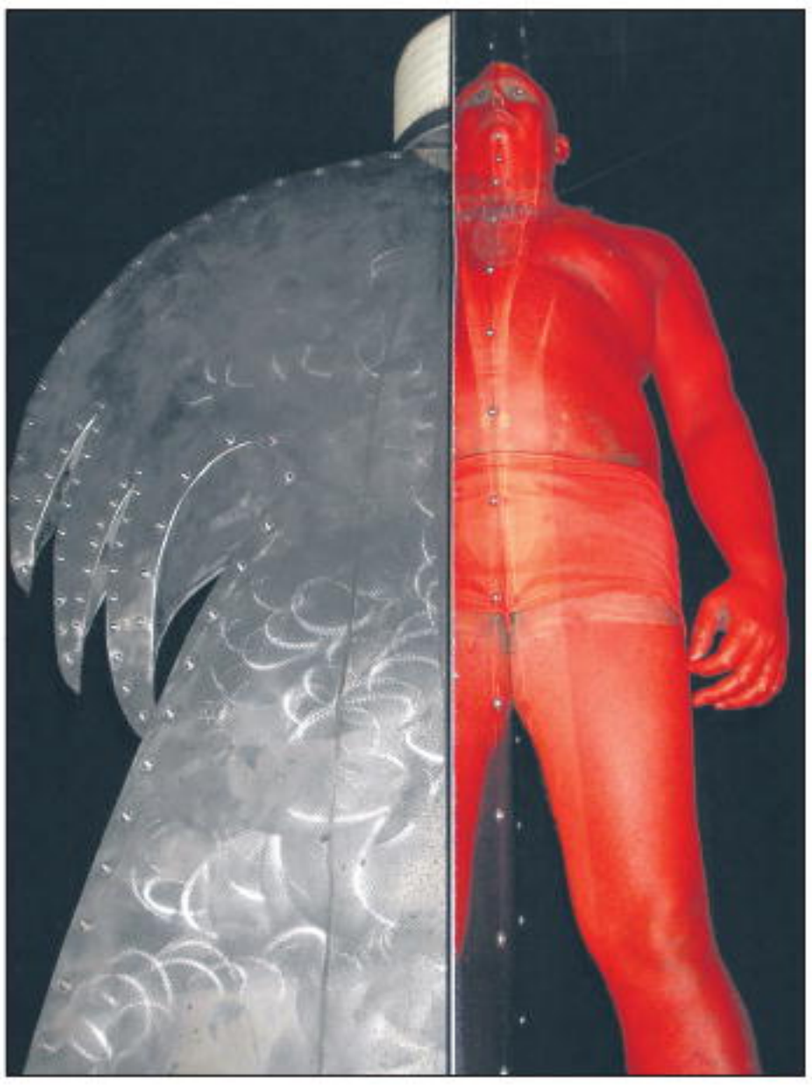

PHOTOS: DESMOND LIM, S. CHANDRASEKARAN

'I am extremely excited to be shortlisted... and also very happy to represent Singapore for the most prestigious awards in Asia'

S. Chandrasekaran, who transformed his own body into a living sculpture for Bleeding Angel (left)

'There were so many other artists from different countries, so I'm proud of that outcome'

Yeo Chee Kiong, whose playful installation in the National Museum, A Day Without A Tree (above), had white museum pillars "melting" into a milky puddle as a result of global warming

Artists in for top award

Two artists from Singapore shortlisted for the region's largest art prize of $45,000

Adeline Chia
ARTS REPORTER

TWO Singaporean artists have been shortlisted for the inaugural Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation Signature Art Prize, the region's biggest art prize.

Contemporary artists Yeo Chee Kiong and S. Chandrasekaran have made it to the shortlist of 10 artists in the region who will vie for the top prize of $45,000.

They are also in the running for three Juror's Choice Awards of $10,000 each and a $10,000 People's Choice Award for the most popular artwork. The results will be announced in October.

Yeo, 38, made the list for his playful installation in the National Museum, A Day Without A Tree. On show from last November to January, it had white museum pillars "melting" into a milky puddle as a result of global warming.

Multi-disciplinary artist Chandrasekaran, 49, was nominated for Bleeding Angel, where he transformed his body into a living sculpture in 2006.

He immersed half his body in a vessel containing wine and bacteria, which caused a film to grow over the encased part of his body. The performances were documented in photographs and video.

Organised by the APB Foundation and the Singapore Art Museum (SAM), the art prize happens once every three years and is given to artists whose works represent a significant development in contemporary art.

It is open to artists in 12 countries in which APB has breweries: Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

A panel of international jurors chose the 10 finalists from an initial shortlist of 34 artworks from these countries.

The jury comprises Singaporean contemporary Chinese painter Henri Chen KeZhan, chairman of the Board of Trustees at APB Foundation Simon Israel, SAM director Kwok Kian Chow, director-general of the office of contemporary art and culture in Thailand's Ministry of Culture, Dr Apinan Poshyananda, and president of the China Academy of Art, Professor Xu Jiang.

Says Yeo, who is a part-time lecturer in sculpture and drawing at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Ngee Ann and Temasek Polytechnics: "There were so many other artists from different countries, so I'm proud of that outcome."

His artwork at the National Museum has since been dismantled, but he says that it is possible for him to use the same concept for another building.

Chandrasekaran is based in Perth, Australia, pursuing a doctorate programme on cross-cultural behaviour in artists during performance art.

He tells Life!: "I am extremely excited to be shortlisted as one of top 10 finalists, and also I am very happy to represent Singapore for the most prestigious awards in Asia."

Other shortlisted artworks in the list include a lifelike sculpture of a donkey bearing tools on its back by Indian artist G. R. Iranna. There is also a playful series of slides where Malaysian artist Ahmad Fuad digitally adds himself to old photographs, and an installation of clothes and shoes made from banana leaf by Thai artist Chakkrit Chimnok.

Says Dr Poshyananda: "The judges were struck by the concepts behind the 10 finalists' works and how these ideas were conveyed creatively through the use of media and choice of material.

"We were impressed by the overall quality of the entries and what this signifies in the Asia-Pacific art scene."

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