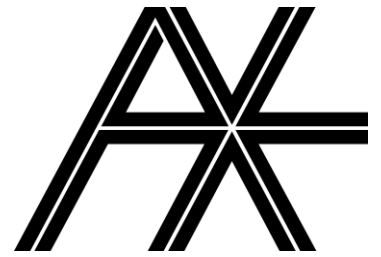


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Ishita Chakraborty Manor Art Prize 2024

Media release
Aarau, November 2023

Ishita Chakraborty (*1989) is the recipient of the Manor Art Prize Aarau 2024, which is awarded every two years to support young artists in Switzerland. The prize comes with a solo exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus as well as a publication, both scheduled for spring 2025.

Ishita Chakraborty uses various media, such as installation, performance, poetry, sound works, drawings, or objects, to explore political issues. Focussing on migration, colonialism, identity, and language, she looks at strategies and discourses of resistance and uses her art to give a voice to those who are seldom heard. "Who speaks?" or, "Who and what is heard?" are central questions of her practice. The resulting answers are mostly generated through a collaborative process with the local population. Chakraborty works in a participatory way, organising workshops, bringing different people from the area together and creating a framework for exchange.

One example of her approach is her work *Europa* (2019-today), which was shown in the Aargauer Kunsthaus exhibition *Auswahl 2021*. The sculptural installation is composed of hundreds of mushrooms made from unglazed clay. They were handmade by refugees, migrants, and locals in different earth tones. Over the course of several workshops, the participants told their personal stories, spoke in their native language, and ate together. In this participatory work, Chakraborty asks existential questions on the human condition regarding individuality and diversity, exclusion and belonging.

Chakraborty also envisions community projects in public spaces. She believes that art should be accessible to all and should also exist in places other than large cities and art centres. She implements this idea with works such as the oral history project, *Whispering Benches* (2022-today), which has wooden benches with built-in audio installations placed in a variety of locations. Passers-by are invited to listen to different stories about migration experiences.

In her most recent projects, Ishita Chakraborty explores how existential topics connect to ecological issues, and brings together old and new knowledge. In the installation *Exotic plants in the Garden – what to do?* (2022-today), for instance, accounts of voluntary or forced migration are interwoven with the history of plants and animals, allowing the artist to deepen the close relationships between colonial heritage and flora and fauna considered 'neophytes today.

For the Manor exhibition, Ishita Chakraborty will create new works and refine existing ones.

A commitment to the young Swiss art scene

The Manor Art Prize, which celebrated 40 years in 2022, is one of the most important prizes for the promotion of contemporary art in Switzerland. It was created in 1982 by Philippe Nordmann to provide a platform for young Swiss artists. It is awarded by a jury of experts annually and alternately in the cities of Aarau, Basel, Biel, Chur, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, Schaffhausen, Sion, St. Gallen and Winterthur. A glance at the list of prize winners shows that the Manor Art Prize has paved the way to an international breakthrough for a whole series of artists.

Manor sincerely congratulates the Manor Art Prize winners and wishes them every success in their artistic careers. www.manor.ch/de/u/kunstpreis

The prize will be awarded to Ishita Chakraborty on the opening night of her exhibition in spring 2025. In addition to the exhibition, it includes a publication.

On Ishita Chakraborty

Ishita Chakraborty was born in West Bengal (India) in 1989. She studied Visual Arts at the Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata as well as at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK, Zürich University of the Arts). Today she lives and works in Möriken, Aargau.

Individual exhibitions: *Sleeping in the Bed of Salt*, Gallery Espace, New Delhi (2023); *In Other Words*, Vitrine Galerie, Basel (2023); *The Scent of Rice*, Kulturfolger, Zürich (2023); *The Songs of Resistance*, KEINRAUM, Lucerne (2021); *Lyrics of Loss and Longing*, Prameya Art Foundation, New Delhi (2020).

Group exhibitions (selection): *Seeds and Souls*, Charlottenborg Art Gallery, Copenhagen (2023-24); *Common Ground*, 8. Weiertal Biennale (2023); *Stranger in the Village*, Aargauer Kunsthaus (2023); *Serendipity*, Art Festival Goa (2023); *Hyundai Art For Hope*, India (2023); *Auswahl 22*, Aargauer Kunsthaus (2022); *Whispering Benches - Art in Public Space*, various locations (2022); *The Mouth Is For Speaking*, We ARE AIA, Löwenbräu, Zürich (2022), *Auswahl 21*, Aargauer Kunsthaus (2021); *LifeLines*, Johann Jacobs Museum, Zürich (2021); *Mother Earth Calling*, Atelier Mondial, Basel (2021).

Prizes and scholarships (selection): Residency in the Brazilian Amazon, Pro Helvetia (2023-24); Work contribution Aargauer Kuratorium (2022); Visiting Artist Fellowship, Lakshmi Mittal SAI, Harvard University (2020-21); Advancement Prize, Credit Suisse (2021); Jury Prize Auswahl 21, Aargauer Kunsthaus (2021); POP UP Project grant Pro Helvetia Switzerland (2021); Research article, Aargauer Kuratorium (2021); Scholarship, Avina Stiftung (2020); Residency, Gästeatelier Krone, Aarau (2017); Residency, Piramal Museum of Art, Mumbai (2016).

Additional information

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