

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Chelsea Hotel Painter Dalwood Is Turner Prize Nominee

By Farah Nayeri



May 4 (Bloomberg) -- British painter Dexter Dalwood, famous for his imagined depictions of Jackie Onassis's yacht, Kurt Cobain's greenhouse, and Sid Vicious's room at New York's Chelsea Hotel, is one of four nominees for the U.K.'s 2010 Turner Prize.

Dalwood has had solo shows at the Gagosian Gallery in Beverly Hills, London and New York. He is known for portraying interiors with tragic associations. The shortlist was made public today by Tate, the prize's organizers, at a briefing.

Also nominated are Spanish-born Angela de la Cruz, who hangs her frameless canvases as if they were drapery; Scotland-born Susan Philipsz, whose singing voice is at the center of her sound-based installations; and the Otolith Group, formed in 2002 by Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar, whose film-based work is rooted in science fiction and experimental documentary.

Set up in 1984 to reward emerging U.K. contemporary art, the Turner Prize has fueled sarcastic tabloid coverage because of the conceptual nature of some works. This year's choice of Dalwood and the other finalists seems conventional by comparison.

"A figurative painter is not what the public expects to see," said critic Philip Hensher, part of the five-person jury led by Tate Britain Director Penelope Curtis. "The popular image of the Turner Prize is of conceptual art and video art."

Political Art

Hensher said Dalwood "engages with contemporary realities" including, most recently, political events such as "The Death of David Kelly" (2008) -- the British weapons inspector who killed himself in 2003 during an inquiry into the Iraq conflict -- and "Greenham Common" (2008), an all-women anti-nuclear peace camp set up in the early 1980s.

Spanish-born finalist De la Cruz works in a genre that is halfway between painting and sculpture, where you can picture the actions that led to the making of her art.

"Ashamed" (1995) is a broken painting slammed into the corner of a gallery. Hensher described her creations as "very messy surfaces and complicated forms."

Philipsz beams folk tunes sung by herself from speakers placed on museum facades, at bus stations, cemeteries and churches. As the songs waft through the urban air, they stir feelings of loss and longing in the listener.

"Her work is incredibly difficult to photograph," said judge Polly Staple, who heads the Chisenhale Gallery in east London.

The Turner Prize goes to "a British artist under 50 for an outstanding exhibition or other presentation of their work" in the 12 months preceding April 27, 2010. The prize money is 25,000 pounds (\$38,000) for the winner and 5,000 pounds each for the runners-up.

Last year, Richard Wright, a British artist known for wall paintings that he gets rid of after exhibitions, was the winner. Previous victors include Damien Hirst, Grayson Perry, and Mark Wallinger.