

More intimate fair for visitors



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The next edition of the Affordable Art Fair returns from Nov 12 to 15 with 85 galleries representing the works of 600 artists.

Last November, 108 galleries were featured. Organisers say it is because they are working on "a more intimate" visitor experience, now that they have two fairs a year.

The fair here started in 2010 as an annual affair. Since last year, there have been two editions a year.

In November, expect artworks by Singapore's Lim Tze Peng and Japan's Toko Shinoda, and newer artists. The organisers announced these details at Ion Art yesterday while unveiling the solo exhibitions of the winners of the fair's Young Talent Programme.

In its fourth year, the programme gives artists below the age of 35 who live in South-east Asia the chance to show their works on the international stage.

Since the programme started, the fair has featured works by 21 artists at its November editions, and winners such as Alecia Neo and Lavender Chang have gone on to exhibit at the Singapore Art Museum and the National Museum of Singapore.

This year's Winners' exhibition features three solos: At Source by Ezekiel Wong Kel Win (Singapore), The Quest: The Exquisite Rice Bowl by Zhang Fuming (Singapore) and Hunger by Khin Thethtar Latt (Myanmar).

Wong's mixed-media solo highlights societal conflict with wit and humour. Zhang uses hand-print woodcut on paper to address issues such as the pressure to work towards an imagined brighter future.

For the first time, the programme has South-east Asian representation, with Khin's photography and video presentation titled Hunger. It shows the artist and a model in the traditional longyi (sarong) in different poses against a stark black background, calling for reflection on the hunger for power and the fight for dignity in her country.

Fair director and regional managing director Camilla Hewitson says they are excited to see two galleries from Myanmar in November. She says: "We are delighted to have Taw Win Art Gallery and The Yangon Gallery. The latter will showcase rising star Aung Htoo's work.

The fair's focus is on South-east Asia, but it will also feature galleries from Germany, Italy, Spain, France and Britain. Nearly 70 per cent of the galleries are from Asia, with 40 per cent from Singapore.

Expect a diverse selection of contemporary artworks in a variety of styles. All offerings will be priced between \$100 and \$10,000, and three-quarters of the works will cost less than \$7,500.

The fair at the F1 Pit Building brings back the Under-\$1,000 Wall where curated artworks are priced under \$1,000.

A new addition will be the Art Education Space, which features gallery-led discussions on art. Says Mrs Hewitson: "We hope to continue doing what we do best, educating and engaging art collectors, while ensuring a relaxed, friendly and fun-filled family affair."

The Affordable Art Fair is held in 11 countries worldwide and more than once annually in art capitals such as London and New York. The organisers decided last year to make the Singapore fair a biannual event, citing "steady growth in the past five years".

The fair has grown in size, attendance and sales every year. But two editions in one year did impact sales. In this year's April edition, visitor numbers were about the same as last year but sales dropped from \$3.7 million to \$2.8 million, an indication of saturation of the art market here, as more fairs open and more galleries shutter.

Last November, the fair saw record sales and visitors. About 18,200 visitors turned up and sales hit a high of \$4.96 million.

Mr Alan Koh, who heads the edition that takes place earlier in the year and leads the marketing for the fair, says he is confident the market can sustain two annual editions of the fair, pointing to greater maturity of the scene and greater interest in art.

"Despite the recent volatility in the Singapore art market, we have seen continued interest from new potential collectors," he says.

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VIEW IT / YOUNG TALENT PROGRAMME

WHERE: Ion Art, Ion Orchard

WHEN: Till Sept 22, daily 10am to 10pm; artist tours Saturday and Sunday, 3 to 4pm

ADMISSION: Free