

## Turner prize 2016 shortlist features buttocks sculpture and choo-choo train By Mark Brown - May 12, 2016



Anthea Hamilton, Michael Dean, Helen Marten and Josephine Pryde earn place on shortlist. It sparks excitement and joy in some, bemusement and fury in others and this year's most coveted prize in British contemporary art – the 2016 Turner prize – is unlikely to buck the trend.

This year's artists include the creator of an 18ft sculpture of a man's bare buttocks, another obsessed by corrugated shop window shutters, another whose sculptures are described as "slippery and elusive" and a fourth who allowed visitors to ride around the gallery on a choo-choo train.

Organisers named Anthea Hamilton, Michael Dean, Helen Marten and Josephine Pryde on this year's shortlist and all four artists will exhibit their work at a Turner prize show running from September to January with the winner receiving £25,000.

The prize seeks to get out of London every other year – Glasgow last year, Hull in 2017 – but will be back in the capital at Tate Britain this year.

The prize's stated aim is to "promote public debate around new developments in contemporary British art" rewarding British artists under 50 deemed to have made outstanding work over the preceding year.

Tate Britain's director, Alex Farquharson, said the much of the work this year reflected "living in a world saturated in images under the ubiquitous influence of the internet".

Hamilton represents the weirder, more wonderful and wackier end of the artistic spectrum, often bringing surrealism and comedy to popular culture subjects. She is shortlisted for her exhibition at SculptureCenter, New York, called Lichen! Libido! Chastity!

The most eye-catching work was an enormous hyperreal sculpture of a man with his hands on his bare backside which, not surprisingly, became a popular selfie backdrop.

Hamilton's inspiration for the work was a plan in the early 1970s by designer Gaetano Pesce to make a bare male bottom the doorway for a Manhattan skyscraper. Sadly, it was unrealised.

Also in the 37-year-old artist's New York show were chastity belts made from steel and rubber and PVC pipes in the courtyard made to look like giant cigarettes.

Michelle Cotton, one of this year's judges, said Hamilton's work was a "strange combination of humour, exoticism and eroticism that has something to do with her unique and eclectic combination of interests and themes." These range from 1970s disco to Japanese kabuki theatre.

Newcastle-born Dean, 38, is shortlisted for two solo exhibitions: Sic Glyphs at South London Gallery and Qualities of Violence at de Appel arts centre, Amsterdam.

Dean's mainly sculptural work focuses on the physical manifestation of language, turning text into a material thing. He designs typefaces – which only he understands – for the texts he uses, and will often use them on his sculptures created from building materials such as concrete, corrugated metal and industrial reinforcement bars. Dean is generally called a sculptor, although he told one interviewer he was "as much an installation artist as I am a writer as I am a typographer as I am a dramatist as I am a philosopher".

He admitted an obsession with shop shutters and the masses of stickers they encourage. For the SLG show, he made and used his own stickers with his own personal text.

As to what it all means, the Time Out critic said: "You could happily spend hours trying to decode this show ... Dean's art is dense with meaning, layered with allusion. It's intensely clever and intensely visual. It makes you feel alive."

Macclesfield-born Marten, 30, is shortlisted for a show called Eucalyptus, Let Us In at Greene Natfali, New York, and a project called Lunar Nibs at last year's Venice Biennale.

She is also shortlisted for the UK's first dedicated award for sculpture, the Hepworth prize, meaning her work for two major prizes will be displayed in London and Wakefield this year.

Marten's work is described by Tate as "slippery and elusive in both form and meaning: it attracts and intrigues while also resisting interpretation and categorisation".

One fan was the Guardian's Adrian Searle, who wrote of her 2012 show at the Chisenhale gallery: "Marten makes you want to look very closely at the things she makes and the traces she leaves. Her way of thinking, with its word salads and trap-door metaphors, is dangerously infectious ... Rarely have I been so struck."

Josephine Pryde, 49, is shortlisted for her show at the CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, called lapses in Thinking By the person i Am.

The Northumberland-born artist's work could be described as conceptual photography, said Cotton. For her California show Pryde installed a 1:10 scale model of a Union Pacific freight locomotive which pulled two boxcars that visitors could ride as they viewed Pryde's photographs of disembodied female hands.

It has not been confirmed whether a miniature train will run through Tate Britain when the Turner Prize exhibition opens this year as artists can either make new work or show work for which they have been shortlisted. Similarly, there is no guarantee that the giant buttocks will travel to London.

The judging panel this year is Cotton, director of Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn; Tamsin Dillon, curator; Beatrix Ruf, director, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Simon Wallis, director, the Hepworth Wakefield. It is chaired by Farquharson.

The prize, established in 1984, has been won by artists including Gilbert & George, Rachel Whiteread, Damien Hirst and last year the design and architecture collective Assemble.