

October 11 2013



PRESS RELEASE

NEW YORK HOSTS WORLD'S FIRST DIGITAL FINE ART PRIZE – WITH A PLEDGE FOR PEACE

Two global and innovative organisations are joining forces to bring the new horizons of digital art to a New York audience, and raise valuable funds to help bring peace to conflict zones worldwide.

The **Lumen Prize 2013**, the world's first prize for digital fine art, brings its exhibition to New York City's NYIT Gallery 61 at 15, W. 61st St. from November 1st to 9th to give a local audience the chance to see up close the top 50 works from 22 countries chosen by the competition's international selection committee, and the top 3 Lumen Prize winners chosen by the jury panel.

During the exhibition on November 5th, there will be a special **Peace Direct Benefit Auction** of the Lumen Prize works, giving an invited audience the chance to own their own piece of digital fine art, created using software or apps with computers, tablets, or smart phones, including digital interactive performance, digital sculpture and glitch art. Funds raised through the auction go to Peace Direct, an award-winning international NGO that supports local peace building in conflict zones worldwide, with affiliates in the UK, USA and Germany, and programmes in 11 countries.

Lumen Prize

This year's Lumen Prize entries featured over 700 works from some 45 countries, and the winner chosen by an eminent panel of judges, including academics, artists and writers is **Apodemy** by Katerina Athanasopoulou. There is also a People's Choice Award selected from an online gallery, and this goes to **Wilderness** by Ginevra Boni who is based in the UK. The winners were announced in the Prize's home city of Cardiff, Wales, UK in October, and after their New York show they travel to The Space in Hong Kong in February 2014 and London's Triangle Space, Chelsea School of Art and Design, in March.

"The range and quality of the work entered this year was simply incredible, it was such a difficult choice for judges to make, but the winner is very worthy of the Prize," commented the CEO and Founder of the Lumen Prize, Carla Rapoport. Jury Panel member and President of the Royal Cambrian Academy for Art, Ivor Davies added: "It's exciting to see so many new ideas from artists all over the world. Digital technologies are very stimulating for the art world and hold great promise for the future."

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Apodemy is a short experimental art film on the theme of Emigration, created for an art installation in Athens in a park called *Plato's Academy* where it is believed the philosopher taught his students. Its creator, Katerina studied painting at the School of Fine Arts of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and then completed an Animation MA at the Royal College of Art in London, where she now lives. Katerina said: "I thought it fitting to work with Plato's hypothesis of the human soul as a birdcage, where knowledge is birds flying. I was fascinated by the ornithological term "Zugunruhe" which is the turbulent behaviour of birds about to migrate, whether free or caged.

"That image, of birds circling their cage nervously, trying to set off for a journey that will never be, moved me deeply. I decided to turn that inside out, with a ghost cage-bus circled and moved by a flock of birds, within a city fragmented, half finished and abandoned. As a Greek who migrated to London, I'm struck by all the unfinished buildings that have been left behind by the crisis, that look themselves like empty cages."

Accepting her award, Katerina said: "After working in the dark for so long, winning the Lumen Prize is like coming into the light."

The Lumen Prize was set up in 2011 as the first international awards for digital fine art. Entries are created digitally using software or apps with computers, tablets, or smart phones, including digital interactive performance, digital sculpture and glitch art. Runner-up this year is French entry *Passage* from Bonjour Interactive Lab, and *Afterall* by Nicolas Feldmeyer is a finalist.

Katerina again: "I created the city and the birds in 3D, allowing the buildings and the roads to merge into a dystopia. After building the city digitally (as a model within Cinema 4D) I set the cage-bus in a journey broken by fallen statues that represent the past leaders that we have rejected but still come back and haunt us. In a time when Europe seems to be imploding, this is my portrait of Athens."

This year's People's Choice Award goes to Ginevra Boni, an animation graduate who created her work with Photoshop and After Effects. Ginevra describes *Wilderness* as: "An impression of how plants and humans can blend together through Nature. This image was shot in the gardens of Ham House in Richmond, London. I was there to picture a modern version of Elizabeth Dysart, owner of the property in the 17th Century, known for being a big lover of her plants and gardens other than an important and strong and controversial political figure of her time."

Cardiff Partnership

The City of Cardiff is a partner to the Lumen Prize. Ken Poole, Head of Economic Development at Cardiff Council, commented: "The partnership with the Lumen Prize is another step forward as Cardiff generates a growing reputation for innovation and as a hub for creative industries. We look forward to enhancing our relationship with the Lumen Prize and supporting their 2013-14 world tour including New York and Hong Kong where the name of the capital of Wales will be associated with this far-sighted initiative. It will certainly help to showcase the city's business credentials and encourage more digital investment into the city, which was recently boosted by a £10.2 million investment in superfast broadband".

Peace Direct

The Lumen Prize is a not-for-profit company that donates proceeds after costs to its partner charity, Peace Direct, which funds local peace builders in conflict zones around the world. Peace Direct US Director Michael Pankow said: "Across the world, 1,000 people a week are killed in wars – and 15,000 more die from related causes such as disease and malnutrition. Peace Direct was set up to help fund those local people working tirelessly to stop violence, heal their communities, and save lives.

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“Digital art has become a valuable commodity, and through the Benefit Auction we now have a special relationship with the Lumen Prize, this innovative international competition, to help us achieve our goals.”

Ends

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Notes To Editors:

- **November 5th, 5:30 pm, NYIT Gallery 61, 16 West 61st Street, New York, NY.** The evening will feature an exclusive live auction of works hand selected by art auction site [Paddle 8](#). In anticipation of the [Peace Direct Benefit Auction](#) on November 5th, art auction site Paddle 8 will open online bidding for select works in mid-October. Event attendees will receive iPads so they may continue bidding in the online auction over the course of the evening. All net proceeds will benefit [Peace Direct](#), an award-winning international organization that finds, funds, and supports local peacebuilders operating in some of the most challenging conflict zones worldwide. Peace Direct partners with local peacebuilders to prevent violence, resolve conflicts, and remove barriers to peace.

Peace Direct’s three-pronged approach is simple: Find, Fund, and Promote. They find local peacebuilders, raise money for their programs, and help connect them with other powerful advocates and resources so they can accelerate momentum on their visionary peace projects. With their help, these dynamic local peacebuilders are making a concrete and tangible impact on their communities.

- The Lumen Prize Exhibition is based in Cardiff and has a three year partnership deal with The City of Cardiff
- The Lumen Prize Exhibition was launched by Brecon based Treberfydd Foundation director Carla Rapoport, a former financial journalist who worked for the Financial Times and The Economist Group.
- Guardian Culture Blog has called the Lumen Prize “The world’s pre-eminent digital art prize.”
- The Lumen Prize 2013 judges are:

Gordon Young, one of the UK’s top artists in the field of public art, is the creator of projects including the Comedy Carpet in Blackpool, a forest of typographic trees in Crawley Library, and the Ring of Steel, Milton Keynes.

Tessa Jackson OBE, UK-based gallery director, curator and arts consultant; founding Artistic Director of Artes Mundi, Wales' International Visual Art Exhibition & Prize. Currently, CEO of Iniva, Institute of International Visual Arts, London.

Tom Cheshire, Associate Editor, Wired Magazine. London-based journalist who writes on arts, culture and technology for Wired and other journals.

Yashodhara Dalmia, a New Delhi-based art historian, writer and curator. Her book *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives* is regarded as the definitive account of this seminal phase of Indian art.

George Blacklock, Dean of Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London and prize-winning painter whose work has been collected around the world. He is represented by Flowers Galleries.

Ivor Davis, President of the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art and one of the foremost figures in contemporary Welsh art whose work is in museums and private collections around the world.

Barbara Isenberg, award-winning Los Angeles-based arts writer (LA Times, Time Magazine, The Huffington Post) and author of LA Times best-seller *Conversations with Frank Gehry*.

Douglas Dodds, Senior Curator in the Word and Image Department at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Recent exhibitions include *Barbara Nessim* (2013) and *Digital Pioneers* (2009/10). The V&A holds the UK's national collection of early digital art.

Yang Yongliang, Shanghai-based and trained in classical Chinese painting, Yang creates his works using traditional and modern techniques. He has been collected by The British Museum as well as private collectors around the world.

Tommy Ingberg, Swedish-based artist and Winner of the 2012 Lumen Prize. Ingberg has also won awards and honourable mentions from the International Photography Awards, Prix De La Photographie Paris and Sony World Photography Awards.

Stephen Hilyard, US-based Professor of Digital Arts, University of Wisconsin and Finalist, 2012 Lumen Prize. His work has been widely exhibited and collected around the world.