

Aimia Inc.

Aimia | Ago Photography Prize announces 2017 shortlist and 10-year anniversary celebration program

Jury selects four international finalists; public vote for C\$50,000 prize begins on September 6

TORONTO, July 25, 2017 /CNW Telbec/ - Four outstanding international artists have been shortlisted for this year's **Aimia | AGO Photography Prize**, marking the 10th anniversary of Canada's most significant award for photography. Co-presented by **Aimia**, the Canadian global leader in data-driven marketing and loyalty analytics, and the **Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)**, the Prize awards C\$50,000 to one winner who is chosen by public vote. The four finalists will present their work in an exhibition opening on **Sept. 6, 2017** at the AGO in Toronto. Voting begins in person at the AGO after the exhibition opens and on the Prize's [website](#) beginning on **Sept. 13, 2017**.

The 2017 finalists are:

- **Liz Johnson Artur** (Ghana/Russia)
- **Raymond Boisjoly** (Haida Nation/Canada)
- **Hank Willis Thomas** (USA)
- **Taisuke Koyama** (Japan)

Thirteen international nominators selected a long list of 30 artists. From that list, a jury of three experts named the four finalists, each of whom have shown extraordinary potential. The jury was headed by **Sophie Hackett**, the AGO's Curator of Photography and included **Ken Lum**, artist, professor and Chair of the Fine Arts Department at the University of Pennsylvania; and **Eva Respini**, the Barbara Lee Chief Curator at the ICA/Boston.

"The jury was struck by the distinctly compelling character of each nominee's work," said Hackett, who will also curate the 2017 exhibition. "Though they are working in very different ways, each artist aims to transform and transmit a new understanding of the world we live in, through variations of digital image capture, experiences of blackness, and the relationship between indigeneity, language (both visual and verbal) and colonialism. I look forward to putting the nominees and their work in dialogue in the exhibition and through the various programs related to this year's prize."

In celebration of the 10th year of the Prize, Aimia and the AGO present a **symposium** in partnership with *Aperture Magazine*. The symposium, which will be held at the AGO on **Dec. 3 and 4, 2017**, will feature curators, scholars, and artists (including past Prize winners and nominees) who will discuss the issues and ideas impacting the field of photography today. Details will be announced later this summer.

A commemorative publication will also be produced for the anniversary year, telling the story of the Aimia | AGO Photography Prize over the past decade. The book will showcase the extraordinary work of current and past nominees of the Prize, explore its scholarships and residencies, and celebrate the impact the Prize has had over 10 years. The book is scheduled to be released on Dec. 4, 2017, and will be available at the AGO.

ABOUT THE 2017 FINALISTS

Liz Johnson Artur (b. 1964) is a Russian-Ghanaian photographer based in London. For the last 28 years, Johnson Artur has been working on a photographic representation of people of African descent, capturing compelling nuances of blackness and highlighting family, love and friendships. Her monograph with Bierke Verlag was included in the *New York Times*' Best Photo Books 2016 list. Johnson Artur works as a photojournalist and editorial photographer for various fashion magazines and record labels all over the world. She received her Master of Arts in Photography from the Royal College of Art in London and has taught at the London College of Communication.

Raymond Boisjoly (b. 1981) is an Indigenous artist of Haida and Québécois descent who lives and works in Vancouver. He has exhibited extensively across Canada and internationally in both solo and group exhibitions. Boisjoly investigates the ways images, objects, materials and language continue to define Indigenous art and artists, with particular attention to colonial contexts. In 2016, he was a recipient of the VIVA Award, presented by the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation for the Visual Arts in Vancouver, and is one of five artists shortlisted for the 2017 Sobey Art Award. Boisjoly is an assistant professor of Interdisciplinary Studio in the Department of Visual Art and Material Practice at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. He is represented by Catriona Jeffries Gallery.

Taisuke Koyama (b. 1978) is a Japanese artist who explores the possibility of image making in the digital age. His abstract photographs and moving images employ experimental production methods to investigate the relationship between organic processes and phenomena and the technologies that facilitate their visual capture. He has exhibited extensively in Europe and Asia including *Generated Images* at the Daiwa Foundation Japan House Gallery, London, 2016 and at international art festivals: Aichi Triennale (2016), Seotuchi Triennale (2013), and Daegu Photo Biennale (2012). In 2010, he was selected as part of the annual roster of Foam Talent for *Foam Magazine*. Monographs of his work include *VESSEL – XYZXY* (RRose Editions + taisuke koyama projects, 2017) and *RAINBOW VARIATIONS* (artbeat publishers + Kodoji Press, 2015). Koyama currently lives and works in Amsterdam and is represented by G/P Gallery, Tokyo, Metronom, Italy and Sunday Gallery, Switzerland.

Hank Willis Thomas (b. 1976) is a multidisciplinary contemporary African-American visual artist, photographer and arts educator, working primarily with themes related to identity, history and popular culture. He has exhibited throughout the U.S. and internationally including the International Center of Photography, Public Art Fund and The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. His work can be found in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Thomas' monograph, *Pitch Blackness*, was published by Aperture in 2008. He received a MFA/MA in Photography and Visual Criticism from the California College of Arts. Thomas is represented by Jack Shainman Gallery in New York City and Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

ABOUT THE AIMIA | AGO PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE

Over the last 10 years, the **Aimia | AGO Photography Prize** has recognized and developed the best in Canadian and international contemporary photography and helps to foster the next generation of artists. The Prize comprises an annual exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, an online exhibition at AimiaAGOPhotographyPrize.com, a range of public programming and a national scholarship program. It includes awards of \$50,000 to the winner, \$5,000 to each of the three runners-up, \$7,000 to each of three scholarship winners and \$1,000 to each of their respective schools.

Previous winners of the Prize include German artist Ursula Schulz-Dornburg (2016), Americans Dave Jordano (2015) and Lisa Oppenheim (2014), Canada's Erin Shirreff (2013), Britain's Jo Longhurst (2012), Gauri Gill of India (2011), Canadian Kristan Horton (2010), Marco Antonio Cruz of Mexico (2009) and Canadian Sarah Anne Johnson (2008).

For updates on the Prize, further details on the shortlisted artists and additional information, please visit AimiaAGOPhotographyPrize.com and follow [@AimiaAGOPrize](https://twitter.com/AimiaAGOPrize) on Twitter.

ABOUT AIMIA

Aimia, a data-driven marketing and loyalty analytics company, has adopted two fundamental principles of loyalty, trust and reciprocity, as the pillars of its global social purpose — to create mutually beneficial partnerships that leave a lasting impact in our communities. As an enthusiastic patron of the Arts, Aimia supports many Canadian and International arts and culture initiatives through donations, sponsorships and employee volunteer activities. Aimia has supported several Canadian cultural organizations including the Art Gallery of Ontario, Art Canada Institute, Business for the Arts, Canadian Art Foundation, the National Gallery of Canada, Luminato Festival and the Walrus Foundation. Aimia is proud to engage in a dialogue around the arts through the Aimia | AGO Photography Prize and scholarship program, and through our office art installations in Montreal and Toronto. Visit us at www.aimia.com to learn more.

ABOUT THE AGO

With a collection of close to 95,000 works of art, the **Art Gallery of Ontario** is among the most distinguished art museums in North America. From the vast body of Group of Seven and signature Canadian works to the African art gallery, from the cutting-edge contemporary art to Peter Paul Rubens's masterpiece *The Massacre of The Innocents*, the AGO offers an incredible art experience with each visit. In 2002, Ken Thomson's generous gift of 2,000 remarkable works of Canadian and European art inspired Transformation AGO, an innovative architectural expansion by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry that in 2008 resulted in one of the most critically acclaimed architectural achievements in North America. Highlights include Galleria Italia, a gleaming showcase of wood and glass running the length of an entire city block, and the often-photographed spiral staircase, beckoning visitors to explore. The AGO has an active membership program offering great value, and the AGO's Weston Family Learning Centre offers engaging art and creative programs for children, families, youth and adults. Visit www.ago.ca to learn more.

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The AGO acknowledges the generous support of **Aimia**, Signature Partner of the Photography Collection Program and Founding Partner of the Aimia | AGO Photography Prize.

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