

Press Release 6th December 2021

For immediate release

The winner of the 2021 Platform Graduate Award has been announced.

CVAN South East, along with the participating venue partners and Universities, are delighted to announce the winner of this year's Platform Graduate award.

Chosen from four finalists, this year's winner has been announced as Brighton based, multi-disciplinary artist **Ainoa Burgos Gonzalez** nominated by Phoenix Art Space. Ainoa is a graduate of Fine Art at the University of Brighton where she is currently studying MA Photography.

The award, presented by guest judge, film and performance artist Michelle Williams Gamaker took place at a ceremony in front of an online audience on 4th December. The ceremony was a chance to hear from each of the nominated finalists; Laura Buckle, Him Ming Chan, and the first artist duo to be nominated for the award, Will & Bevan.



Showcasing the very best in emerging artists from the South East region, the four finalists were selected by venue partners Aspex in Portsmouth, MK Gallery in Milton Keynes, Modern Art Oxford, and Phoenix Art Space in Brighton out of twenty-four exhibiting artists, selected from fifteen Universities from the region.

Speaking of Ainoa's work, and in particular the piece in the Platform Graduate Exhibition *The Solanum Tuberosum Banquet*, Director of Phoenix Art Space states:

The work of Ainoa Burgos Gonzalez has a language accessible to all. Working with a variety of materials including sculpture, installation, performance, video and photography, Ainoa manages to connect the work to audiences with great ease and engagement. Her socially engaged work considers themes including beauty stereotypes, environment and anthropology. The Solanum Tuberosum Banquet is an absolute joy in the context of gallery space as well as our diverse community groups due to the physical installation and the bilingual Potato Recipe Cookbook.

The Platform Award, which has been running since 2012, includes a £2,000 bursary and 12 months of tailored mentoring by a practicing artist during the informative months directly after graduating.

Reacting to the announcement that they are this year's winner, Ainoa explains:

I feel so fortunate and happy to receive this Award and to have been part of a great selection of nominees. I will use this opportunity for my professional development and to maintain my practice as an artist. I hope it will also help me to build my confidence as an art practitioner to contact other spaces around the country like Phoenix Art Space to support and expand my work. It is a great opportunity to keep my momentum going and I hope to develop the social engagement aspect of this piece of work. I really value the mentoring and I will make the most of this opportunity in a proactive way.

Speaking of Ainoa's work, guest panelist at this year's award, Michelle Williams Gamaker, comments:

It has been a pleasure to play a part in judging this award, which is so much about inclusivity and support for artists still establishing themselves. The panel's decision was finely balanced as we were impressed with all four nominees. Ainoa Burgos Gonzalez convinced us with a project which takes the humble potato as a symbol of equality to connect people around the world. Her multifaceted social practice explores colonial histories, food poverty and art making to build community. These areas of research seem vital today. I am sure the professional development opportunities offered by the award will benefit Ainoa long into her career.

All exhibiting artists will join a growing alumni of Platform artists giving peer to peer support as well as joining annual meet-ups focussing on issues and topics faced by artists hosted by CVAN South East. Find out more about this year's cohort [here](#).

CVAN South East would like to take this opportunity to thank all participating Universities and venue partners, and to congratulate all the artists involved in this year's award.

You can find out more about this year's finalists, and the winner on the CVAN South East website [here](#).

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

Images

Featured Image: *The Solanum Tuberosum Banquet*, Indoors Installation view, Ainoa Burgos Gonzalez, 2021.

Nominated artists: A selection of images, one from each artist mentioned, can be accessed [here](#). Image credits, and associated gallery partner can be found in the file name.

Platform Graduate Award

The initiative is led by CVAN South East (Contemporary Visual Arts Network South East) and in 2021, is a partnership between four galleries: Aspex in Portsmouth, MK Gallery in Milton Keynes, Modern Art Oxford, and Phoenix Art Space in Brighton. Following an exhibition and events programme across the four participating galleries, an artist from each gallery will be nominated for the award, with the winning artist announced in December 2021.

Platform focuses on artists in the first year after graduation; a critical time when the loss of the university support structure and financial pressures can test an artist's dedication to their practice. For the participating galleries, this is a way to keep in touch with the most promising emerging practice, and with higher education institutions. More broadly, the scheme aims to stimulate artist networks outside of London and encourage artists to stay in the South East region.

In 2020 the Award was won by [Louise Hall](#), a graduate of [Arts University Bournemouth](#), who was nominated by Aspex.

For information about the previous years' winners exhibiting artists - [Platform Graduate Award](#)

CVAN South East

CVAN South East aims to be an effective network for the sector in the South East region by working in partnership on strategic projects and programmes, and by sharing learning and information to maximise expertise and creative thinking.

Platform Graduate Award Venue Partners (interactive logos)

aspex
portsmouth



**MODERN ART
OXFORD**



University Partners

Aspex, Portsmouth working with:

UCA Farnham

Winchester School of Art, Southampton University

Solent University, Southampton

University of Portsmouth

University of Chichester

Arts University Bournemouth

MK Gallery working with:

University of Bedfordshire

University of Hertfordshire

University of Northampton

Modern Art Oxford working with:

Oxford Brookes University

Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford

University of Reading

Phoenix Art Space working with:

Brighton University

East Sussex College, Hastings