

Anonymous Was A Woman

Anonymous Was A Woman awards \$375,000 to 15 women artists over the age of 40

15 artists receive unrestricted awards of \$25,000 apiece in recognition of their work



Images: Barbara Kasten, Amanda Ross-Ho, Dindga McCannon.

December 14, 2023—Anonymous Was A Woman (AWAW) today announced the recipients of its 2023 awards, which recognize 15 woman-identifying artists over 40 years of age who have made significant contributions, while continuing to create new work, and who are each at a critical juncture in their practice. Each recipient receives an unrestricted award of \$25,000.

While AWAW typically recognizes ten artists per year, donations from two generous supporters have enabled the organization to recognize five additional artists. Three additional awards have been made possible by the Meraki Artist Award, an initiative funded by a Boston-based philanthropist who wishes to remain anonymous at this time; two additional awards are made possible by anonymous donors.

The 2023 Anonymous Was A Woman award recipients are:

Carolina Caycedo, 45, California

Liz Collins, 55, New York

Steffani Jemison, 42, New York

Stanya Kahn, 55, California

Barbara Kasten, 87, Illinois

Athena LaTocha, 55, New York

Candice Lin, 44, California

Suchitra Mattai, 50, California

Dindga McCannon, 76, Pennsylvania

linn meyers, 55, Washington, D.C.

Erika Ranee, 58, New York

Amanda Ross-Ho, 48, California

Drew Shiflett, 72, New York

Cauleen Smith, 56, California

Saya Woolfalk, 44, New York

Winners were chosen from among a competitive pool of applicants recommended by a group of distinguished art historians, curators, writers, and artists who serve as anonymous nominators. The 2023 award recipients range in age from 42 to 87, and work in mediums including painting, installation, performance, photography, film/video, and new media. The “no strings-attached” award is intended to provide them freedom to continue development of their creative vision. *Bios of each recipient follow.*

Anonymous Was a Woman was founded by artist Susan Unterberg in 1996. In 2018, after more than two decades of anonymity, Unterberg revealed her identity as the founder and sole patron of the award program. That news elevated the profile of the award, and led to several events and public discussions about making art as a woman, featuring past award recipients. Until 2021, the funding for AWAW came solely from Unterberg. AWAW has awarded \$7 million to 295 artists since 1996. In 2022, Anonymous Was A Woman introduced an annual Environmental Art Grant in collaboration with NYFA, which provides \$250,000 to woman-identifying artists in support of environmental art projects that inspire thought, action, and ethical engagement.

“I am delighted to congratulate this year’s award recipients—a group of artists who represent a wide spectrum of perspectives, backgrounds, and formal practices,” said Unterberg. “When I started Anonymous Was A Woman, I did so to address a need that I felt personally and observed among my peers. Nearly a quarter century later, that need persists. It is an honor to come to know these artists and their practices, and I am very excited to see what the award recipients do next.”

While it is not need-based, the award has often had a transformative impact on the lives and work of the recipients, many of whom received the award at critical junctures in their careers or before they had received wider recognition. Award winners have gone on to present solo exhibitions at institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Venice Biennale, among many others; to create important public art projects, performances, and installations; and to receive significant critical acclaim.

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Anonymous Was A Woman is an unrestricted award of \$25,000 that enables women-identifying artists over 40 years of age and at a significant junction in their lives or careers, to continue to grow and pursue their work. The Award is given to ten artists a year in recognition of an artist's accomplishments, artistic growth, originality, and potential; in 2021, 2022, and 2023, funds have been provided for additional awards beyond the annual ten. The Award is not need-based and is by nomination only. The name of the award program, Anonymous Was A Woman, refers to a line in Virginia Woolf’s “A Room of One’s Own.” As the name implies, nominators and those associated with the program have, until this point, been unnamed. Artist Susan Unterberg created the Award in 1996, partly in response to the decision of the National Endowment for the Arts to cease support of individual artists. Each year, an outstanding group of distinguished women—art historians, curators, writers, and previous winners from across the country—serve as nominators. To date, over 600 notable women have participated as nominators and panelists, and the Award has been given to 280 artists. In 2022, Anonymous Was A Woman introduced an Environmental Art Grant in collaboration with NYFA, which provided \$250,000 to women-identifying artists in support of environmental art projects that inspire thought, action, and ethical engagement.

For more information on Anonymous Was A Woman, please visit anonymouswasawoman.org.

The Meraki Artist Award

The Meraki Artist Award is a new initiative that supports the work of artists at a critical moment in their career who embody meraki (may-rah-kee), a Greek word meaning to do something with soul, love, or creativity. The Meraki Artist Award is funded by a Boston-based philanthropist who wishes to remain anonymous at this time.

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Image Credits (left to right):

Barbara Kasten, *Collision 5 T*, 2016, Digital chromogenic print on Fujiflex Crystal Archive.

Amanda Ross-Ho, *ALL THAT JAZZ (KNIFE EDGE/PLACES)*, 2023. Gallon glass jars, distilled water, imitation calfskin, thread, birch plywood, Wet and Wild Blush (BED OF ROSES). Courtesy the artist, ILY2, Portland, OR, and Mitchell-Innes and Nash, NY. Photo: Mario Galucci.

Dindga McCannon, *I Don't Have a Husband – I Just Don't Have Time*, 2013. Overdyed cotton fabrics, paints, felts, papers and yarns. Photo by Nick Ghiz.

2023 Anonymous Was A Woman Award Recipients

Carolina Caycedo (b. London, 1978) is a Colombian multidisciplinary artist living in Los Angeles. Her immense geographic photographs, lively artist's books, hanging sculptures, performances, films, and installations are not merely art objects but gateways into larger discussions about how we treat each other and the world around us. Through her studio practice and fieldwork with communities impacted by large-scale infrastructure and other extraction projects, she invites viewers to consider the unsustainable pace of growth under capitalism and how we might embrace resistance and solidarity. Process and participation are central to Caycedo's practice, she contributes to the reconstruction of environmental and historical memory as a fundamental space for climate and social justice. Informed by Indigenous and feminist epistemologies, she confronts the role of the colonial gaze in the privatization and dispossession of land and water. Caycedo is a 2023 United States Artists fellow and 2023–24 Getty Research Institute Artist in Residence.

Liz Collins (b. 1968 Alexandria, VA) is a Brooklyn, NY-based artist who works with a broad range of textile techniques and materials to make fiber works that vary in scale and form. She has collaborated with design brands on collections of functional textiles, and produced large-scale public art works and performances. Solo exhibitions and installations have been at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY; the Tang Museum, Saratoga Springs, NY; Luis de Jesus, Los Angeles, CA; Rossana Orlandi, Milan, Italy; and Touchstones Rochdale in England, among others. Collins has been in group shows in many museums and galleries including New York institutions the New Museum, the Drawing Center, The Leslie Lohman Museum, and at the ICA/Boston and the Addison Gallery in Massachusetts. Collins' honors include a USA Fellowship (2006), ma Civitella Ranieri Fellowship (2023), the Drawing Center Open Sessions program (2018-20), and the Two Trees Cultural Subsidy Studio Program (2020-). Several of her works are currently included in "Woven Histories: Textiles and Modern Abstraction", an exhibition that is traveling from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to the National Galleries of Art in Washington DC and Canada, and then to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 2025, Collins will have a mid-career retrospective at the RISD Museum with an accompanying monograph. Her BFA and MFA in Textiles are from Rhode Island School of Design.

Stanya Kahn (b. 1968, San Francisco, CA) is an interdisciplinary artist working in film and video, drawing, painting, sculpture and installation, sound and writing. Humor, pathos and the uncanny are central to a hybrid media practice that seeks to re-work relationships between fiction and document, absurdity and distress, narrative time and the synchronic time of impulse. In a long-term investigation of how rhetoric gains and loses power, Kahn's projects often situate language in the foreground of works that are dialectically driven by the demands and of the body. Sometimes language falls away altogether. Recent solo exhibitions include shows at Institute for Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Wexner Center for the Arts; MoMA/PS1; the New Museum, New York; the British Film Institute/London Film Festival; Rotterdam International Film Festival; Susanne Vielmetter, Los Angeles; Marlborough, New York; The Pit, Los Angeles; and Cornerhouse, Manchester, UK. Select group exhibitions include the Yokohama Triennial (forthcoming 2024), Wesleyan Art Gallery, the Walker Art Center, CAM/St. Louis, the Gwanju Biennial (2018), Hammer Museum, New Museum, MOCA/SD, Fernley Astrup/Norway,

Transmediale, and the California Biennial (2010). Her collaborative work with Harry Dodge has shown at Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, the Whitney Biennial (2008), Sundance Film Festival, MOCA/LA, MoMA/NY, ZKM/Karlsruhe, among others. Kahn was a 2012 Guggenheim Fellow in Film/Video. She was a contributing writer and actor in feature film *By Hook or By Crook*. Her writings and drawings appear in multiple publications including *Die Laughing* (2nd Cannons), *Moving Image* (MIT Press), *It's Cool, I'm Good* (Cornerhouse), and *Abstract Video* (UC Press.) Her work is in the collections of the Hammer Museum, MoMA/NY, LACMA, the Walker Art Museum and among others.

Steffani Jemison (b. 1981, Berkeley, CA) is an artist in Brooklyn, New York. Jemison has presented solo exhibitions and commissioned performances at JOAN Los Angeles, Greene Naftali, Mass MoCA, Jeu de Paume, CAPC Bordeaux, the Museum of Modern Art, LAXART, and other venues. Her work has been included in significant generational exhibitions, including Greater New York 2021 and the Whitney Biennial 2019. Her work is part of many permanent public collections, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Kadist, and the Stedelijk Museum. Jemison is the author of *A Rock, A River, A Street* (Primary Information, 2022). Her publishing project, Future Plan and Program, published books by Harold Mendez, Martine Syms, Jibade-Khalil Huffman, Jina Valentine, and Szu-Han Ho. With Quincy Flowers, she co-founded at Louis Place, a platform for writers.

Barbara Kasten (b. 1936, Chicago, Illinois) received her BFA from the University of Arizona in 1959 and MFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts in 1970. She is the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, two National Endowment for the Arts Grants, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Space as a stage of a changing reality is the central motif of Barbara Kasten's photography and film installations, which she produces in an 'interdisciplinary performance' between photography, sculpture, architecture, and painting, an approach going back to Kasten's roots as a painter and sculptor. Since the 1970s, Kasten has been constructing expansive installations of 'architectural props' made with acrylic, mirrors, and wood in front of the camera for her abstract photographs and as sculptural installations. Her first major museum survey and monograph in the U.S., *Barbara Kasten: Stages*, originated at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, and traveled to the Graham Foundation, Chicago and MOCA Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles (2015-16). The exhibition *Barbara Kasten: Scenarios* at the Aspen Art Museum (2020–21) focused exclusively on Kasten's sculpture and video installations. In 2020 and 2022, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg and Sammlung Goetz, Munich presented her first European museum survey, *Barbara Kasten WORKS*. A forthcoming installation will open at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea, England, in June 2024. Other recent international exhibitions include *Re-Inventing Piet Mondrian and the Consequences*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg and Wilhelm Hack Museum, Germany (2023–24); *Women in Abstraction*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, and Museo Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain (2021); the 2020 *Busan Biennale*, South Korea; *Shape of Light: 100 Years of Photography and Abstract Art*, Tate Modern, London, UK (2018); *Sharjah Biennial 14*, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE (2019); *Bauhaus and America*, LWL - Landesmuseum Münster (2018). Among many other public and private collections, her work is in the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York; Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Contemporary Art, LA; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Her latest monograph, "Barbara Kasten: Architecture & Film (2015-2020)," features interdisciplinary works created since 2015.

Athena LaTocha (b. 1969, Anchorage, Alaska) creates massive works on paper exploring the relationship between human-made and natural worlds. The artist incorporates materials such as ink, lead, earth, and wood, while responding to the storied and, at times, traumatic histories that are rooted in place. Her work is in the collections of institutions such as the Plains Art Museum, Fargo, ND; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Forge Project, Taghkanic, NY; Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA. LaTocha is the recipient of artist grants and awards, among them the Saint-Gaudens Memorial Fellowship (2023); Rockefeller Brothers Fund Pocantico Art Prize in Visual Arts (2022); Eiteljorg Fellowship, the National Academy Affiliated Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, and NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship in Painting (2021); Joan Mitchell Foundation (2019, 2016); Wave Hill (2018); and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation (2013). She received her B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her M.F.A. from Stony Brook University, New York. The artist divides her time between Peekskill, NY and New York City.

Candice Lin (b. 1979, Concord, MA) is an interdisciplinary artist who works with installation, drawing, video, and living materials and processes, such as mold, mushrooms, bacteria, fermentation, and stains. Her work deals with the politics of representation and issues of race, gender, and sexuality through histories of colonialism and diaspora. She has had recent solo exhibitions at Canal Projects, New York (2023); Spike Island, Bristol, UK (2022); The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Cambridge (2022), Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2021); Guangdong Times Museum, Guangzhou, China (2021); and the Govett Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand (2020). Lin's work was included in the 13th & 14th Gwangju Biennales (2021, 2023); 59th Venice Biennale, The Milk of Dreams (2022); and Prospect.5 Triennial, Yesterday We Said Tomorrow (2022) among numerous others. She is an Associate Professor of Art at the University of California Los Angeles.

Suchitra Mattai (b. 1973, Guyana) is a multi-disciplinary artist of Indo-Caribbean descent who creates mixed-media paintings, sculptures, and installations that often combine processes and materials associated with the domestic sphere, such as embroidery, weaving, and found clothing, in order to honor the labor of women. Past projects include group exhibitions at the MCA Chicago, Crystal Bridges Museum, the Sharjah Biennial, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the MCA Denver. Upcoming solo exhibitions include the ICA San Francisco, the Tampa Museum of Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and Socrates Sculpture Park. Her works are represented in public and private collections which include Crystal Bridges Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum, the Nasher Museum of Art, the Tampa Museum of Art, the Joslyn Museum of Art, the Crocker Museum of Art, the University of Michigan Museum of Art. Mattai is also a recipient of a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. She received an MFA in painting and drawing and an MA in South Asian art from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Dindga McCannon (b. 1947, New York City) has spent the last 55 years as a fiber artist, painter, printmaker, muralist, writer, wearable art-maker and illustrator of books for young adults. She was one of the founding members of "Where We At, Black Women Artists" (1971) and a lifelong member of the Weusi Artist Collective, two important groups of the early Black arts movement. She has had recent solo shows at Friedman Gallery, New York, and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London, and was recently featured in the Survey Section of Art Basel 2022 with Friedman Gallery. Her work is in numerous museum

collections including the Brooklyn Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Phillips Collection, RISD Museum, American Folk Art Museum, and the Woodmere Museum.

linn meyers (b. 1968, Washington, D.C.) sees her work as an act of resistance to the ever-increasing speed and scale of the world in which we are living. She dedicates her practice to tenderness, and an unhurried, deliberate approach to image-making. meyers makes paintings, drawings, prints, and large-scale, site-specific wall drawings. Systems of mark-making based on the grid – a structure that implies stability, organization, and uniformity – propel her compositions. The slippages and imperfection of her human touch inevitably challenge the order and predictability of the grid. meyers earned her BFA from Cooper Union and her MFA from California College of the Arts. Her works have been included in exhibitions and permanent collections in public and private venues including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Phillips Collection in Washington, DC, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Drawing Center, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Baltimore Museum of Art, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Amore Pacific Museum of Art in South Korea, and the British Museum, London, among others. meyers has received numerous awards and fellowships, including a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award, and several grants from the DC Commission on the Arts. She divides her time between Washington, DC, and Los Angeles.

Erika Ranee (b. 1965, Los Angeles, CA) explores the boundless approaches to abstract painting. She has been awarded several grants and fellowships, including as a double recipient of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA)/Fellowship in Painting (1996 and 2021); an AIM Fellowship from the Bronx Museum; and as a resident artist at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She has shown extensively throughout New York and in 2020 she exhibited in her first international show at Wild Palms in Dusseldorf, Germany. Her work has recently been featured in exhibitions at Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, Platform Project Space, the Milton Resnick Pat Passlof Foundation, The Landing Gallery in Los Angeles, CA, Hollis Taggart Gallery in Southport, CT, and in a solo exhibition at Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Studio Museum. Ranee received her B.A. from Wesleyan University, her B.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts and an M.F.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. She works in New York.

Amanda Ross-Ho (b. 1975, Chicago, IL) is an interdisciplinary artist and a professor of sculpture at the University of California, Irvine. She holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from the University of Southern California. She has exhibited, lectured, and taught internationally. Exhibitions include the 2008 Whitney Biennial, The Museum of Modern Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, The Walker Art Center, the Bonner Kunstverein and the Vleshaal Contemporary Art Center. Recently she was included in *Crack Up Crack Down*, the 33rd Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts curated by Slavs and Tatars, and a solo exhibition at Kunsthall Stavanger, Norway. She has presented commissioned public works at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; City Hall Park, New York; the Parcours Sector of Art Basel Switzerland; and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. In 2024 she will install her first permanent public sculpture on the campus of Carnegie Mellon University, and will publish a ten year career monograph with the Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art, Middelburg, Netherlands. Ross-Ho's work takes the form of experimental archival

research, driven by conflicting impulses towards sentimentality and clinical objectivity. Embracing contradictions between forensics and theatre, her work's aim is not to establish clarity or secure links to the past, but to closely analyze, disarticulate, and exaggerate artifacts into poetic forms. The resulting reconfigurations suggest a type of liberated futurity. Her work aims to monumentalize the transitory and often corrupted relationships between time, form, witness, and memory. Ross-Ho lives and works in Los Angeles.

Drew Shiflett (b. 1951, Chicago, IL) is a visual artist living and working in New York City and East Hampton, NY. She has maintained a studio practice in New York for over four decades and is known for her layered, collaged paper and fabric constructions. From 1979 to the present, her work embodies a synthesis of drawing, relief, and sculpture. With each body of work she has produced, she examines surface, structure, and texture through pieces that are defined by process and material. Her early involvement with drawing and sculpture led to a greater focus on paper, canvas, and the grid. Shiflett has had solo exhibitions at The Arts Center at Duck Creek, East Hampton; Lesley Heller Gallery, New York; Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton; The Drawing Room, East Hampton; Islip Art Museum, East Islip; The InterArt Center, New York; White Columns, New York; and Fashion Moda, Bronx. Her work has also been shown nationally and internationally at institutions including The Drawing Center (New York), Weatherspoon Art Museum (Greensboro, NC), Sculpture Center (NYC), Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, (Louisville, KY), A&A Gallery, Yale University School of Art (New Haven, CT), Baltimore Museum of Art, and Kunststiftung K52 (Berlin, Germany). Shiflett is the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Artists' Fellowship award in printmaking/drawing/book arts (2009), and in sculpture (1990); a Mid Atlantic/NEA Regional Visual Arts Fellowship award in sculpture (1993); and a Guggenheim Fellowship award in fine arts (1992). Her work appears in private and public collections that include Guild Hall Museum, the Baltimore Art Museum, and the Islip Art Museum. She received an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Hoffberger School of Painting, and a BA from Columbia College Chicago.

Cauleen Smith (b. 1967, Sacramento, CA) was raised in Sacramento, California and lives in Los Angeles. Smith is faculty in the UCLA School of Arts and Architecture. Smith holds a BA in Creative Arts from San Francisco State University and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Theater Film and Television. Smith's short films, feature film, an installation and performance work were showcased at International Film Festival Rotterdam 2019. Smith has had solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, MassMoCA and LACMA. Smith is the recipient of the following awards: Rockefeller Media Arts Award, Creative Capital Film / Video, Chicago 3Arts Grant, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Chicago Expo Artadia Award, and Rauschenberg Residency, Herb Alpert Awards in the Arts in Film and Video (2016), United States Artists Award (2017), inaugural recipient of the Ellsworth Kelly Award (2016), recipient of the Studio Museum Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize (2020), and Guggenheim Fellowship (2021).

Saya Woolfall (b. 1979, Gifu, Japan) creates works of art that incorporate the African-American, European-American, and Japanese influences of her family background. Also alluding to science fiction, feminist theory, mythology, anthropology, archaeology, Eastern religion, and fashion, she re-imagines a utopian, empathic world through painting, sculpture, video, performance, multimedia

installations, and public artworks. Woolfalk has presented multimedia works and performances at museums, galleries, and alternative spaces throughout the U.S. and in Asia including recent institutional solo shows at the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA; the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY, and forthcoming at the Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH. In 2015 the Seattle Art Museum commissioned Woolfalk to create a major multimedia installation for the traveling exhibition *Disguise: Masks and Global African Art*. The museum later acquired the installation where it remains on extended view. She recently completed a multi-part, multimedia installation, commissioned by the Pennsylvania Academy of Art (now on view there in the exhibition *Rising Sun: Artists in an Uncertain America*). The Coretta Scott King Peace and Meditation Garden (Atlanta), created by Woolfalk with the support of Hulu, was dedicated at the King Center in April 2023. Among her other commissioned works are two murals for the Metropolitan Transit Authority in conjunction with the Percent for Art Program; a mural for a public school in Queens for the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs School Construction Authority; and a basketball court in Marcus Garvey Park, supported by the New York City Parks Department and Publicolor.