes as a starting point Gustav Klimt's painting The Three Ages of Woman (1905), which features a naked elderly woman standing in apparent shame. In the final artwork, comprising two 11-metre-long free-hanging silk paintings, a life-sized sculptural figure, drawings and an animation and developed during her residency, Talbot re-framed the older woman as a figure with agency, capable of overcoming a series of trials similar to The Twelve Labors of Hercules. Through her modern-day trials, the woman reconstructs contemporary society, tackling some of the most pressing issues of our time.

The finalised project was presented at Whitechapel Gallery 30th June - 4 September 2022 before travelling to Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy from 23 October 2022 - 9 July 2023.



Ninth Edition: 2022 - 2024

WINNER: DOMINIQUE WHITE

Dominique White was nominated winner of the ninth edition of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women in a ceremony held at the Whitechapel Gallery. For the first time, Gilane Tawadros, who succeeded to the historic twenty years Director Iwona Blazwick OBE, chaired the jury panel together with the guest curator Bina von Stauffenberg. The panel that nominated the shortlisted Rebecca Bellantoni, Bhajan Hunjan, Onyeka Igwe, Zinzi Minott, also included gallerist Rozsa Farkas, artist Claudette Johnson, writer Derica Shields and collector Maria Sukkar.

Dominique White residency, developing from May to October 2023, is touring in Agnone, Palermo, Genova, Milan and Todi to discover historical aspects of the nautical world and to experiment with metals, central to White's production.

ABOUT DOMINIQUE WHITE

Dominique White received a BA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths University of London and studied Foundation in Art and Design at the Central Saint Martins. She lives and works between Marseille and Essex. A sculptor and installation artist, she is interested in creating new worlds for 'Blackness' and fascinated by the metaphoric potency and regenerative power of the sea. She produces ghostly, seemingly fragile, yet highly physical works, often employing discarded and potent nautical relics. Her practice weaves together theories of Black Subjectivity, Afro-pessimism and Hydrarchy from below (dismantling or overthrowing the ability for individuals to gain power over land through water) with nautical myths particularly relevant to the Black Diaspora. She redefines the term Shipwreck(ed) as a reflexive verb and state of being to embody the inherent abolition within her work. White's sculptures, or 'beacons', recall seabound, imagined worlds which prophesise the emergence of the Stateless: "a [Black] future that hasn't yet happened, but must."