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The winners of the Eastern Mediterranean stage of BE OPEN ART competition will be awarded in Nicosia

By CM Guest Columnist

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BE OPEN Art, an online art gallery set up by BE OPEN think tank, a humanitarian initiative founded by international businessperson and philanthropist Elena Baturina, is running a new competition for emerging artists, aimed to support those whose art best represents their regional, cultural and ethnic identities – BE OPEN Regional Art.

At the beginning of the year 2023, BE OPEN expert community team started selecting those young artists who best represent the artistic tradition of the Eastern Mediterranean to feature in the BE OPEN Art gallery and offer them greater visibility.

Every month, works by 20 emerging artists from Cyprus, Turkey, the Greek Dodecanese islands, and the countries of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Egypt were posted at the online gallery, for the public to select the Regional Artist of the Month. In January, February and March the title was given to Christina Kyriacou (Cyprus), Jovanna Theodosiou (UK, Cyprus) and Abdelrahman Mahmoud (Egypt) correspondingly.

Based on the number of votes by the public and BE OPEN's art community members, [Jovanna Theodosiou](#) has become the Artist of the Region for the Eastern Mediterranean. Jovanna studied Fine Art at Kingston University, UK, and currently lives and works in Nicosia, Cyprus. As a regional winner, she gets a money prize of EUR500.

The Founder of BE OPEN Elena Baturina commented on the programme's first results: *"So many young artists all over the world deserve to be seen, and BE OPEN is happy to contribute to their future success. BE OPEN Regional Art will facilitate them in getting deserved attention and an opportunity to have their say in the art and therefore affect the lives of people who appreciate it. Congratulations to Jovanna Theodosiou, her work will become the core of our first exhibition that will celebrate the amazing art of the Eastern Mediterranean. My personal favourite will be present at the exhibition as well – a work by [Aya Abu Hawash](#), a Palestinian multimedia artist, who explores intimacy, censored history and memory in the Middle East."*

Several other works by other participants of the competition selected by the results of monthly public votes will be exhibited at a bespoke event that will be held in June 2023 in a cultural centre in Nicosia, Cyprus.

BE OPEN Regional Art is a series of competitions for emerging artists, aimed to support those whose art best represents their regional, cultural and ethnic identities. Each regional stage lasts three months, therefore four stages will be run a year, with a winner named for each of them. The regional winners get a monetary prize of EUR500, while a selection of artwork best representing the region forms an exhibition, in order to share the art with the wide public and celebrate the artists involved. The ongoing stage of the regional programme is held in the Caribbean, and then BE OPEN Regional Art will travel to Southeast Asia and Central Africa at the end of the year.

