

The Photographers' Gallery New Talent (TNT) 13 November 2023

TNT 23 artists announced! Igor Chekachkov, Weiyi (Margaret) Liang, Cynthia MaiWa Sitei, Cian Oba-Smith, Robbie Spotswood and Ruudu Ulas.

[The Photographers' Gallery New Talent \(TNT\)](#) showcases and supports the most exciting and relevant UK-based emerging artists working in photography today.

Now in its third edition, the TNT 23 artists are Igor Chekachkov, Weiyi (Margaret) Liang, Cynthia MaiWa Sitei, Cian Oba-Smith, Robbie Spotswood and Ruudu Ulas.

The six artists were chosen following an open call by artist Hoda Afshar and Karen McQuaid, Senior Curator at The Photographers' Gallery. Afshar described the work as showing 'subtle tenderness, a sense of quiet hope, and a display of resilience – both in ourselves and in our world.'

The TNT 23 artists will have their work showcased on [an online gallery](#) and featured on billboards, supported by JACK ARTS, part of BUILDHOLLYWOOD. The artists will each be paired with a creative mentor and receive a £1,500 bursary to support the development of their practice over a twelve-month period.

The selected artists:

Igor Chekachkov (b.1989, Ukraine) is a photojournalist and artist. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, he has focused on exploring Ukrainian identity, connectedness and the idea of home. He is interested in how war imagery is produced, circulated and consumed.

Chekachkov currently lives in London. He studied at Goldsmiths, University of London, Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics and Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts.

[Explore Chekachkov's work *100 Days of War*](#)

Weiyi (Margaret) Liang (b.1998, China) uses her training as a bodybuilder to subvert traditional ideas of gender in her photographs. Her work responds to an identity that is permanently in flux as a result of living in between cultures and nations. Working primarily with self-portraiture, she explores notions of strength, the body and gender expression.

Liang lives and works in London. She studied at the Royal College of Art and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

[Explore Liang's work *Mountain of A*](#)

Cynthia MaiWa Sitei (b.1992, Kenya) combines archival images with her own, often indistinguishable, contemporary photography, to explore colonial legacies of Kenya. Her work invites the viewer to reflect on their own perception and imagination, while raising questions about power and authorship.

MaiWa Sitei lives and works in Reading. She studied at the University of South Wales and Winchester University.

[Explore MaiWa Sitei's work *spear of a nation*](#)

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Cian Oba-Smith (b.1992, UK) is a photographer who makes work with communities that are often misrepresented and issues that are often overlooked. *Untitled* is an ongoing project which records the effects of the knife violence epidemic in London. The project includes photographs, alongside interviews of those who have been affected by knife crime. Oba-Smith considers the root causes of the violence and asks what solutions can be found.

Oba-Smith lives and works in London. He studied at the University of West England.

[Explore Oba-Smith's work *Among Flowers, Tears and Rain*](#)

Robbie Spotswood (b.1994, UK) works in a documentary style, using his camera to create a visual diary. Raised in a matriarchal, West African home, the themes of identity, culture and race intertwine to create dream-like narratives linked to his own, personal experiences and family life in London and Accra, Ghana.

Spotswood lives and works in London. In 2023 he was selected to be part of Reframe: The Residency at the Southbank Centre, London.

[Explore Spotswood's work *I Just Want to Stay Home*](#)

Ruudu Ulas (b.1987, Estonia) combines video, photography and sculpture to create installations. She uses commonplace objects to create uncomfortable interventions in space that are a balance of chaos and order. Spilling out, wedged in, oddly weighted and lopsided – these objects offer a surreal, playful and critical view on everyday things.

Ulas lives and works between London and Berlin. She studied at the Royal College of Art, Glasgow School of Art and HGB Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig.

[Explore Ulas's work *Difficult Objects*](#)

Hodar Afshar said of the TNT 23 artists:

"In a world marked by growing unrest, and overshadowed by war and natural disasters, how do we rank images and the stories they convey? As I reviewed the images submitted for TNT 23, I hoped for projects that serve as a reminder of the good within us; projects that highlight our capacity to care and to place trust in one another; that produce intimacy, not distance, by helping us to see through pre-established patterns of seeing and relating. I sought out subtle tenderness, a sense of quiet hope, and a display of resilience – both in ourselves and in our world."

TPG New Talent is generously supported by [Leica](#), [JACK ARTS](#) (part of BUILDHOLLYWOOD) and [ldlewild Trust](#).

Notes for Editors

Press Contacts

For further press information and image requests please contact:

Robyn Deane at robyn@margaretlondon.com

For general information and enquiries about The Photographers' Gallery, including the archive, Print Sales Gallery or Bookshop contact: press@tpg.org.uk

The Photographers' Gallery

The Photographers' Gallery New Talent (TNT) was launched in 2019 as an open call to identify and champion under-recognised or emerging UK-based artists and photographers. The programme supports The Photographers' Gallery's aim to be the home of new-generation photography. Every effort has been made to remove barriers to entry – there is no entrance fee, age limit or educational requirement for anyone to enter. ('Emerging' is defined as not having had a significant solo exhibition or a book published by a third-party publisher.)

2023 is the third edition of TNT. Previous TNT artists are: Rhiannon Adam, Chiara Avagliano, Alberto Feijóo, Adama Jalloh, Seungwon Jung, Alice Myers, Giovanna Petrocchi, Miguel Proença, Heather

Agyepong, Jessica Bernard, Ollie Gapper, Mariam Sholaja, RAKE Collective, Wing Ka Ho Jimmi.

[TNT 2021 selected artists](#)

[TNT 2019 selected artists](#)

TNT 23 selection panel

Hoda Afshar

Hoda Afshar began her career as a documentary photographer in Iran in 2005, and since 2007 she has been living in Australia where she practices as a visual artist and lectures in photography and fine art. Working at the intersection of conceptual, staged and documentary image-making, Afshar's artistic practice explores the representation of gender, marginality and displacement. Afshar has exhibited widely in Australia and abroad. Her works are held in major collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of South Australia, the Auckland University Art Collection, the Monash University of Modern Art Collection, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Art Gallery of South Australia.

<https://www.hodaafshar.com/>

Karen McQuaid

Karen McQuaid is Senior Curator at The Photographers' Gallery and an Associate Lecturer at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Karen has led the TPG New Talent programme since 2019. She has curated many exhibitions at The Photographers' Gallery, as well as international exhibitions, including at The Moscow House of Photography and The National Gallery of Kosovo. She regularly contributes to international workshops, panels, and photography publications.

The Photographers' Gallery

The Photographers' Gallery explores how photography is connecting, captivating and radically changing our world today. The Gallery's programme and spaces – from exhibitions, events and digital platforms, to the galleries, shop and cafe – all explore the beauty, complexity and future of photography. Right outside the Gallery, the very best of contemporary photography is shown for free, day and night, in Soho Photography Quarter.

tpg.org.uk

Visitor information

Monday – Wednesday 10am – 6pm

Thursday & Friday 10am – 8pm (Friday free from 5pm)

Saturday 10am – 6pm

Sunday & Bank Holidays 11am – 6pm

16-18 Ramillies Street, London, W1F 7LW

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