

WINNING FUTURE

Ottawa-born printmaker **CIARA PHILLIPS** is nominated for one of the art world's most prestigious prizes

BY EMILY URQUHART

"IT'S INSANE HERE," says Ciara Phillips, her cell buzzing and email pinging in the background as we speak via Skype shortly after she was named one of four nominees for Britain's star-making Turner Prize. The artist (a long-time friend of mine) looks saucer-eyed. She's the first-ever Canadian nominated for the Turner, which counts Damien Hirst and Steve McQueen as previous recipients. The award is always controversial; past winning entries have included a painting made with elephant dung, a sectioned cow and calf in formaldehyde and an empty room in which a light switches on and off, each one inciting public ire.

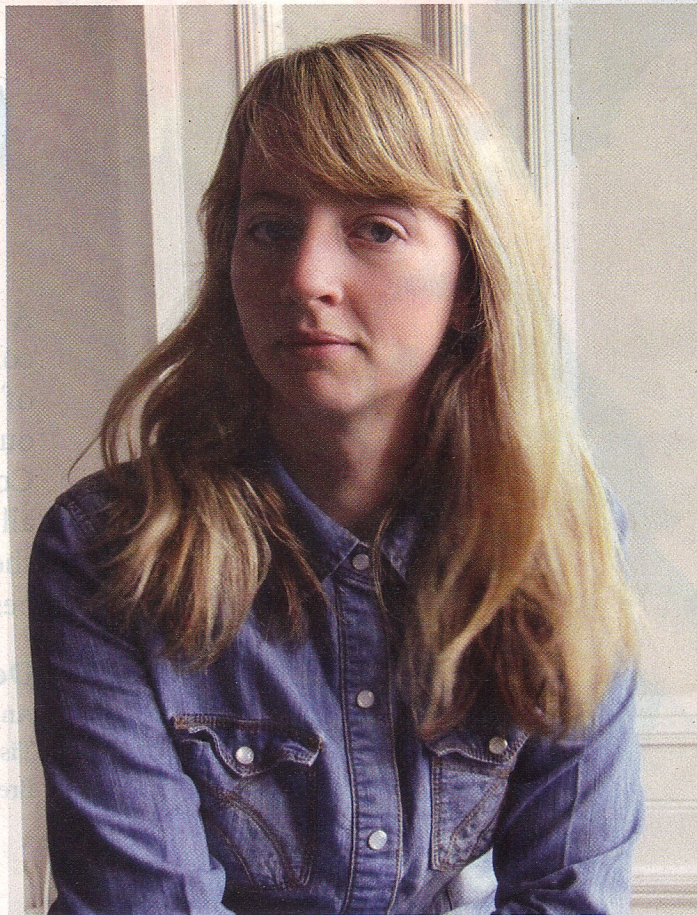
Phillips, who teaches at the Glasgow School of Art, is primarily a printmaker who creates works on paper and textiles that recall domestic arts—such as knitting, embroidery and weaving—in their cascading geometric shapes and wallpaper-like patterns. These prints are juxtaposed with word play, like *NO/OK* (2013), illustrating the thin line between acceptance and denial.

It was her print-studio installation, *Workshop* (ongoing from 2010), that caught the attention of the Turner Prize committee gallery last fall. In a space adorned with her floor-to-ceiling screen prints, erected at London's Showroom gallery, Phillips invited artists, designers and advocacy groups to print posters alongside her. An organization called Justice for Domestic Workers produced a banner that read "No 2 Slavery" and carried it straight to a rally. "It was great," says

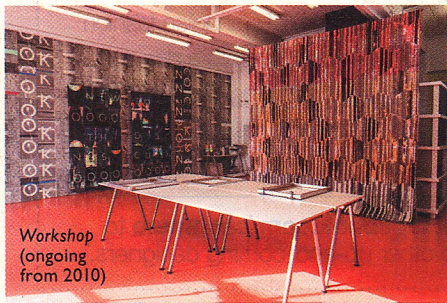
Phillips. "The work already had a destination."

Collaboration, activism and women's issues have long been a part of Phillips' oeuvre. She depicts females as strong, focused and independent, as in her 2009 untitled black-and-white alphabet photo series featuring a woman wearing a quilted racing-style jacket that Phillips designed. "A lot of my photographs present women the way I'd like them to be seen," she says. "With appeal but not looking for approval."

Workshop, alongside this year's other Turner-nominated entries, will be exhibited at the Tate Britain (Sept. 30–Jan. 4); the winner will be announced Dec. 1. Will a Canadian triumph? Only time will tell, though at least one major British gaming house places Phillips in the lead. ♦



SELECTED WORKS

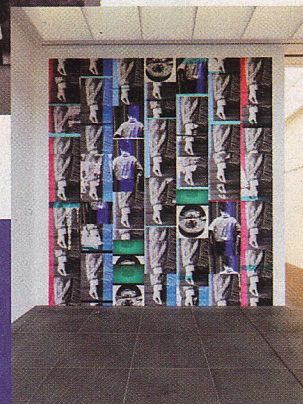


Workshop (ongoing from 2010)

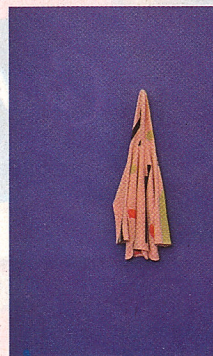


O: Tie, Necklace, Zipper (2009)

Things Put Together (2013)



Jacket (2011)



PHOTOGRAPHY: DANIEL BROOKE (WORKSHOP), KENDALL KOPPE (O: TIE, NECKLACE, ZIPPER, JACKET), ANNETTE KRADISCH (THINGS PUT TOGETHER), EDITOR: MAUREEN HALUSHAK