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ArtReview

"Sigg Prize 2025 Review: Academics and Aesthetics"

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## Sigg Prize 2025 Review: Academics and Aesthetics

Aaina Bhargava   Reviews   27 November 2025   ArtReview Asia



Heidi Lau, *Pavilion Procession*, 2025 (installation view). Photo: Lok Cheng. Courtesy M+, Hong Kong

### **The youngest group of nominees yet evince our changing relationships with new technologies and the futures they promise**

Awarded biennially, the Sigg Prize and accompanying exhibition of work by the shortlisted artists highlights practitioners from the greater China region and its diasporas, providing glimpses of the topical trends, cultural issues and events that inform their work. This year's nominees are Pan Daijing, Wong Ping, Hsu Chia-Wei, Heidi Lau and Ho Rui An, Bi Rongrong – all of whom were born during the 1980s and 90s, making them the youngest group to be nominated yet.

Although seemingly disparate, their practices do share common threads. Hsu, Lau and Bi put a twist on traditional materials, while referencing folklore and mythology. And all nominees are notable for an unexpected use of and commentary on new technologies, and for reexamining the present and its implications for the future.



Wong Ping, *Debts in the Wind*, 2025 (installation view). Photo: Lok Cheng. Courtesy M+, Hong Kong

The exhibition ends with Wong Ping's *Debts in the Wind* (2025), which comprises a satirical narrative (typical of the artist's work) defined by intentionally crude video aesthetics and dark humour to address controversial and often taboo topics. Through ten episodes, viewers are privy to the perspective of ten characters, including one 'I', who lives inside a hole on a golf course. Others include 'the businessman', 'hairy ball', 'intruder 1 and 2', 'the young man who knows the law' and 'old tree'. The artist uses golf's associations with the wealthy and elite, and connects them to local/social incidents, including a land dispute related to the building of a new golf course in Hong Kong during the 2010s, to reflect and comment on social inequalities and touchy subjects that range from politics to sex.

The previous Sigg Prize winner, [Wang Tuo](#), known for [narrative-driven films](#) that comment on socioeconomic and political issues, was chosen unanimously, according to M+ director Suhanya Raffel, due to his work's 'sophisticated imagery and intricate storytelling' and the way in which 'many layers of narratives in his epic work help foster cultural dialogue and demonstrate his unique vision of the contemporary world'.

Artists in this year's selection come with distinct and diverse practices, formally and materially. Applying the same criteria as the previous edition, Wong's unique low-grade aesthetic and strong satirical narrative could make him a front-runner. Lau's miniverse is an effective exercise in world building, yields high visual impact and benefits from prominent placement. The experiential nature of Pan's work elicits visceral reactions but is devoid of an obvious narrative. In stark contrast to both Lau and Pan, Ho and Hsu have a research-driven approach that emphasises academics over aesthetics.

From reflecting on how history is documented, to the resurgence of ancient myths and folktales, to critical reflections on how technological advances are changing society, the one clear takeaway from the exhibition is that it effectively channels discourses occurring in the contemporary art field, not only in China, but all over the world.

***Sigg Prize 2025 at M+, Hong Kong, [through 4 January 2026](#)***

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