

RBC Canadian Painting Competition names finalists for \$25,000 prize

JAMES ADAMS >

PUBLISHED JULY 5, 2016

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There's been a plenitude of obituary notices for painting, especially in the past 35 years, but Canada's Royal Bank seems to believe that the reports of its death have been greatly exaggerated. Proof? On Tuesday, the bank's foundation announced the 15 finalists for the 18th annual RBC Canadian Painting Competition, culled from an impressive total of 568 submissions.

Selected by a nine-member jury organized by the Canadian Art Foundation, the 15 finalists – 10 women, five men – are vying for \$85,000 in prize money, to be awarded Sept. 20 at a ceremony at Toronto's Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery. The winner receives \$25,000 while each of the two runners-up gets \$15,000. The remaining 12 finalists go home with \$2,500 each. The top three paintings eventually will become part of RBC's corporate art collection.

The award, since its start in 1999, has sought to honour and support artists "in the early stages of their careers." As a result, the finalists almost invariably have been in their late 20s to mid 30s.

In previous competitions, finalists have been allotted by region – that is, five from Western Canada, five from Central Canada, five from Eastern – but this year there wasn't a requirement for an equal number of finalists from each region. Thus, there are six Central finalists, five from the West and four Eastern.

The following are paintings by three of the finalists:

Frame as Void

Walls Cheung, Toronto

Oil on wood, 56 cm by 43 cm



Walls Cheung

Born in Hong Kong; educated at the University of Guelph; member of the seven-person art collective vsvsvs.

"Painting is part of my everyday experience of life; it allows me to compress banal and ordinary events into lavish visual experiences with a sense of purpose. There was a ... time when the direction of my work was uncertain: I spent the time sitting and blankly staring at the walls of my studio, starting to notice that these walls held more interest to me than the paintings I was working on. The marks on the wall, like parasites, took over my studio, hijacking my intention ... forcing their way into my paintings."

Aya in Tokyo

Keita Morimoto, Toronto

Oil on canvas, 183 cm by 122 cm



Keita Morimoto

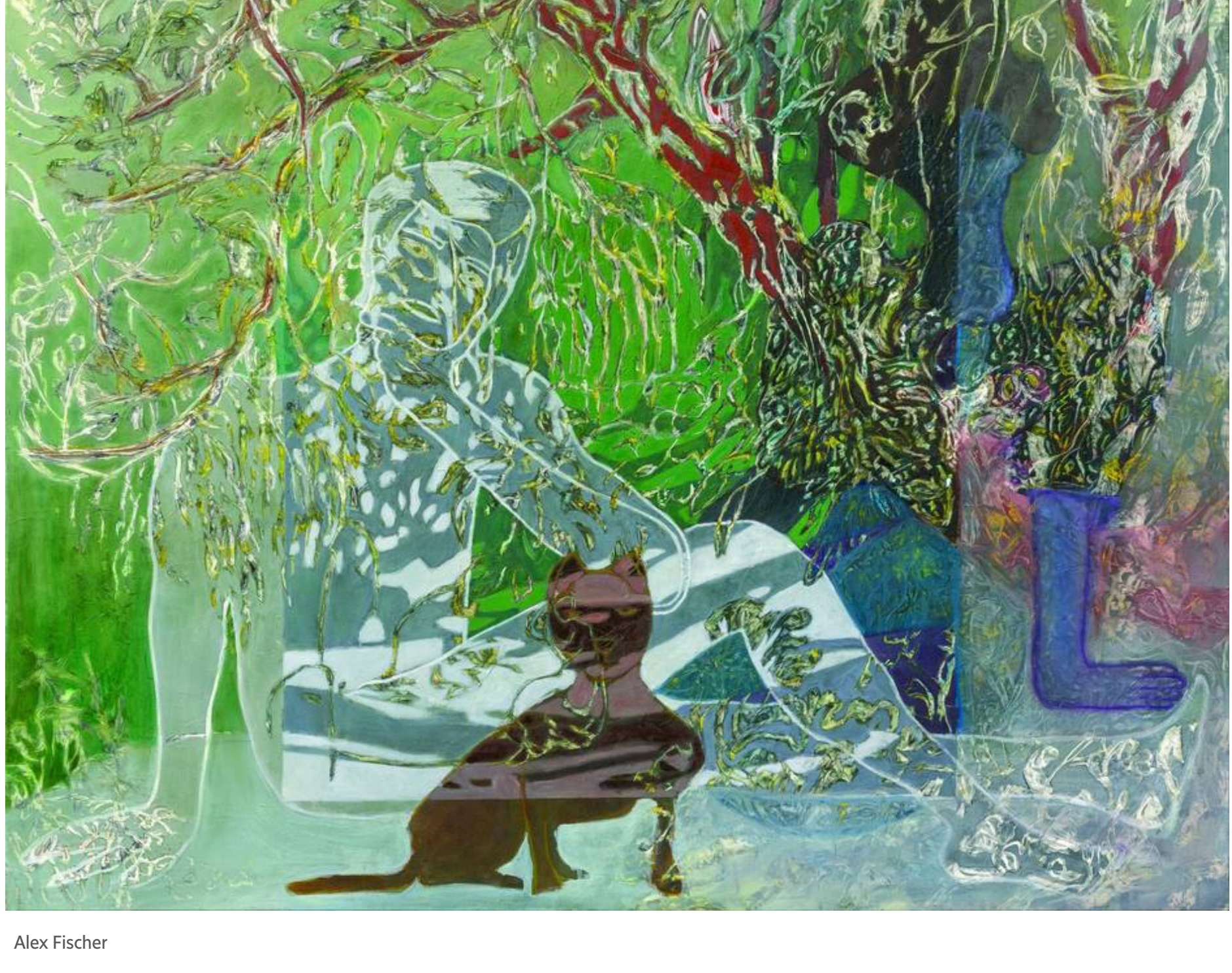
Born in Osaka; educated at Ontario College of Art and Design University, Toronto.

"This body of work depicts several of my peers as well as myself in various contexts loosely based on historical paintings from the Dutch Golden Age to Romanticism. There are strong ideological connections between the hedonism of Greek myths, Romantic/Rococo depiction of aristocratic outings, and the pleasure-oriented lifestyle of today's youth."

Pet, Casper And Hesper

Alex Fischer, Toronto

Oil and acrylic on canvas, 137 cm by 122 cm

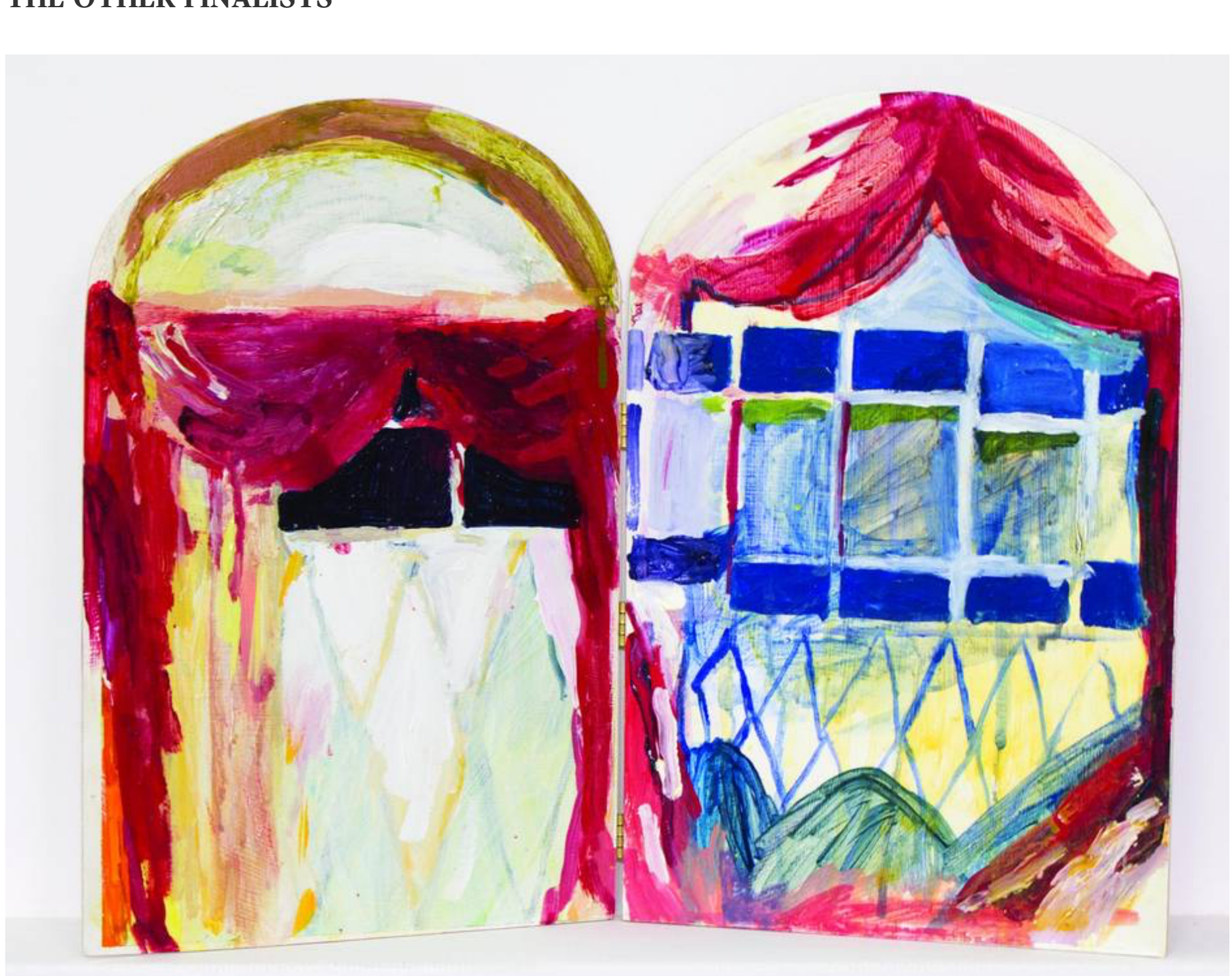


Alex Fischer

Born in Walkerton, Ont.; educated at York University, Toronto.

"I believe painting remains one of the most rich and sophisticated forms of communication. A finished painting can flatten and frame months of meditation and resolve ... I work on the frontier of expanded painting. This means that a riot of possible techniques and subjects are considered when working on a single piece. Similarly to an Abstract Expressionist, I practice a continuous reflexivity, layering and determining compositions through the creative process ..."

THE OTHER FINALISTS



Cameron Forbes

Western Canada

Cameron Forbes, Saskatoon

Brian Hunter, Winnipeg

Brian Kokoska, Vancouver/New York

M.E. Sparks, Vancouver

Angela Teng, Vancouver



Hanna Hur

Central Canada

Stephanie Hier, Toronto

Hanna Hur, Toronto/Los Angeles

Ambera Wellmann, Guelph



Justine Skahan

Eastern Canada

Nika Fontaine, Montreal/Berlin

Andrew Maize, Lunenburg, N.S.

Justine Skahan, Gatineau, Que.

Geetha Thuraiajah, Sackville, N.B.

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