

2019 Joan Miró Prize

Seventh Edition

Nalini Malani



PRESS KIT

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Cover photo: Nalini Malani, dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel
Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Payal Kapadia

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Press Release

Nalini Malani, 2019 Joan Miró Prize

The Indian artist Nalini Malani is the winner of the seventh edition of the prize granted by the Fundació Joan Miró and the "la Caixa", one of the most prestigious and best-endowed contemporary art awards in the world.

The jury acknowledged her longstanding commitment to the silenced and the dispossessed all over the world, most particularly women, through a complex artistic quest based on immersive installations and a personal iconography where a profound knowledge of ancient mythologies converges with a bold condemnation of contemporary injustices.

"la Caixa" is providing the 70,000 euro award and covering production of the solo exhibition of Nalini Malani's work scheduled for 2020 at the Fundació Joan Miró.

Barcelona, 23 May, 2019. Marko Daniel, Director of the Fundació Joan Miró, and Elisa Durán, Deputy General Director of the "la Caixa" Foundation, have announced the winner of the 2019 Joan Miró Prize. Nalini Malani (Karachi, 1946) has been selected for this seventh edition of the prize, awarded every two years and whose past recipients have been Olafur Eliasson (2007), Pipilotti Rist (2009), Mona Hatoum (2011), Roni Horn (2013), Ignasi Aballí (2015) and Kader Attia (2017).

The jury panel for the 2019 Joan Miró Prize included Iwona Blazwick, Director of the Whitechapel Gallery (London); Magnus af Petersens, Director of the Bonniers Konsthall (Stockholm); Alfred Pacquement, former Director of the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris); João Ribas, Curator of the Portuguese pavilion at the 58th Venice Art Biennale 2019; Nimfa Bisbe, Head of the "la Caixa" Foundation contemporary art collection, and Marko Daniel, Director of the Fundació Joan Miró (Barcelona). The jury members, all renowned professionals in the field of contemporary art, selected the winner for her prodigious intellectual curiosity, her radical imagination and her socio-political awareness, values that also characterized the work of Joan Miró.

Specifically, the statement issued by the jury for the 2019 Joan Miró Prize highlights the countless cultural references upon which Malani has built “an impressive body of work that engages viewers through complex, immersive installations that present her vision of the battered world we live in. Her interest in ancient mythology, both Greek and Indian, as well as in modern symbols and image-making, has allowed her to develop a very personal, cosmopolitan iconographic mingling that boldly denounces contemporary violence and injustice, and their effects on planetary life.”

Nalini Malani (Karachi, 1946) was born under the British Indian Empire and grew up between Kolkata and Mumbai, where her family sought exile after the Partition of India. This personal background marked by the consequences of colonialism led to a firm socio-political commitment and a distinctly cathartic approach in her work, a reminder of the vulnerability of human existence and the exploration of female subjectivity. She now lives in Mumbai, where she pursues her multi-disciplinary artistic quest in a language all of her own. A pioneer in film, photography, installation, video art and performance in India, Malani studied fine arts at the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art in Mumbai and then spent two years in Paris, from 1970 to 1972, with a scholarship from the French government. In 2010, the San Francisco Art Institute granted her an honorary doctorate in fine arts and in 2013 she became the first Asian woman to receive the Arts & Culture Fukuoka Prize. Among other distinctions, the artist was also acknowledged with the St. Moritz Art Masters Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014 and the Asian Art Game Changers Award in 2016. International art institutions to have shown her solo exhibitions include the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Castello di Rivoli – Contemporary Art Museum in Rivoli, the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Boston, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin and the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in New Delhi.

As part of the 2019 Joan Miró Prize, which includes a 70,000 euro cash award, Nalini Malani will be featured in a solo exhibition in 2020 at the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona, jointly produced with the “la Caixa” Banking Foundation.

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Jury Statement for the 2019 Joan Miró Prize

A jury composed of Iwona Blazwick, Alfred Pacquement, Magnus af Petersens, João Ribas, Nimfa Bisbe and Marko Daniel has unanimously awarded the 2019 Joan Miró Prize to Nalini Malani.

The jury considers the Indian artist worthy of the prize for her longstanding commitment to the values of radical imagination and socio-political awareness, also dear to Joan Miró. Over an extended career, Malani has been an unremitting voice for the silenced and the dispossessed, most particularly women globally.

By alluding to a myriad of cultural references from both East and West, she has built an impressive body of work that engages viewers through complex, immersive installations that present her vision of the battered world we live in. Her interest in ancient mythology, both Greek and Indian, as well as in modern symbols and image-making, has allowed her to develop a very personal, cosmopolitan iconographic mingling that boldly denounces contemporary violence and injustice, and their effects on planetary life.

In addition, just like Joan Miró, Malani has explored and mixed different disciplines and media, most notably theatre, installations, drawing, film and video, going back to the 1960s. Her prodigious intellectual curiosity and continued dialogue with some of the most outstanding luminaries of our times has also inflected her output, just as Miró's friendships with Artaud, Leiris, Bataille and Kandinsky profoundly impacted him and enriched his oeuvre. For all these reasons, the jury is enthusiastic in acknowledging the extraordinary stature of Nalini Malani's artistic contribution and unanimously grants her the 2019 Joan Miró Prize.

Barcelona, 23 May 2019

Jury Members for the 2019 Joan Miró Prize

Nimfa Bisbe
Iwona Blazwick
Marko Daniel
Alfred Pacquement
Magnus af Petersens
João Ribas

Martina Millà (secretary of the jury)



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Artist Biography



Nalini Malani in her studio in Mumbai. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Johan Pijnappel

*Art has to go under
the thick skin we have developed*

Nalini Malani

Nalini Malani is one of the most influential contemporary artists in India, with a solid trajectory that has received broad international acclaim. She was born in Karachi in 1946, one year before the separation of India and Pakistan following independence from the British Empire. Her family sought refuge in Kolkata in 1947 and then moved to Mumbai in 1954, where Malani continues to live today. The personal and collective trauma of the Partition of India, her early experience of displacement and her refugee status marked her biography and her artistic output, which developed, in her own words, as an attempt to “make sense of the feelings of loss, exile and nostalgia” that had such an impact on her childhood.

Malani's work addresses the recent history of the Indian subcontinent and delves boldly into pressing, universal themes such as violence, war, fundamentalism, the oppression of women, the effects of globalisation and the destruction of the environment. Her work is built as a narrative that intertwines the mythologies and aesthetic forms of East and West, reassessing their legacy. A pioneer in introducing the feminist dimension of art into her home country in the 1970s, Malani places particular emphasis on female archetypes in an attempt to recover and amplify the voice of women of all times. Significantly, in her role as a curator, Malani organized the first group show of Indian woman artists in Delhi in 1985. For her, "understanding the world from a feminist perspective is an essential device for a more hopeful future, if we want to achieve something like human progress."

With the practice of painting as its point of departure, Nalini Malani's output has gradually shifted towards space and time to the extent of being expressed in immersive installations that integrate painting, audio-visual elements, traditional arts, and performance. In the early 1990s, Malani was one of the first artists in India to break away from classical painting – and from cultural and economic elites – to explore new media that would allow her to reach a broader public, thus bridging the gap between modern and contemporary art in her country. Since then, ephemeral mural drawings, video and other traditional forms of moving image, such as kaleidoscopic lanterns and shadow plays, have become vehicles of memory and emotion for the artist. "The form that I use in my video and shadow plays," Malani explains, "are rotations or revolutions [...] that don't repeat the superimpositions. [...] The artwork forms before one's eyes. It gets completed in your presence and immediately changes. [...] It is like life, in that one unique moment will never come back again. It grows and dies in front of you while you are part of the artwork itself." Through the ephemeral character of the images, Malani emphatically states: "Another aspect that I want to negate is 'market value' and bring back memory value."

Accordingly, her charcoal drawings made directly on walls are erased in public, so that viewers can feel the fragility of all the images, of life itself, and, eventually, their loss. In her own words, "The artwork is like a gossamer thread of fleeting experience."

Malani studied fine arts at the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art in Mumbai. During that time, she set up her studio at the Bhulabhai Memorial Institute in Mumbai, where artists, musicians, dancers and actors gathered. Soon after graduating, Malani worked in film and photography. From 1970 to 1972, she received a scholarship from the French government to study art in Paris, where she encountered the theories of Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes and Noam Chomsky, among others. In 1973 Malani moved back to India, determined to

contribute to her country's modernization and intellectual emancipation through art.

In 2010, the San Francisco Art Institute granted Malani an honorary doctorate and in 2013 she became the first Asian woman to receive the Arts & Culture Fukuoka Prize. She has received other salient distinctions as well, such as the St. Moritz Art Masters Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014 and the Asian Art Game Changers Award in 2016.

Malani's broad range of interests has often driven her to work alongside artists and thinkers from various fields, such as anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, actress Alaknanda Samarth, Butoh dancer Harada Nobuo and theatre director Anuradha Kapur. These collaborations attest to her ongoing exploration of interdisciplinary forms to inquire into and communicate the personal and political questions that shape her art.

Over the course of five decades and with more than three hundred exhibitions to her name – two hundred of which were international – her output has been shown at the leading contemporary art venues in the world, with solo exhibitions at the ICA (Boston), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), the Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin) and the New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York); and retrospectives at the Castello di Rivoli – Contemporary Art Museum (Rivoli) in 2018, the Centre Pompidou (Paris) in 2017, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (New Delhi) in 2014, the Musée des Beaux Arts (Lausanne) in 2010 and the Peabody Essex Museum (Salem) in 2005. Her work has been featured in twenty biennials, such as the 12th Shanghai Biennale in 2018; dOCUMENTA 13 in 2012 in Kassel; the 2008 Biennale of Sydney; the 52rd and 51st Venice Biennale exhibitions in 2007 and 2005, and the third Seoul Biennale in 2004. Nalini Malani's works are included in thirty museum collections throughout the world.

For more information about Nalini Malani and her trajectory, visit www.nalimalani.com

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Selected Images for the Press

Nalini Malani

Onanism, 1969
Digitised 16mm black-and-white film,
3:52 min, silent
Collection: MoMA, New York



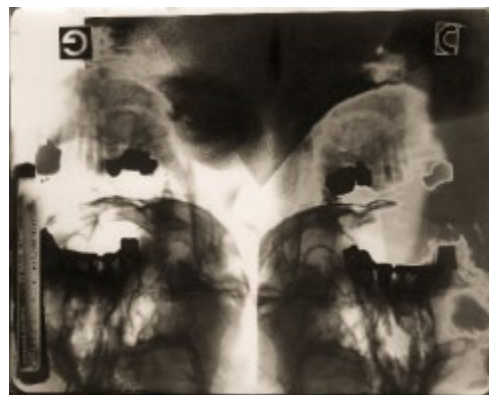
Nalini Malani

Untitled II, 1970
Black and white, cameraless photograph,
Size: 123 x 107 cm
Collection: Tate Modern, London



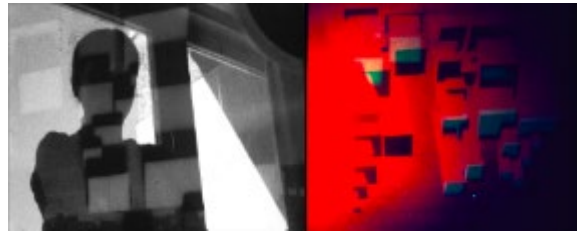
Nalini Malani

Damaged Survivors, 1970
Black and white, photo collage,
Size: 35.5 x 46 cm
Collection: Centre Pompidou, Paris



Nalini Malani

Utopia, 1969-1976
Digitised two-channel film installation,
left 16 mm b/w, right 8 mm colour,
4:39 min, silent
Collection: Centre Pompidou, Paris



Nalini Malani

Alleyway Lohar Chawl, 1991
Shadow play with five Mylar drawings,
each 185 x 100 cm
Photo credit: Nalini Malani
Collection: the artist



Nalini Malani

Medeamaterial, 1993
Experimental theatre play,
in collaboration with Alaknanda Samarth
Max Mueller Bhavan Institute, Mumbai
Photo credit: Nalini Malani



Nalini Malani

The Job, 1997
Video sculpture with stop-motion
animation *Memory: Record/Erase*, 10:23
min. Installation view: *Nalini Malani:
Splitting the Other*,
Musée des Beaux Arts, Lausanne, 2010.
Collection: Musée des Beaux Arts,
Lausanne
Photo credit: Musée des Beaux Arts,
Lausanne



Nalini Malani

Remembering Toba Tek Singh, 1998
 Four-channel video play, 12 monitors in
 tin trunks, sound, 20 min
 Installation view: World Wide Video
 Festival, Amsterdam, 1998
 Collection: Art Gallery of New South
 Wales, Sydney
 Photo credit: World Wide Video
 Festival, Amsterdam, G.J. van Rooij

**Nalini Malani**

Hamletmachine, 2000
 Four-channel video play
 with bed of salt, 20 min
 Installation view: *Nalini Malani:*
The Rebellion of the Dead-Part I, Centre
 Pompidou, Paris, 2017
 Collection: Centre Pompidou, Paris
 Photo credit: Centre Pompidou, Paris

**Nalini Malani**

Hamletmachine, 2000, detail
 Four-channel video play with bed of salt, sound, 20 min
 Collection: Centre Pompidou, Paris
 Photo credit: Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka

**Nalini Malani**

Transgressions, 2001
 Three-channel video/shadow play, with four
 reverse-painted Mylar cylinders, sound, 7
 min. Installation view: *Nalini Malani:*
Transgressions, Stedelijk Museum
 Amsterdam, 2017
 Collection: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
 Photo credit: Stedelijk Museum,
 G.J. van Rooij



Nalini Malani

Mother India: Transactions in the Construction of Pain, 2005, detail
 Five-channel video play, sound, 5 min
 Installation view: *Nalini Malani: The Rebellion of the Dead-Part II*, Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018
 Collection: Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photo credit: Nalini Malani



Nalini Malani

Sita-Medea, 2006
 Reverse painting on acrylic sheet,
 183 x 122 cm
 Collection: Private collection, Switzerland
 Photo credit: Nalini Malani



Nalini Malani

Splitting the Other, 2007
 Fourteen panels, reverse painting on acrylic sheet, each panel 203 x 144 cm
 Collection: Start Museum, Shanghai
 Photo credit: Nalini Malani



Nalini Malani

Remembering Mad Meg, 2007
 Four-channel video/shadow play with eight reverse-painted Lexan cylinders,
 sound, 20 min
 Installation view: *Nalini Malani: The Rebellion of the Dead-Part I*, Centre Pompidou, 2017.
 Collection: Centre Pompidou, Paris
 Photo credit: Centre Pompidou, Philippe Migeat



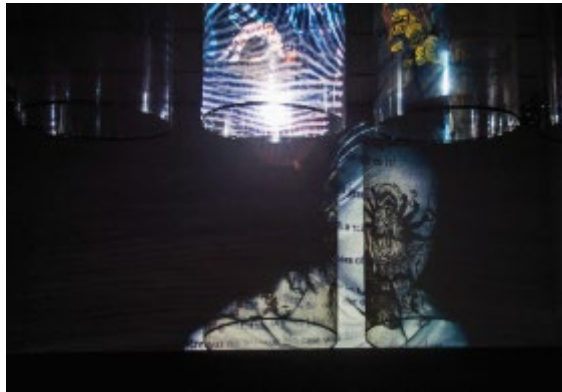
Nalini Malani

Cassandra, 2009
 Thirty-panel reverse painting on acrylic sheet, overall size 228 x 396 cm
 Collection: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi
 Photo credit: Nalini Malani



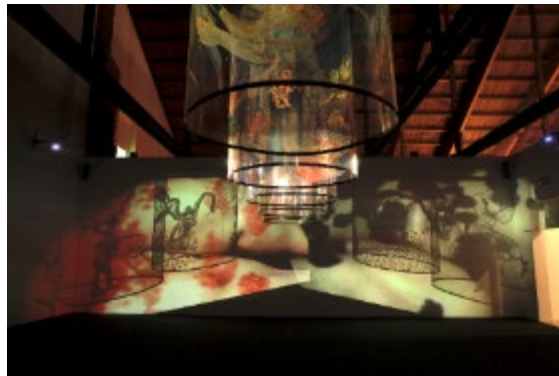
Nalini Malani

In Search of Vanished Blood, 2012
 Six-channel video/shadow play with 5 cylinders, reverse paintings, sound, 11 min
 Installation view, *Nalini Malani: In Search of Vanished Blood*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 2016
 Photo credit: Institute of Contemporary Art, Danita Jo, Boston
 Collection: MET, New York



Nalini Malani

In Search of Vanished Blood, 2012
 Six-channel video/shadow play, five cylinders with reverse paintings, sound
 Installation view: *Nalini Malani: The Rebellion of the Dead-Part II*, Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018. Photo credit: Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Ranabir Das, Mumbai. Collection: Burger Collection, Hong Kong



Nalini Malani

In Search of Vanished Blood, 2012
 Single-channel video play, sound, 11:24 min
 Collection: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
 Photo credit: Nalini Malani



Nalini Malani*In Search of Vanished Blood*, 2012Single-channel video play, sound,
11:24 minInstallation view: *Nalini Malani: Can You Hear Me*, Arario Gallery, Shanghai 2018

Collection: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

Photo credit: Arario Gallery, Shanghai

**Nalini Malani***City of Desires-Traces*, 2017

Wall drawing/erasure performance

Installation view: *Nalini Malani: Transgressions*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 2017Photo credit: Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam,
G.J. van ROOIJ**Nalini Malani***All We Imagine as Light*, 2017Eleven-panel reverse painting on acrylic sheet,
each panel 180 x 100 cmInstallation view: *Nalini Malani: The Rebellion of the Dead-Part I*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2017

Collection: Burger Collection, Hong Kong

Photo credit: Centre Pompidou, Philippe Migeat

**Nalini Malani***George Orwell Once Said*, 2018

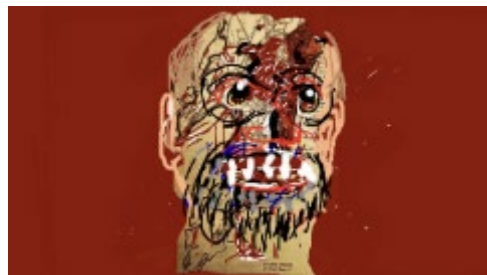
Instagram Notebooks, single-channel stop-motion animation, sound

Photo credit: Nalini Malani

**Nalini Malani***UBU ROI*, 2018

Instagram Notebooks, single-channel stop-motion animation, sound

Photo credit: Nalini Malani



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Former Prize Recipients

2017. Kader Attia

The French-Algerian artist Kader Attia (Dugny, 1970) defines his practice as the embodiment of a political experience. His work is an exploration that stems, in his words, from the "urge to recover, through form, the field of emotion in the public debate with the aim of repairing the wounds of history." The jury panel of the award's sixth edition acknowledged the breadth of his research; his bold, syncretic approach to the impact and the lingering effects of colonialism; as well as his encyclopaedic, yet nuanced, elaboration of the notion of repair. *Scars Remind Us that Our Past Is Real*, held at the Fundació Joan Miró following the prize, was the artist's first solo exhibition in Spain.

2015. Ignasi Aballí

Ignasi Aballí (Barcelona, 1958), the first Catalan artist to receive this prize, has had a long career in conceptual art, which has been recognized by the leading international contemporary art centers. His reflections on the limits of the creative act and the role played by the artist in this process have often led him to defend the illuminating power of the tangential approach, of minor territories, imperceptible realities, or even absences and disappearances, beginning with that of the figure of the author himself. In awarding this prize, the jury sought to emphasize "his ongoing reflection on the limits of painting and representation, his meticulous attention to the significant consequences of the tiniest changes in strategies of resignification, and his role as a mentor for younger artists."

2013. Roni Horn

Roni Horn (New York, 1955) has explored the mutable nature of art through sculpture, photography, drawings and books. Her work revolves around the dialogue between people and nature, a relationship she views as a mirror in which human beings attempt to remake nature in their own image. According to the jury, Horn "impresses international audiences with a multifaceted artistic practice that links aspects of nature, the landscape, popular culture [...] with the mechanics of perception and communication." Fundació Joan Miró presented the artist's first monographic exhibition in Barcelona, *Roni Horn. Everything was sleeping as if the universe were a mistake*, which could also be seen at CaixaForum.

2011. Mona Hatoum

In the words of the jury, the 2011 Joan Miró Prize was awarded to the Palestinian-British artist Mona Hatoum (Beirut, 1952) for her “ability to connect personal experience with universal values.” In awarding the prize, the jury sought to draw attention to Hatoum’s commitment to human values of concern to all cultures and societies, “similar to Miró’s vision of mankind after experiencing three devastating wars.” Hatoum’s sculptures, installations, performances and videos have made her one of the most well-known names in the contemporary art scene. *Projection*, the exhibition presented at Fundació Joan Miró from June to September 2012, was a huge audience success, drawing more than 140,000 visitors. Hatoum, who lives in London, donated the €70,000 cash prize to help aspiring young artists study at British art schools.

2009. Pipilotti Rist

The Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist (Grabs, Sankt Gallen, 1962) received the prize in 2009. The jury chose her unanimously, noting, “Over the past twenty years, Rist has never ceased to surprise and provoke us with her artistic forays that take us through mental and aesthetic landscapes, while penetrating into the deepest strata of the personal and collective conscious.” Rist said she was honored to receive a prize named after Miró, given his past and continuing influence on the art world. In 2010, Rist presented the exhibition *Friendly Game – Electronic Feelings* at Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona and Centre Cultural Caixa Girona-Fontana d’Or in Girona.

2007. Olafur Eliasson

The first Joan Miró Prize was awarded in 2007 to the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson (Copenhagen, 1967). Eliasson’s work, focused on the study of sensory perception, the laws of physics, and natural phenomena, won over the jury with the impact and beauty of his installations, which reflected on today’s world and society. One year after receiving the prize, Eliasson presented *The Nature of Things*, his first Spanish show, in Barcelona and Girona.

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