

ART & MARKET

The 2026 Sovereign Asian Art Prize

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Spotlight on Citra Sasmita and upcoming exhibitions



Michele Chu, *tracing your veins and blisters*, 2025, repoussé on copper pot, spatula, pan, and ladle, 41 x 109 x 8cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

30 artists have been shortlisted for The 2026 Sovereign Asian Art Prize. Now in its 22nd year, the initiative offers artists international recognition and generous financial prizes. The sale of artworks by the finalists go towards the Make It Better programme, launched in 2013 by the Sovereign Art Foundation, to sustain the operations of expressive arts groups for children living in Hong Kong's disadvantaged communities.

Altogether, the shortlist features artists from 12 countries and territories around the Asia-Pacific region, with India having the strong representation, including Sangita Maity represented by Shrine Empire Art Gallery. This is followed closely by Australia and



Yim Yen Sum, *Breath Beneath the Gold*, 2025, silkscreen and embroidery on acrylic-dyed gauze, PVC-covered wire, black and gold thread, 152 x 42 x 30cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

From Southeast Asia, there are Filipino artists Alvin Zafra, Joey Cobcobo and Josephine Turalba, Indonesian artists Filippo Sciascia, Sintia Tantra and Citra Sasmita, Malaysian artist Yim Yen Sum, Singapore artists Oh Chai Hoo and Desmond Mah and Thai artist Subannakrit Krikum.

The judging panel is led by David Elliott, who is writer, curator and museum director . It includes Arpita Akhanda, who was The 2025 Sovereign Asian Art Prize winner, alongside Manray Hsu, independent curator and writer and Özge Ersoy, Executive Director, Asia Art Archive. “This year’s final exhibition matches the high standard of quality reached in previous years,” says Elliott. “As one may expect, no unifying theme or tendency emerges from this other than a desire to distill the realities of now. Sadly, some countries are not represented because of the disruptions of war, sanctions, and the vagaries of choice yet, in spite of this, artists across the region remain focused, the surreal clarity of their views expressing the integrity, tension, and, at times, joy of our times.”



Alvin Zafra, *A Turn of Events*, 2025, pebble etching on sandpaper, 62.8 x 80.3cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

The artworks were selected from over 250 entries made by 145 artists. These were nominated by 46 independent professionals, as well as 16 galleries invited to participate for the first time by nominating artists through an internal nominating committee.



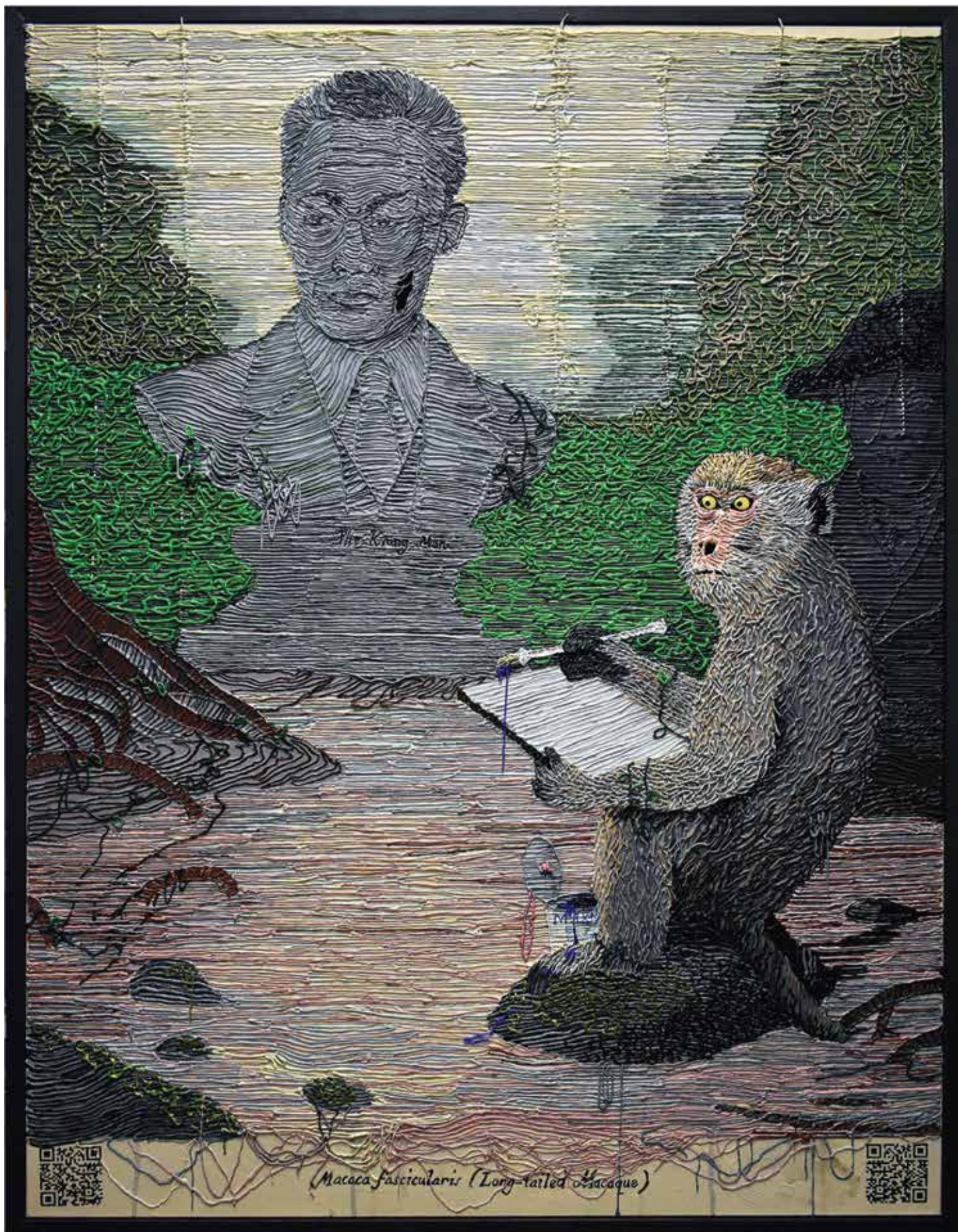
Citra Sasmita, *Poetry of the Fountain*, 2025, acrylic on Kamasan traditional canvas, ceremonial cloth, stone beads, pearls, 110 x 70cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Yeo Workshop.

Sasmita's shortlisted work for The 2026 Sovereign Asian Art Prize is *Poetry of the Fountain*. Sasmita says, "*Poetry of the Fountain* is an attempt to convey a transmission of Eastern

knowledge that is both rootless and endless.” She adds, “In experiencing visual art, the eye serves as a meditative portal, the depth of thought acts as the fountain, and perception becomes the poetic way to distribute this knowledge.” This is especially so in Bali, where the artist is from. “Holistic rituals in Bali—incorporating various mediums, movements, and sounds—are events of knowledge transmission that have been sustained to this day,” elaborates Sasmita. “This is the artistic potential I wish to share within the global art context.”

Being shortlisted is a nod of approval from stakeholders in the art community for the artists. “For me, being shortlisted for The 2026 Sovereign Asian Art Prize represents a step forward in challenging the conceptual and artistic production of my work and its relevance to today’s artistic spirit,” says Sasmita. Her work was nominated by Yvonne Wang, Sakda Chantanavanich, Lisa Botos, Tanya Michele Amador and Sofia Coombe. “Furthermore, the support from fellow nominees and the art public is a meaningful expression of appreciation for my creative process,” reflects Sasmita. “If art can serve as a form of charity and alms, it becomes both a blessing and a spiritual investment for the artist, ultimately imbuing their work with a more profound and evocative power.”

Sasmita’s work, along with all the other shortlisted works, will be on view in two free-access exhibitions first from 24 April to 3 May at H Queens, and next from 12 to 15 May at Phillips Asia. “We are proud to be presenting an exhibition of the 30 finalists in two world-class Hong Kong venues,” says [Howard Bilton, Chairman and Founder, The Sovereign Art Foundation](#). “Firstly, in Central, at the renowned H Queen’s building, and then at the magnificent Phillips Asia headquarters in the West Kowloon Cultural District. We are deeply grateful to H Queen’s and Phillips for their continued support.”



Desmond Mah, *Still Living Rent-Free*, 2025, acrylic paint and mixed media on canvas, 126 x 95cm.
Image courtesy of the artist.

The judges will select a winner of the Grand Prize and another to receive the Vogue Hong Kong Women's Art Prize. There will also be a Public Vote Prize, which the public can cast

votes for at the physical exhibitions or [here online](#). All the winners will be announced on the Sovereign Art Foundation's digital channels on 19 May 2026.

The shortlisted works are offered for sale by timed or live auction, with proceeds shared evenly between the artists and the charity programmes that the foundation runs. [Bidding and direct sales will open on the foundation's website](#) on 23 April 2026 and will close on the night of SAF's charity Gala Dinner at Agate, M+ Museum, on 15 May 2026.

Art & Market is proud to be the official media partner of The 2026 Sovereign Asian Art Prize.

Interested parties can purchase Gala Dinner tickets and pre-register for bidding at art@sovereignartfoundation.com.

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Nadya Wang

Nadya Wang is Founder and Managing Editor of Art & Market (A&M) and Fashion & Market (F&M), documenting the art and fashion ecosystems in Southeast Asia. She is committed to telling stories about creative practices from the region, and works closely with the A&M and F&M teams to do so. Recently, she set up Front & Off-Centre, a cultural agency offering communications, curatorial and programming services. Nadya holds a PhD in History of Art from The Courtauld Institute of Art.