



Óscar Seco wins the 2014 Focus-Abengoa International Painting Prize with his work *Little Nemo in Secoland*

- Helí García and Koldo Etxebarria Etxebarria were shortlisted for their works *Naturaleza muerta con árbol* (Still life with tree) and *Belleza más allá de las formas* (Beauty beyond forms).

12 December 2014.- The Focus-Abengoa Foundation has announced the winner of the 31st Focus-Abengoa International Painting Prize, which this year has been awarded to Óscar Seco for his work “Little Nemo in Secoland”. Of the 27 paintings selected, the jury was unanimous in their decision to give the prize to the work by Óscar Seco, “which explores a disquieting personal mythology, interwoven with visual paradoxes that have been successfully assembled by the artist with coherence and pictorial skill, and capable of integrating images borrowed from both history of art and the world of comics. In fact his ‘Little Nemo’ serves as the unifying theme for other works, thus comprising a veritable iconographic programme”.

The jury awarded second prize to the work by Helí García entitled *Naturaleza muerta con árbol (Paysage de Saint-Martin)* “in which an acute pictorial intuition articulates a sensorially persuasive place in which the borders serve as a setting for the unfolding of an informalist deconstruction, and features an unsettling series of objects that evoke a biographical memory which in turn suggests a climate of hopelessness”.

The second runner-up was the work entitled *Belleza más allá de las formas* by Koldo Etxebarria Etxebarria, which “tackles a complex spatial challenge where the geographic definition of forms, light, shadow and semi-shadow conspire to exude a melancholic restlessness”.

In addition, the work by Greta López-Chicheri García, *Desde las plataneras VI* (From the banana groves VI) received a special mention from the jury for its theme of a “landscape studded with identity elements whose metallic figuration, the product of an autonomous chromatic system, structures the space through a solid determination of pictorial planes”. Antonio Montalvo Martín’s work *Parerga* also received a special mention for “its strict composition, iconic synthesis, and limited chromatic range which combine to produce a symbolic scene in the style of a “vanitas” within a cold theatricality that seeks a subtle complicity with the spectator”.

The jury of the 31st edition of the prize was chaired by Anabel Morillo León, Director General of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation, and comprised Jaime Brihuega Sierra, Juan Carrete Parrondo, Juan Fernández Lacomba, Álvaro Fernández-Villaverde y de Silva, Guillermo Pérez Villalta, Manuel Sánchez Arcenegui and Juan Suárez Ávila. A total of 477 works were submitted on this occasion, of which 134 came from artists outside of Spain.



The Focus-Abengoa International Painting Prize, awarded for any technique and theme, is worth a total of €36,000, with a first prize of €24,000, which will be awarded to Óscar Seco, and two runners-up prizes of €6,000 each, which will be presented to Helí García and Koldo Etxebarria Etxebarria. The works of the three winners will be added to the Focus-Abengoa collection of paintings, sculptures and graphic art.

The exhibition of the works by the finalists and award-winners will be officially opened at 8.00 pm on 18 December at the Foundation's headquarters, the Hospital de los Venerables in Seville. Entry to the exhibition will be free.

The Focus-Abengoa International Painting Prize, which has a long tradition and a prestigious reputation, has been held for 31 years and has become one of the foremost European and American awards in the art world. This international prize reflects the Foundation's ongoing commitment to contemporary art and the interests and wishes of its founders, helping to promote an exchange of artistic experiences beyond our borders.

As shown in recent years, participation in this prize increases the value of works by recognised painters and opens up new opportunities for young talent, who need both financial and social support in their careers towards becoming professionals.

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation has always expressed a clear interest in all cultural activities, not only in those directly connected to the city of Seville, but all artistic, literary and scientific expressions at a national and international level.

About the prize-winners

Óscar Seco (Madrid, 1964). Artist and illustrator, he graduated in Fine Art from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He also studied at the "Arte Actual" workshop taught by Rafols Casamada at the Círculo de Bellas Artes academy in 1984.

His artistic work contains a major narrative component, and veers between illustration and animation through micro-narratives, in some cases with a historical theme.

His work has been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums in Spain (Galería Blanca Soto Madrid, Galería Ferrán Cano Barcelona, Galería Valle Orti Valencia, Galería T20 Murcia, Galería Ferrán Cano Palma de Mallorca, Galería Trinta Santiago de Compostela...) and at international fairs (Red Dot Fair London, Arco Madrid, Diva Paris, Arteba Argentina, Scope Miami, Art Cologne, Diva New York, Balelatina Basel). His work can be seen in collections such as Art and Nature, La Caixa Foundation and the Reina Sofía National Art Centre.

He has received numerous distinctions including the Aranjuez Town Council Award (Madrid), Wellington Foundation Award (Madrid), Alicante Provincial Government National Award, 1st Caja España Award, Torrelodones Town Council and Casino de Madrid Award, First Prize in the Unipublic Competition, Madrid. Infographics Award



from the Madrid Regional Government (in partnership with J. Solano), Award for a work in the 4th U.N.E.D. Painting Competition, 1994, Casa de Velázquez, and the Acquisition Award for a work at the 12th National Fine Arts Fair.

Helí García Martínez (Granada, 1983). She studied art in her final years at school in Granada before obtaining a degree in Fine Art in the same city. She finished her training at the Akademia Sztuk Pięknych in Poznan (Poland) thanks to an Erasmus scholarship.

Her distinctions include the 2009 Alonso Cano Painting Award from Granada University; First Prize in the 3rd Ramón Portillo-Ciudad de Motril painting competition; First Prize in the 13th La Latina Youth Art Competition, Madrid; Second Prize in the 27th Villanueva del Trabuco National Painting Competition (Malaga) and Second Prize in the 9th Plastic Arts Youth Competition in Granada.

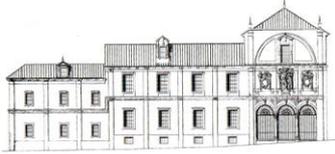
She has held a number of one solo exhibitions, including *Zooliloquios* at the Miscelanea Gallery in Barcelona this year; *Zoografía e histeria* in the BAT Alberto Cornejo Gallery in Madrid in 2013; and *Del terreno hecho paisaje*, in the Centr d'Art La Rectoria in Barcelona in 2007. She has also taken part in several group exhibitions since 2005.

Koldo Etxebarria Etxebarria (Vizcaya, 1960). He studied Fine Art at the University of the Basque Country, and on receiving his degree in 1983 joined the art department of Euskal Telebista. The artist has chosen new technologies as his means of graphic expression. Using 3D design and animation programs –and through trial and error– he has forged a new field of graphic creation.

He is the winner of several awards including the *ex aequo* Fine Arts Award from the Basque Country Association of Civil Engineers in 2012; the Ixatxak Award for an Artistic Career from the Centro San José in 2011; and the National Painting Competition Award, Art and Technology, Carsa-Arte in 2002, 2005 and 2007.

Focus-Abengoa Foundation

The Focus-Abengoa Foundation was created in 1982 as a result of the cultural work begun in 1972 by Abengoa with the publication of the works *Temas Sevillanos* (Themes of Seville) and *Iconografía de Sevilla* (Iconography of Seville). A collection of documents, books and engravings on the Kingdom of Seville and by Sevillian authors was created during the same period. This initial cultural work showed Abengoa's directors the importance of the company's involvement in activities that directly benefit society, beyond the firm's core technology work, which led to the creation of the Seville Cultural Fund Foundation. The Hospital de los Venerables, a 17th century monument and the headquarters of the Focus-Abengoa Foundation in Seville, has housed the Diego Velázquez Research Centre, a leading institution for studying and disseminating the Baroque era and the Sevillian period of this universally renowned artist, since the acquisition of Velázquez's "Santa Rufina" by the Foundation in 2007. The focus on this crucial era of the Golden Age is complemented with the legacy from Professor Alfonso



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E. Pérez Sánchez, bequeathed to the Foundation in 2011. It comprises his library, photo library, personal archive and art collection and is being catalogued to help create a library specialising in the art and culture of the Baroque period. <http://focus.abengoa.es/>

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