

Sameen Agha Named Winner of The 2024 Sovereign Asian Art Prize

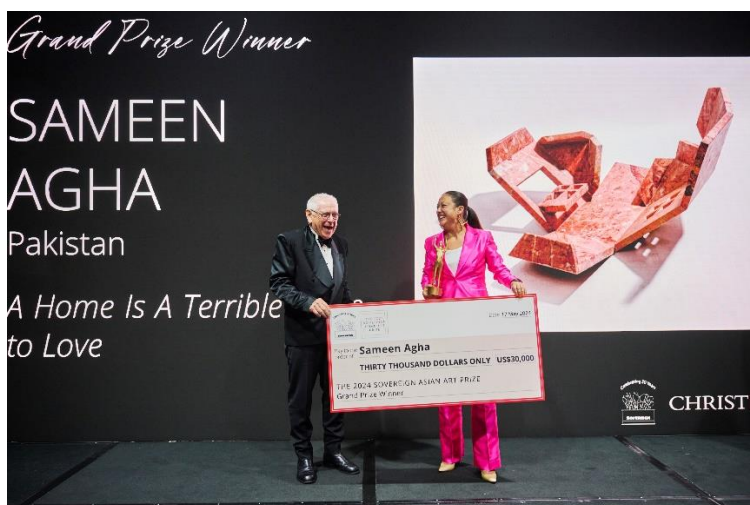


Image (L-R): Tiffany Pinkstone (Co-founder and Director of SAF) receiving award on behalf of Sameen Agha (Grand Prize Winner, The 2024 Sovereign Asian Art Prize); Portrait of Sameen Agha. Courtesy of the artist and The Sovereign Art Foundation.

Hong Kong, 20 May 2024 – The Sovereign Art Foundation (SAF) today announced Pakistani artist Sameen Agha as Grand Prize winner of The 2024 Sovereign Asian Art Prize, with a cash prize of US\$30,000 for her work *A Home Is A Terrible Place to Love*, an intricately designed sculpture carved from red marble and incorporating a symbolic reference to home. This year marks the 20th anniversary of Asia's most prestigious award in contemporary art.

Michelle Fung of Hong Kong was awarded the Vogue Hong Kong Women's Art Prize of US\$5,000 for her work, *Red Bean Stalk*, an original wood carving that reflects the culmination of drawing and printmaking work spanning two decades. **Demet** of the Philippines is awarded the Public Vote Prize of US\$1,000 for his work, *PPE, Paint Palette Emulation*, an oil painting that employs techniques of hyperrealism and trompe l'oeil.

Sameen Agha's winning sculpture draws from a collective well of associations, as she explores the emotions at the core of interpersonal and political tensions. The use of a specific red marble gives a sense of skin, flesh, and blood; it is both hard yet brittle, playing with the idea of a home, which in its own materiality is quite strong as a structure but very fragile in its essence as a domestic space. Agha was nominated for The Prize by curator and arts educator Adeel Uz Zafar.

Agha said of her win:

"It is an incredible honour to be awarded The 2024 Sovereign Asian Art Prize. I am thrilled and deeply grateful for this recognition. This award is a significant milestone for my career, and I am profoundly appreciative and thankful for the acknowledgment and support. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Adeel Uz Zafar for nominating me and believing in my practice. It is a huge privilege to showcase my work on the prestigious platform provided by The Sovereign Art Foundation.

To be selected among 30 brilliant artists from Asia and now to receive the Prize is truly humbling. I am immensely thankful to the Judges for this opportunity. This honourable award will undoubtedly propel my career to new heights and be a significant stepping stone in my career as an artist."

The awards were presented live at The 2024 Sovereign Asian Art Prize Gala Dinner and Charity Auction, held on Friday, 17 May at Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong. Click [here](#) for pictures of the event.

The artworks, besides the Grand Prize winner, were auctioned at the Gala Dinner, with proceeds split evenly between the artists and SAF's charity programmes. The evening raised over US\$220,000 in artwork sales and donations.

Funds raised will support SAF's Make It Better (MIB) programme, which has been providing expressive arts workshops for children living in Hong Kong's most disadvantaged communities since 2013. The workshops support the social, emotional, and behavioural challenges of children with special educational needs including autism, ADHD, and other specific learning difficulties, and are run by a professional team of registered Art Therapists. The programme currently serves over 150 beneficiaries weekly and has recently expanded to provide education, training and support for the children's caregivers and social workers.

The Finalists Exhibition was presented at 9/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong from 8 to 16 May 2024. Visitors were invited to cast a vote for their favourite artwork and take part in an educational activity onsite. A special artist-led workshop was also arranged for a group of children from the Make It Better programme, with Hong Kong finalist Doris Chui Suet Wai.

A board of 55 independent art professionals nominated artists from 15 countries and regions across Asia-Pacific into The Prize. The finalists from 15 countries and territories were shortlisted by a judging panel including writer, curator, and museum director, **David Elliott** (Chair Judge); Executive Director and Curator at Para Site in Hong Kong, **Billy Tang**; artist and former Prize recipient, **Debbie Han**; independent curator, critic, and policy analyst, **Marian Pastor Roces**; and artist and winner of The 2023 Prize, **Parul Gupta**.

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Presented by: The Sovereign Art Foundation
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Press Kit

Please see overleaf for full list of 2024 finalists and nominators. [Click here](#) to view and download a full press kit with high-resolution artwork images, bios, portraits, and factsheet. *All images please credit the artist and The Sovereign Art Foundation.*

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Editors Notes

The Sovereign Art Foundation

The Sovereign Art Foundation (SAF) is a charitable organisation that was founded in 2003 with a well-defined twin focus: to recognise the growing wealth of contemporary art talent in Asia and bring the proven benefits of expressive arts to disadvantaged children.

In the same year, SAF launched The Sovereign Asian Art Prize, now recognised as the most established and prestigious annual art award in Asia-Pacific. The Prize increases the international exposure of artists in the region, whilst raising funds by auctioning shortlisted artworks and sharing proceeds equally between the participating artists and SAF. SAF uses these proceeds to fund programmes that support disadvantaged children using expressive arts.

In 2013, SAF launched Make It Better (MIB), an initiative that supports children from low-income backgrounds and with special educational needs in Hong Kong. MIB works in local schools and community centres to offer children a programme of expressive arts workshops designed to build self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness and interpersonal skills. SAF also supports teachers, social workers and caregivers of these children by introducing them to the therapeutic benefits of art.

SovereignArtFoundation.com

About H Queen's

An architectural icon in itself, H Queen's is designed to be the game-changer for how people experience art, culture and lifestyle in Hong Kong. The 24-storey tower houses extraordinary spaces for major international galleries namely David Zwirner, Pace Gallery, Tang Contemporary Art and Whitestone Gallery, as well as dining and lifestyle establishments. Designed by the renowned architect CL3, H Queen's utilizes a combination of advanced technologies, materials and concepts and has already attracted both local and international architectural awards. Situated at the intersection of the Pottinger Street and the bustling thoroughfare of Queen's Road Central in Hong Kong, H Queen's presides over a prestige position that brings together art and cultural audience.

hqueens.com