

ROBERT  
WALTERS  
GROUP

# UK New Artist of the Year Award

in collaboration with  
Saatchi Gallery and UK New Artists

## Artist briefing for submissions

**Thursday 29 June 2023**

Call for entries opens at 10.00am

**Sunday 3 September 2023**

Call for entries closes at 11.59pm

**Friday 8 September 2023**

Longlisting complete (top 100 notified)

**Monday 18 September 2023**

Shortlisting complete (10 finalists notified)

## Background and context

Three unique organisations are collaborating to provide a significant platform and stepping-stone for new artists. Now in its third iteration, *The Robert Walters Group UK New Artist of the Year Award*<sup>1</sup> in collaboration with Saatchi Gallery will discover and champion exceptional artists who are representative of contemporary Britain.

From a free open call across the UK, we are seeking to discover 10 outstanding artists whose work demonstrates a strong and original voice, and is of exceptional artistic quality. We're looking for artists who represent the UK's richly diverse population, and embody the experiences of their community. Artists who create bold, unique pieces of art that reveal their own perspectives and experiences and who represent unique viewpoints and will help start new conversations in the UK art scene.



*The 10 finalists of the Robert Walters UK New Artist of the Year Award, 2021 (top), and 2022. Photos by Reece Straw and Tom Morley.*

<sup>1</sup> The Robert Walters UK New Artist of the Year Award was previously Robert Walters UK Young Artist of the Year Award

In 2019 the award posed the question, *What is Contemporary Britain?* and presented 10 exceptional artists from over 500 submissions. In 2021 the award asked, *Where do we go from here? Is there to be a 'new normal'?* and presented 10 exceptional artists from almost 1000 submissions. In 2022, the award saw outstanding 1,400 applications and presented 10 artists and works that addressed the theme *The Unimagined Future*.

**For 2023**, the award is interested in works which address the theme, **'The Journey of Self-Actualization: Exploring the Illusion of Greener Grass and the Pursuit of the Dream'**.

Life is often filled with aspirations and dreams, and one common desire is to find the perfect job or career path that brings us fulfilment and self-actualization. However, this pursuit is not always straightforward, and it can be tempting to believe that the grass is always greener on the other side. This year's theme revolves around exploring the illusion of greener grass and the journey of self-actualization, focusing on the following aspect:

Artists are encouraged to reflect on the concept of "greener grass" and how it can deceive us into believing that happiness lies solely in external circumstances, artists can explore the idea that appearances can be deceiving, and that true fulfilment comes from within.

The 10 shortlisted artists' work will be exhibited at the Saatchi Gallery in London for a VIP awards evening, as well as in a virtual gallery space, online for one month following the award.

**First Award:**

£10,000 cash prize

The winner's work will be shown at the Robert Walters Group head office for a period of 12 months following the award

**Second Award:**

£5,000 cash prize

**People's Choice Award:**

*Decided by a public vote during the virtual exhibition 10th November - 10th December and announced on Tuesday 12th December.*

The winner will have the opportunity to take part in one of UK New Artists' international presentations.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for the award, you must be aged 18 or over, and within the first 10 years of your professional practice, and have the right to live, work or study in the UK. Upon application, we will ask you to define the start of your professional practice using one of the following:

- the date that you registered as a self-employed artist
- the first public exhibition or performance you presented
- your first paid commission
- the year you completed your education or training

- you are yet to do any of these things, and self-define the start of your professional practice

If shortlisted, you must be available to be in Central London on **Thursday 09th November 2023** Artists should be working within the following fields:

**Applied arts:** ceramics, glass, textiles, jewellery

**Digital Arts:** moving image, performance video, technological arts

**Fine Arts:** painting, printmaking, photography, installation, sculpture.

## Selection Criteria

Judges will be looking for works which reflect the question posed and who are able to demonstrate the following:

### Diversity of experience

We're looking for artists who represent the UK's richly diverse population, and embody the experiences of their community.

### Diversity of expression

We're looking for artists who create bold, unique pieces of art that reveal their own perspectives and experiences.

### Diversity of thought

We're looking for artists who represent unique viewpoints and will help start new conversations in the UK art scene.

## Selection Panel

Applications will be reviewed by a selection panel which consists of representatives from the sector.

Judges will include:

**Robert Walters** – art collector and Founder of Robert Walters Group; **Michelle Bowen**, Director of UK New Artists; **Paul Foster**, Director of Saatchi Gallery; **Alex Zawadzki**, Founder of The Second Act Gallery; **Harold Offeh**, Artist, Educator & Learner; **Inger Margrethe Stoveland**, Director of Fluks, Centre for Young Art at the University of Agder, Norway; and **Habib Hajallie**, artist and winner of the Robert Walters Award 2022.

The exhibition at Saatchi Gallery will be curated by **Garth Gratrix**, an international artist, curator and studio director of Abingdon Studios in Blackpool.

Gratrix' work often showcases cross-disciplinary practices in diverse and unique settings.

## Financial Support

Robert Walters Group will provide a stipend of £200 for each of the ten shortlisted artists to attend the awards evening in London on **Thursday 09th November**, and will cover all shipping costs for works to be delivered to and from the Saatchi Gallery.

The partners will also be producing an exhibition booklet and there will be extensive promotional activity of the shortlisted artists.

## Key Dates

<b>Thursday 29 June 2023</b>	Call for Entries opens at 10.00am
<b>Sunday 3 September 2023</b>	Call for Entries closes at 11.59pm
<b>4-8 September 2023</b>	Longlisting - All submissions will be reviewed and 100 artists will progress to the next round.
<b>Friday 8 September 2023</b>	Longlisting complete (top 100 notified)
<b>9-18 September 2023</b>	Shortlisting - the judging panel will individually score the top 100 with the outcome of the ten highest scoring submissions forming the finalists.
<b>Monday 18 September 2023</b>	Shortlisting complete (10 finalists notified)
<b>Tuesday 3 October 2023</b>	Finalists announced
<b>Thursday 9 November 2023</b>	Exhibition & prize-giving event to be held at the Saatchi Each shortlisted artist will receive 2 VIP guest invites
<b>Friday 10 November 2023</b>	Digital Gallery exhibition opens, public vote opens
<b>Sunday 10 December 2023</b>	Digital Gallery exhibition closes, public vote closes
<b>Tuesday 12 December 2023</b>	Public vote winner announced

## About our collaborators

### Robert Walters Group

Robert Walters Group is a global recruitment group committed to powering people and organisations to fulfil their unique potential. With vast experience in helping professionals grow their careers, Robert Walters Group is now aiming to help emerging UK artists express their unique voices and launch their artistic careers.

<https://www.robertwalters.co.uk>

### **Saatchi Gallery**

Since 1985, Saatchi Gallery has provided an innovative platform for contemporary art. Exhibitions have presented works by largely unseen young artists, or by international artists whose work has rarely or never been exhibited in the UK. This approach has made the Gallery one of the most recognised names in contemporary art. Since moving to its current 70,000 square feet space in the Duke of York's Headquarters in Chelsea, London, the Gallery has welcomed over 10 million visitors. The Gallery hosts over 5,000 school visits annually and has over 6 million followers on social media. In 2019 Saatchi Gallery became a charity, beginning a new chapter in its history.

[www.saatchigallery.com](http://www.saatchigallery.com)

### **UK New Artists (UKNA)**

UK New Artists (UKNA) is a registered national charity that champions the next generation of creativity, supporting collaboration and intercultural dialogue, ensuring a vibrant and diverse creative future for the UK. We develop artists' practice through cross art form opportunities and celebrate creativity at national & international festivals.

[www.uknewartists.co.uk](http://www.uknewartists.co.uk)

## **Guidance and FAQs**

### **Images**

You may submit up to five images of the work/series that you are applying with. If successful in your application, these images will be used in press and promotional materials for the Robert Walters Award, and across UKNA's and Robert Walters' digital channels. Make sure these images are:

- Clear and light, showing your work accurately and against a plain background where possible
- For visual arts, sculpture, installation etc, it is helpful to see images of your work in situ to get a sense of the size and scale
- For textiles and paintings or work with a high level of detail and technique, close-up images that clearly show detail are very useful, in addition to images that show the entire work
- Permitted file types: jpg, jpeg, png, gif, tiff, tif, MP4 or embed links via Vimeo or YouTube
- Images must be print quality – i.e. 300dpi - you can find this out by looking at the 'properties' of the image by right clicking on it in Finder (mac) or your Files window (Windows)

### **Equal Opportunities Questions**

The questions at the end of the application form are required for equal opportunities and monitoring purposes. This information helps us understand whether we are reaching and engaging with a wide range of people from different backgrounds and locations. The answers you provide in this section will not be visible to the judges and will not be used to make a decision on your application. The answers will be collated anonymously in order for us to have a clear picture of the breadth of artists that have

applied. If you would prefer not to disclose this information, you can tick 'prefer not to disclose', or leave the question blank.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Do I have to be aged between 18-30 to apply?** No, as of April 2020 UKNA's opportunities are open to artists at any age 18 or above who are within the first 10 years of their practice.

**Do I have to be from the UK to apply?** No, however you do need to have the right to live, work or study in the UK at the time of application.

**Why do artists need to be within the first ten years of their practice?** The first years of an artists' practice can be difficult to navigate. We provide support and a cushion to enable artists to develop a sustainable career; investing at the point when the most help is needed.

**Can a group/collective apply?** No, the Robert Walters Award is open to individuals.

**Do I need to be a graduate or have undertaken arts training to apply?** No. We recognise that people enter artistic careers from a variety of routes and work is not evaluated on the academic background of the artist.

**How do I apply for the Robert Walters Award?** The application form is on Zealous.co, and linked on the UKNA and Robert Walters website. If you have access requirements which mean you cannot complete the online form please contact a member of the UK New Artists team on [info@uknewartists.co.uk](mailto:info@uknewartists.co.uk) or by using one of our social media channels.

**Can I send my application in the post or via email?** Unfortunately we cannot accept submissions through the post or via email unless prior arrangement has been made due to an access requirement.

**When can I apply?** The form will be available from Thursday 29th June at 10am until the closing date of 11.59 on Sunday 3 September. Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

**Is there a cost to apply?** No, all UKNA activities are free to apply for.

**Am I allowed to create new work for the Robert Walters Award?** In order for the panel to make an appropriate assessment on your work and its suitability for the award, we ask that work submitted already exists and documentation (photography etc) is provided. The panel will not assess proposals, sketches or outlines for work not yet made or completed.

**Can I save my application and return to it later?** Yes, you can continue to edit and refine your application whilst the call for entries portal is open. For more questions about the application process, visit <https://zealous.co/help/>

**Is it possible to amend my original submission?** Applications cannot be amended once they have been submitted. If you believe you have made a mistake in providing your contact details please email UKNA.

**Am I allowed to submit more than one piece of work?** Each application should be for a single project/series, though this can include multiple outcomes, such as a collection of paintings or selection of photographs. Please let us know in your application the

number of pieces you would wish to showcase. However, due to venue restraints it may not be possible to showcase all of your work, the decision as to what is showcased will be made by the curator. Two very distinct pieces of work or work with multiple outcomes should be submitted in separate applications.

**If I am successful am I expected to attend the awards evening on Thursday 09th November at Saatchi Gallery?** The 10 finalists are asked to do their best to attend the awards ceremony. The exhibition will be open on that day only, therefore it will be your opportunity to see your work in this prestigious space, and take part in press activity and photography documentation. The first and second prizes will be awarded at this event, so it is important that you are there, should you be chosen.

**When will my work need to be ready for transportation to the Saatchi Gallery?** Your work will need to be packaged and ready for transportation up to two weeks before the exhibition (from 25th October).

**Who will be responsible for shipping my work to and from Saatchi Gallery?** UKNA will organise the collection, shipping and return of your work to and from Saatchi Gallery. You will be responsible for packaging your work safely and securely, and will be required to print a label for the package which we will provide via email.

**When will my work be returned to me following the exhibition?** Usually, your work will be dispatched back to you within 1-2 weeks. If you are the first prize winner, your work will be exhibited at Robert Walters Group HQ in Covent Garden for 12 months. This is likely to be only one piece of work, rather than a full series.

**Who is responsible for insuring my work if it is selected?** UK New Artists and the partners will be responsible for insuring your work whilst it is in transit, during installation and during the public event.

**If I am successful, what costs are covered for me to attend the event?** Robert Walters Group will provide artists with a stipend of £200 per person to attend the event in London.

**When will I hear back about my application?** The 10 finalists will be notified no later than Monday 18th September. You will receive an email from Zealous if your application has not been successful.

**If my application is not successful, can I request feedback?** UK New Artists is a small team, unfortunately we are unable to provide feedback on applications due to the high volume of submissions.

**How do I make a general query about the event?** If you need to contact us please email [info@uknewartists.co.uk](mailto:info@uknewartists.co.uk)

You're all set! THANK YOU, and we look forward to reading your application! Don't forget: the deadline to apply is Sunday 3 September at 11.59pm!