

## **BEST 'NEW ARTIST' NAMED AT SAATCHI GALLERY AND SECURES £10,000 PRIZE**

Habib Hajallie, was named as the winner of the [Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award](#), at an awards ceremony held at the prestigious Saatchi Gallery on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November for his work titled "Questions of our Day."

Habib was recipient to the £10,000 cash prize – out of a possible 1,400 number of entries - presented by global recruitment consultancy Robert Walters Group, after being selected ahead of the other nine shortlisted artists for work submitted within the brief of '**The Unimagined Future**'

Habib – based in the South East – wowed the judges with his intricately detailed figures realised on the pages of antique Sierra Leonean texts for his [winning piece](#).

Habib's practice is informed by his Sierra Leonean and Lebanese heritage, in the representation of figures that have been left-out of traditional British Portraiture he works to investigate how identity can be reconstructed by historical oppression.

His canvases of antique texts and maps recontextualise these figures to confront the enduring ethnocentrism still embedded within modern western society. Through his use of medium – a modern ballpoint pen depicting the empowered subjects, whose likeness is inspired by himself and his family, Habib constructs links in ink between past, present and future.

The winning piece of work will be on display at the Robert Walters Group head office in Covent Garden for 12 months. The [digital gallery](#) showcasing all the shortlisted artist's works along with an [online voting poll](#) for users to vote for their favourites has gone live today. Votes for the Peoples Choice Award will close on the 10<sup>th</sup> January, with the winner announced on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January.

**Habib Hajallie, winner of the 2022 Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award, commented:**

"I was genuinely happy to just be selected to exhibit at Saatchi Gallery with nine other ambitious and talented emerging artists - being shortlisted felt like a triumph. I've been a full-time artist for the past three-and-a-half years; winning the award is profoundly humbling and will serve to further galvanise my ambitions.

"As a young artist from an ethnically diverse background, being recognised for an art prize that is intended to showcase the work of new British art being made today, is something that I hope will resonate with people from similar backgrounds as myself. For too long the work of Black British artists went unseen or underappreciated, I have to thank the generations of immensely driven and talented Black British artists that paved the way to allow people such as myself opportunities for greater visibility to challenge archaic and oppressive notions of what it means to British.

“I can’t think of any organisations that champion emerging artists, in the way that UKNA does. They consistently provide an array of opportunities to catalyse the careers of up-and-coming artists.”

“This award in particular is truly special. Having the opportunity to exhibit at the world renowned Saatchi Gallery is a dream come true for any artist, at any stage of their career; also having the chance to win a £10k prize offers a unique opportunity to both gain practical exposure and crucial financial support. I can only thank Robert Walters, Saatchi Gallery and UKNA for their work in tandem to provide such an important showcase for emerging artists.”

Tyreis Holder – based in London - was recipient of the £5,000 runner-up prize for her work titled ‘Dun Dunnah;’ a response to the explosion in media attention of The Black Lives Matter movement, to an unimagined future, of what it truly looks like when healing and generational trauma breaking takes place via textile and poetry. It is both a critique of present/systemic oppression and failure; and a healing site—for future self and community.

**Tyreis Holder, runner-up of the 2022 Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award, commented:**

“Winning the award symbolises a milestone for me – a formal recognition of all the blood, sweat and literal tears I put in to my craft. However, most importantly, I didn’t win runner-up by myself – I won it with, and for my community. I won it with my mum, my nan, my great-nan, and all those who followed before me, passing down this language of textiles. Winning this award solidifies the importance of generational connection, knowledge and skill-sharing – but also love. For that, I am blessed and highly favoured.

“The £5k will greatly impact my career in the arts by allowing me to buy new equipment and materials to experiment with my creative practise and fund my next body of work - providing me a healthy foundation to delve further into the art world and share my work on a larger scale. It will also give me the means to take some time-off to immerse myself in the beauty of art making, reconnecting with my love for arts, textiles and poetry.

“I would also like to thank the UK New Artists and Robert Walters for selecting me as runner-up for this award and to extend a massive congratulations to Habib. I would like to thank Somerset House Studios for commissioning the work and the ongoing support from the artists’ studio and to all my previous tutors and mentors. As well as a huge thanks to my friends and family – especially my dad– for the unbridled support of me and my career. Lastly, my mother and grandmother who I carry with me, always in my spirits.”

The awards set out each year to discover and champion exceptional artists who are representative of contemporary Britain, and is bought together by three leading organisations – global recruitment consultancy [Robert Walters Group](#), arts charity [UK New Artists](#), and renowned contemporary art platform [Saatchi Gallery](#) - to help provide a career springboard for emerging artists.

The awards ceremony took place on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November at the Saatchi Gallery, and was curated by Garth Gratrix, an internationally exhibiting artist, Clore visual arts fellow, curator and studio director based in the North West of England. Judges included **Paul Foster** – Director of Saatchi Gallery; **Michelle Bowen** - Director of UK New Artists; **Lisa**

**Gee** – longstanding Director of the Harley Foundation Charitable Trust; **Saad Eddine Said** – internationally-acclaimed curator and Artistic Director and CEO of New Art Exchange; **Won Hee Nam** - CEO of Art Lab N3 and Gallery N&K based in Seoul, South Korea; and **Anne von Freyburg** - artist and winner of the 2021 UK New Artist of the Year award.

**Robert Walters, CEO of Robert Walters Group comments:**

“We were so pleased to see the positive reception to the shortlisted work on display last night – and to see so many returning supporters to the evening celebrations.

“Providing opportunities for ambitious professionals to achieve their potential is the foundation of our business and as an organisation it was a privilege to be able to provide such a platform for young artists in the UK.

“We are looking forward to the return of the Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award next year.”

**Michelle Bowen, Director, UKNA adds:**

“The shortlist for the first Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award has been exceptional and UKNA thanks all ten finalists for their outstanding contributions. We would like to congratulate Habib Hajallie on winning the award and look forward to working with him over the coming year.

“We also wish continued success to our runner up Tyreis Holder. Collaborating with Robert Walters Group and Saatchi Gallery on yet another successful awards continues to help us on our mission of reaching new audiences and supporting more new and emerging artists.”

For more information about the *Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award* click [here](#).

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Notes to editors:

- Image credits: Tom Morley - [Website](#)
- Press Images – [link](#)
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- Live Poll for People Choice (closing 10 Jan) - [link](#)

**About Habib Hajallie – winner**

Habib Hajallie – based in South East London - is a British artist of Sierra Leonean and Lebanese Heritage based in Southeast London. Harjallie is also an elected member of the Royal Society of British Artists. He is currently an artist-in-residence at UAL: 20/20 Decolonising Arts Institute - Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, was recently commissioned by Meta, Inc as a Facebook artist-in-residence, and has enjoyed past residences in both France and the USA. He has won numerous accolades from the Royal Society of British Artists, Wells Contemporary Art, the Art Council England and many more. Habib's work has been exhibited across London and the UK as well as the USA – with recent exhibitions at the RBSA Gallery in Birmingham and the Bingham Riverhouse in Richmond.

#### **About Tyreis Holder – runner-up**

Tyreis Holder – living in South East London - is a British artist with heritage reigning from Jamaican/St Vincent. Tyreis graduated from Goldsmiths University, with a BA in Fine Art. She works across mediums of textiles, installation, sculpture to sound, performance and poetry. She is currently a Somerset House Studio resident and has exhibited across London and Oxford – whilst performing her poetry in venues across London. Her work has garnered much acclaim; being a recipient of the Christine Riley Award and the people's choice award from *Evolve Exhibition*.

#### **About Robert Walters**

With more than 4,000 people in 31 countries, Robert Walters Group delivers recruitment consultancy, staffing, recruitment process outsourcing and managed services across the globe. From traditional recruitment and staffing to end-to-end talent management, our consultants are experts at matching highly skilled people to permanent, contract and interim roles across all professional disciplines, including: Accountancy & Finance, Banking & Financial Services, Engineering, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal, Sales & Marketing, Secretarial & Support, Supply Chain & Procurement. [www.robertwaltersgroup.com](http://www.robertwaltersgroup.com)

#### **About Saatchi Gallery**

Since 1985, Saatchi Gallery has provided an innovative platform for contemporary art. Exhibitions have presented works by largely unseen young artists, or by international artists whose work has been rarely or never exhibited in the UK. This approach has made the Gallery one of the most recognised names in contemporary art. Since moving to its current 70,000 square feet space in the Duke of York's Headquarters in Chelsea, London, the Gallery has welcomed over 10 million visitors. The Gallery hosts over 5,000 schools visits annually and has over 6 million followers on social media. In 2019 Saatchi Gallery became a charity, beginning a new chapter in its history.

[www.saatchigallery.com](http://www.saatchigallery.com)

#### **About UK New Artists (UKNA)**

UK New Artists (UKNA) is a national charity that champions artists who are in the first ten years of their practice. UKNA supports the next generation of artists working in visual arts, theatre, dance and spoken word to help develop their practice and pursue a creative career. Since its inception in 2008, UKNA has supported over 1500 artists in the UK and internationally, organised five biennials in the East Midlands, most recently the UKYA City Takeover in Nottingham, and partnered with international organisations including Seojung Arts Centre , Seoul and Yiyuan Tang Museum, Shanghai. UKNA is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and is funded and supported by De Montfort University, Nottingham Trent University, University of Derby and University of Lincoln. UK New Artists was formerly known as UK Young Artists (UKYA). As of April 2020, artists at any age above 18 within the first 10 years of their professional practice are eligible for our opportunities.

[www.uknewartists.co.uk](http://www.uknewartists.co.uk)