

Local Artist to be exhibited in Aesthetica Art Prize's First Major Exhibition this Spring

8 March – 28 April
(Private View: 7 March)

Local artist Ben Jack Nash is to be featured in an international art show in the UK this spring as the Aesthetica Art Prize launches its first major exhibition in the historic city of York. Selected from over 3000 entries, Ben earned his place in the Aesthetica Art Prize longlist of 100 artists with an innovative and outstanding submission, and will have his work projected in the enchanting setting of York St Mary's – York Art Gallery's contemporary art space.

Ben's striking piece '[]~ No. 7' will be juxtaposed with the medieval setting of York St Mary's in an exhibition which challenges the notion of the "white cube" and delivers a unique experience. This new visual context showcases Ben's work alongside other international rising stars of the art world in a major event.

Organised by Aesthetica Magazine, the international art and culture publication, the Art Prize is a showcase for emerging and contemporary artists internationally, bringing their work to a wider audience. Anticipating the success of the Aesthetica Art Prize's inaugural exhibition, Cherie Federico, Editor of Aesthetica Magazine and Art Prize judge, explains what the show represents for her: "I am delighted to bring these artists' works to the city. Moreover, the nature of many of the pieces comments upon life in the 21st century, evoking a deeper meaning, and reflection of the world in which we live."

The Aesthetica Art Prize has been a fantastic opportunity for up-and-coming names in international contemporary art to gain recognition for their work in the past. With this being the first year that the Art Prize has produced an exhibition, there is an added sense of promise and excitement surrounding Ben's work and the success he may experience subsequently.

Previous entrants include Julia Vogl, who after winning the Aesthetica Art Prize last year went on to win the Catlin Art Prize, was shortlisted for *New Sensations* – Saatchi Gallery and Channel 4's Prize – and has exhibited at Zabludowicz Collection. Vogl describes the impact the competition has had on her as an artist: "It has been a terrific boost to my confidence, especially at a time where being an artist is fiercely competitive and hard to finance." Other notable entrants include leading modern expressionist and 2011 finalist Marcus Jansen, who joined a legacy of artists by featuring in Absolut Vodka's artistic campaigns, and Bernat Millet, finalist in 2012, who has also been shortlisted for National Portrait Gallery's Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize.

World renowned British sculptor and Art Prize judge Kate MccGwire was impressed by the level of talent exhibited this year and is confident that we'll be seeing more of these artists in the future: "I feel honoured to have been invited to judge the Aesthetica Art Prize; it has been a privilege to experience the breadth of work that the contemporary art scene has to offer and I look forward to seeing the development of these gifted artists over the coming years."

The impressive list of judges who selected Ben for this year's longlist includes influential art figures and curators: Cherie Federico, Editor of Aesthetica Magazine; Laura Turner, Curator at York Art Gallery; Frances Guy, Head of Collection and Exhibitions at The Hepworth Wakefield; Kate MccGwire, internationally renowned British Sculptor and Neeta Madahar, acclaimed British photographer represented by the Purdy Hicks Gallery, London.

The exhibition is a unique chance to view the international breadth of work entered into the Prize, and appreciate the range and quality of current artistic practice. The works highlight modern concerns, ranging from the environment and capitalism to traditional views on women and marginalised communities. Free admission provides exclusive access to this year's longlist, including entrants from the USA, South Korea, Australia, Denmark and the UK. As well as being projected within the space, Ben will also feature in the

accompanying Aesthetica Art Prize publication, on sale at the exhibition, online and at select galleries nationwide.

A Free Public Talk Programme will accompany the show, with speakers including 2011 winner Julia Vogl, who will discuss her practice and the works on display, and Editor of Aesthetica Magazine, Cherie Federico, who will provide an exclusive insight into the selection process.

York St Mary's is open from 10am-4pm and admission is free. For more information visit www.yorkstmarys.org.uk or www.aestheticamagazine.com/artprize

Ben Jack Nash and representatives of the Aesthetica Art Prize are available for interview.

Notes:

York St Mary's

York St Mary's is a medieval church in the centre of York. It was de-consecrated in 1958 and in 2004 York Museums Trust opened it as a contemporary art venue. The first exhibition was *a light crescendo*, which brought together a number of works by international artists.

In 2005, York Museums Trust commissioned *breathing space* by Caroline Broadhead, followed by *Echo* by Susie MacMurray in 2006. 2007-8 was *The Memory of Place* by Keiko Mukaide. In 2009 Emma Biggs and Matthew Collings used shards of medieval pottery from the Yorkshire Museum to create an installation *Five Sisters* inspired by the window of the same name at York Minster. In 2010 Susan Stockwell installed *Flood* made from thousands of disused computer components, while last year saw Cornelia Parker's *Thirty Pieces of Silver* displayed, on loan from Tate.

Aesthetica Magazine

Aesthetica is an internationally recognised brand, with a combined

online and print audience of **140,000 worldwide**. The brand engages with the arts both in the UK, Europe and further a field and Aesthetica's editorial combines dynamic content with compelling critical debate, attracting a high-profile, culturally aware audience. Aesthetica is a respected voice in contemporary art and culture and is stocked through WH Smiths nationally, major galleries including Tate Modern, ICA and the Serpentine as well as being exported to 18 countries worldwide. Each issue covers visual art, film, music and performance and is published bi-monthly (6 times per year). For further information visit www.aestheticamagazine.com

Further information _For interviews with any of the artists or judges please contact Rebecca Bowery on 01904629137 or email rebecca@aestheticamagazine.com