



**YICCA 2020**  
INTERNATIONAL CONTEST OF CONTEMPORARY ART

## **YICCA 2020 - International Contest of Contemporary Art Winners and selected artists**

### **YICCA**

YICCA is an ambitious project regarding transparency, comparison and research of new artistic talents. Nowadays it is becoming more and more difficult to comply with the requirements of art market, in particular facing the challenge of competing with the constantly increasing number of newly arising artists in the contemporary art field.

YICCA was founded in 2009. The decision of its foundation was taken under the great influence of new ways of making and thinking art that recently have discovered many surprising and unusual forms.

This general confusion and rapid change of offers is without any doubt challenging and extremely exciting.

The main goal of YICCA is to understand and to improve new talents that in this "beautiful chaos" are able to interpret better the upcoming art.

We have assembled an international jury to whom is assigned the task of selecting 18 finalists.

### **JURORS**

**MARTA JOVANOVIC**

**DAINA MAJA TITONEL**

**MILICA CIROVIC**

### **SELECTED ARTISTS**

We are delighted to announce the selected artists of Yicca 2020:

A I - Japan

Alejandro Montenegro - Colombia

Antonella Zito - Netherlands

Brendon Kahn - United States of America

Debbie Donnelly - New Zealand

Dimpy Bhalotia - India

Greg Szostakiwskyj - Canada

Heming Zhang - United States of America

Ivan Midzic - Croatia

Joan Bemel Iron Moccasin - United States of America

Julia Romano - Argentina

Julia W. Szagdaj - Poland

Kanoko Tamura - Spain

Lumjete Havolli - Albania

Miguel Angel Reyes Benz - Germany

Ola Czuba - Italy

Sara Zunino - Italy

Victor Secardin - France

## Introduction by Marta Jovanovic

In a democratic context like YICCA, where artworks arrive from all over the world, covering numerous cultural backgrounds, challenges and questions and there is not a theme to guide the jury to choose the artworks in the competition, it is not always easy to navigate. We were extremely lucky to state that numerous artists responded with beautiful ideas and artworks to the current most urgent issues of memory, immigration, loneliness, gender and the rapid changes that mark the complicated times we are currently living in during and post COVID - 19 pandemic. In the end it seemed natural to choose, according to our opinion, the best works that also happen to respond to fundamental social and political questions and also work together in an exhibition. Thematically we divided the works in three categories: Memory, Female agency and Changes.

### MEMORY

Colored by nostalgia but also by the striking hope, elaborate and powerful installation *Ei Último Testigo* by Alejandro Montenegro (Colombia) is deeply soothing. He describes it as short and charming stories, charged with memories that recreate the past. 'Told by the last witness to live that moment, aided with some evidence to tell it (a picture, letter, telegram, object).' Feelings of loneliness are evoked by two works: *Mondi Inanimati* by Antonella Zito (Netherlands) and *Hotel Girona* by Greg Szostakiwskyj (Canada). While Zito's male character is going about his daily errands cultivating his beautiful intimate world that is his immediate surrounding, Szostakiwskyj's female standing by the pool of what seems like an abandoned hotel triggers a sense of emptiness like in the paintings of Edward Hopper.

Elaborating the memory, inevitably brings us to the question of the passage of time, what time means to each of us individually but also to us as humanity. In *7 candles*, as Heming Zhang (USA) writes about the work: 'The processes of burning of candles and blooming of flower are like the different stages of our life: new born, childhood, adolescent, youth, noon, middle age, and agedness.' With similar poetry Ivan Midzic (Croatia) builds his installation *EcoTv-Tribute to Cargo Cults- Homage to Grandma's*, 'wooden replicas of western technology objects' - according to the author. *Jl - time- performance* by Kanoko Tamura (Spain) is a search for the meaning of time both in the subject matter as well as in choosing of the medium. Performance art in itself occupies immediate time and adds an extra layer to the work.

### FEMALE AGENCY

Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, an iconic feminist work hosted by the Brooklyn Museum is probably one of the first artworks that comes to mind when we think of female agency in contemporary art. The woman is finally out of her domestic environment and it is a banquet! A ceremonial arrangement for 39 places at the grand triangular table, each place honoring an important woman from history. With her video installation *A Place at the Kauri Table*, Debbie Donnelly (New Zealand) shakes to the core the question of the female agency today, fifty years after Chicago's *Dinner Party*. We hold our breaths to see what is at the table for women in the arena of the international social and political debate. We, the jury of three women in the art world with complicated national identities, were delighted to encounter Donnelly's immigrant women and hear their stories at the table for 6 that speaks to millions.

On the other hand, Italian artist Sara Zunino tells about memory and hardship of immigration in a punch in the stomach poetic way. Her installation *Hand Luggage* consists of small almost identical plastic bags filled with some soil and marked by coordinates that represent places where the soil was collected (Libya, Dominican Republic, Algeria, New Zealand, Senegal, Turkey, Oman, to name the few countries on her list). 'This extreme uniformity aims at stressing that there is no difference between one place and the other, between one human being and another in the very moment in which people migrate and leave their place of origin. Without knowing whether they'll ever come back' she writes about it. Stressful changes on immigration policies were introduced by Trump in the United States that shook to the core of what the country was all about: diversity, American Dream, equality, democracy, safe haven for those who were persecuted and whose rights were elsewhere violated. With her *Accentful American Anthem*, Polish artist Julia W. Szagdaj reminds us of the essential values that America once represented.

*Work LOVE- Breast Milk On Paper* by Lumjete Havolli (Albania) is a striking statement of pure biology of female body translated into art. It is performative almost, it is an action painting that Jackson Pollock could have only dreamed of! His urine and sperm left on canvases and papers he worked on, never really left such a strong mark like the delicate trace Havolli's milk left on even more delicate paper. Strength of a woman in *Lake Superior Strong* by Joan Bemel Iron Moccasin (USA) speaks volumes besides being a visual power feast. It's the determination to continue the journey - no matter the difficulty or hardship. - writes the artist about it.

## CHANGES

We live in the dramatically changing world to which most of the artworks responded promptly and that as a theme naturally guided us in a difficult process of choosing one work of art over another. We are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to see so many powerful works. Through art we keep on asking question: What now? We also strive to give answers. 'I build ecosystems in which the apparently real is nothing more than an illusion, or is a composite of both.' - Writes Julia Romano from Argentina on her work Paisajes culturales XVIII - bignonia and Brendon Kahn (USA) seems to respond with his very real photograph Sliding Hope while Dimpy Bhalotia (India) offers the most poetic solution to the question through the photograph We Run, You Fly.

The powerful death, sleek, smooth and soft looking sculpture in reinforced concrete by Miguel Angel Reyes Benz (Germany) finds itself in the strong juxtapose with Discomfort Object a photograph by Ola Czuba (Italy) that reinterprets a Man of Sorrows, one of the devotional icons representing Christ as explained by the artist. In the photograph the beautiful face and fit body of a man there are no wounds but a small acupuncture needle attached in the area of ribs. We cannot help but wonder if alternative and altruistic approach in this new world is the only answer. Along those lines we find a painting of optimism, togetherness and dance, dance, dance ... Sans titre by Secardin Victor (France).

In the end we decided to leave the reader and the spectator contemplating on the Mille fleurs CS20 by the Japanese artist A I. We leave you to indulge yourself in the danger of a sent that could be toxic or soothing just like a person, or like a memory, or like a change. A sent can be violent but also sweet and loving. Rarely presented in the world of visual art, a sent in this work is real food for thought and revisits the themes previously elaborated. It exists and it doesn't, it is like a ghost, for some real for some not.

In the process of choosing the final eighteen, we decided first to separately look at the submitted works and then compare notes. It was very touching that numerous works that we chose independently overlapped which speaks of their power. We are very much looking forward to seeing them exhibited all together.

## WINNING ARTISTS

The 2 winning artists of Yicca 2020 are:

### 1ST PLACE

**DEBBIE DONNELLY - NEW ZEALAND**

### 2ND PLACE

**SARA ZUNINO - ITALY**

## ATTACHMENTS

- artworks images
- artworks captions

## LINKS

Catalogue : [https://contest.yicca.org/images/2020/press/YICCA\\_2020\\_catalogue\\_web.pdf](https://contest.yicca.org/images/2020/press/YICCA_2020_catalogue_web.pdf)

Selected artists: <https://contest.yicca.org/index.php/yicca-2020/selected-artists-2020>

Winning artists: <https://contest.yicca.org/index.php/yicca-2020/winning-artists-2020>

Official site: <https://yicca.org/>

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## YICCA

**International Contest of Contemporary Art**

**[www.yicca.org](http://www.yicca.org)**

**[www.contest.yicca.org](http://www.contest.yicca.org)**

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