

THE QUEEN SONJA NORDIC ART AWARD 2012

Statement of the jury

The Queen Sonja Nordic Art Award is a new art grant programme established to promote contemporary Nordic art. It is a generous programme whose aim is to rekindle interest in and inspire further development of paper-based art in the Nordic countries.

The grant programme came into being through a collaborative project between H. M. Queen Sonja, Kjell Nupen, Ørnulf Opdahl and Ole Larsen at the workshop Atelje Larsen in Helsingborg, Sweden. Together, they created a graphic portfolio whose sales proceeds have formed the start capital of a Foundation – set up in 2011 in H. M. Queen Sonja's name - dedicated to promoting aspiring young artists. Every other year, the Foundation will hand out an art award to one Nordic artist. The grant consists of two parts: the award itself worth: NOK 400.000, and a one week residency at the Atelje Larsen workshop in Helsingborg.

The candidates chosen for the first award ceremony in 2012 have been nominated by the directors of the national museums in the Nordic countries, together with the Foundation's committee. This committee – consisting of H. M. Queen Sonja, artists Kjell Nupen and Ørnulf Opdahl, workshop owner Ole Larsen and art historian Karin Hellandsjø – acts as jury for the award.

All of the nominated candidates work with drawing and various graphic techniques. They do by no means conform to one uniform profile but do, in their individual ways, all achieve artistic excellence. The jury's choice of winner is the Finnish artist TIINA KIVINEN (b.1971).

For several years, Tiina Kivinen has engrossed herself in the art of mezzotint. This is a graphic printmaking technique of the intaglio family dating to as far back as 1650 but which is seldom used by artists today. The mezzotint plate is made of copper and the tool employed, spiked and egg-shaped, is what is known as a rocker. It is a time-consuming technique, particularly suited for the production of nuances in black and grey tones. In Kivinen's pictures, which are predominantly inspired by nature, the motifs created by this drawn out process often produce a meditative, reduced form. A mezzotint plate can be reworked after each print and there is really no limit on the number of times one can modify a motif on the same plate.

The jury found it intriguing that Tiina Kivinen has chosen this particular technique as her preferred artistic medium and remark on how this technique and the pictorial content she focuses on, give a sense of mutualism and clarity in her work. Additionally, the elevated level of technical proficiency shown by Kivinen caught the jury's eye – hers is purposeful work, diligently crafted over an extended period of time.

In line with the award's focus on paper-based art, it is the classic graphic techniques that the jury wish to highlight this year. The jury believe Tiina Kivinen has considerable potential and hope the granting of this year's award will contribute both to the exciting development of her artistry as well as winning her the increased attention she deserves.

Oslo June 2012

H.M. Queen Sonja

Kjell Nupen

Ørnulf Opdahl

Ole Larsen

Karin Hellandsjø