

# Arts and Craft Awards

## 1998/99 award winners

We received many interesting entries from all over the Commonwealth. After a very difficult judging process the following 10 winners were selected:

	Country	Medium	Placement
<b>Africa</b>			
1 James Acheampong	Ghana	Woodcarving	Canada
2 Isaac Khanyile	South Africa	Sculpture	Australia
3 Mary-Ann Soltau	Zimbabwe	Ceramics	New Zealand
<b>Asia</b>			
4 Radhika Vaidyanathan	India	Installation	South Africa
5 Yih Yiing Shia	Malaysia	Painting	Australia
6 Victor Tan Wee Tar	Singapore	Sculpture	Britain
<b>Canada and Europe</b>			
7 Raphael Vella	Malta	Painting	India
<b>Caribbean</b>			
8 Paul Attong	Trinidad & Tobago	Calligraphy	Britain
<b>South Pacific</b>			
9 Karl Millard	Australia	Sculpture	India
10 Tom Deko	Papua New Guinea	Sculpture	Zimbabwe



Taking a step, by Victor Tan Wee Tar, Singapore

## The selection process

### Impressions of a former award winner

The Commonwealth Arts and Crafts Awards is a biennial award sponsored by the Commonwealth Foundation. Every two years, 10 awards are made to young artists who show promise and initiative in their own country but have had little experience of working anywhere else. In 1998, the Foundation invited former award winner Pak Keung Wan to join the selection panel. Here are his views on the process.

*When asked to write about my impressions of being on the Arts and Crafts selection panel, it struck me that this was what the selection procedure was based on. 'Impressions' are what determined my receiving the award in 1997 and what the selection panel had once again to articulate.*

*An application for an award is an impression of the artist by the artist, and as much a part of the creative process as making the work. However, it can never be the whole picture of the artist and their art. In the judging process, without any previous knowledge of the artist's work, all I had to base my judgement on were the visuals presented by the artist and the sheets of biographical information. Positively, this helped to cast aside the notions of 'good' and 'bad' work and made the act of judging much fairer and more tangible.*

*It is difficult for an artist to 'judge' another artist's work. In my experience I often find it uncomfortable. Nevertheless, I feel the presence of an artist on such a selection panel is vital. The artist/judge has an empathy with common materials, particular processes and*

*ideas that may be latent in the work and that can be drawn out for those who are less familiar to see. This empathy also stretches to the abstract reality of what being an artist involves.*

*Being on the selection panel for the first time, I realised how important intuition was in the final decisions. I felt this intuitive sense had grown out of the selection procedure itself. What 'felt right' collectively, played a role in the final decisions.*

*As judges, we were asked to look for artists whose background showed they had something to share with others, but in my opinion this was not absolutely essential. Most artists have something to offer others – what is more important for this process is whether their art is good. And to assess that effectively, I would like to suggest an increase in the number of visuals to be submitted. Six is not enough, especially for installation artists or works with textures or significant details. The judges need a more comprehensive view of the artist's work. Despite this, I consider that the final stage of the selection procedure in which I took part was well managed.*

## Commonwealth Writers Prize

### Regional winners for 1999

(All books published in 1998)

#### 1. Best book

##### Africa

Marion Molteno (South Africa) –  
*If you can walk, you can dance.*  
Shola Books

##### Caribbean and Canada

Lawrence Scott (Trinidad) –  
*Aeldred's Sin.* Allison & Busby

##### Eurasia

Beryl Bainbridge (UK) –  
*Master Georgie.* Duckworth

##### South East Asia and South Pacific

Murray Bail (Australia) –  
*Eucalyptus.* Harvill Press.

#### 2. Best first book

##### Africa

Benjamin Kwakye (Ghana) –  
*The Clothes of Nakedness.* Heinemann

##### Caribbean and Canada

Kerri Sakamoto (Canada) –  
*The Electrical Field.*  
Alfred A Knopf Canada

##### Eurasia

Manju Kapur (India) –  
*Difficult Daughters.*  
Penguin India/Faber and Faber

##### South East Asia and South Pacific

Catherine Chidgey (New Zealand) –  
*In a Fishbone Church.*  
Victoria University Press