SKOWHEGAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE
ANNOUNCES 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION & 2016 AWARDS DINNER

Awards reflect Skowhegan's core values: an unwavering commitment to supporting the creative process, community engagement, and courageous self-expression.

Awards will be given in New York City on Tuesday, April 26, 2016 to David C. Driskell, Julie Mehretu, Shelley and Donald Rubin, and The Committee to Save Cooper Union

New York, NY (March 23, 2016)—The Skowhegan 70th Anniversary Celebration and 45th annual Skowhegan Awards will be held Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at The Plaza Hotel in New York City. Event Co-Chairs David Beitzel (A ’82) & Darren Walker, Ann & Graham Gund, and Paul Pfeiffer (F ’05, ’10) salute the 2016 honorees:

Artist David C. Driskell (Alumnus ’53; Faculty ’76, ’78, ’91, ’04; Governor ’75–’80, ’82–’89; Trustee ’89–’02; Advisory Board Member) will receive the inaugural Skowhegan Lifetime Legacy Award. David is one of the world's leading authorities on African-American art. He is highly regarded as an artist, scholar, curator, and writer. His many honors include the National Humanities Medal, conferred by President Bill Clinton, three Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships, and 13 honorary doctoral degrees in art history. Mark H. C. Bessire, Director of the Portland Museum of Art, will present the award.

Artist Julie Mehretu will be awarded the Skowhegan Medal for Painting. Celebrated for her large-scale gestural paintings, the Ethiopian-born Mehretu addresses both the formal concerns of color and line and the social concerns of power, history, globalism, and personal narrative. A MacArthur Fellowship recipient, she is an advocate for Ethiopian culture and films, and a founding member of Denniston Hill, an artists’ residency in the southern Catskills. Dinner Chair and Skowhegan Governor Paul Pfeiffer (F ’05, ’10) will present the award.

Shelley and Donald Rubin will be presented with the Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Award for Outstanding Patronage of the Arts. The Rubins believe that art is a vital tool for fostering civic participation and promoting positive social change. They are co-founders of the Rubin Museum of Art, which connects the art and ideas of the Himalayas and South Asia to the lives of busy New Yorkers; and of the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, which was recently re-organized to focus exclusively on art and social justice. Additionally, in 2011 Shelley founded A Blade of Grass, the only nonprofit that exclusively supports and presents socially engaged art. Skowhegan Governor Mel Chin (F ’95) will present the award.

The Committee to Save Cooper Union will be honored with the Governors’ Award for Outstanding Service to Artists. CSCU is a group of faculty, students, and alumni that seeks to safeguard philanthropist and industrialist Peter Cooper's vision that The Cooper Union, founded in 1859, be merit-based and tuition-free. CSCU formed in 2013 when the school began charging tuition, and today is working with the administration, the Trustees, and the New York Attorney General's office to find a practical path back to a scholarship model; financial stability; and transparent governance. Like Skowhegan, Cooper's success, diversity and reputation for artistic excellence is a result of its commitment to accepting individuals based on potential rather than financial circumstance. Helen Molesworth, Chief Curator, MoCA, will present the award.
In the spirit of Skowhegan’s democratic and egalitarian campus, where 95% of participating artists receive scholarships to attend, Dorothy Lichtenstein, Jeanne Donovan Fisher, and Agnes Gund have generously underwritten the Class of 2015 at this celebratory event.

They will be joined by generations of Skowhegan artists and patrons of the arts, including: Eleanor Acquavella Dejoux & Morgan Dejoux, Torrence Boone & Ted Chapin, Francis Cape (A ’89, F ’08), Francesco Clemente (F ’83), David Coggins (A ’01), Paul Dierkes, Mark di Suvero (F ’83), Oliver Frankel, Robert Gober (F ’94, ’16), Neil Goldberg (F ’15), Maria-Elena González (F ’05), Agnes Gund, Richard Haas (F ’82, ’84), Katie Herzog (A ’07), Tracey Hummer, Meredith James (A ’11), Jennie C. Jones (A ’96, F ’14), Byron Kim (A ’86, F ’99, ’13), Noel Kirnon, Joyce Kozloff (F ’98), Jo Carole Lauder, Raymond Learsy, Glenn Ligon (F ’98, ’13), Laura Lobdell (A ’99), Damian & Zoya Loeb, Marie Lorenz (A ’04, F ’13), Íñigo Manglano-Ovalle (F ’02), Charles Marburg (A ’77), Marlene McCarty (F ’11), Donald Moffet (F ’04), Malcolm Morley (F ’70), Odili Donald Odita (F ’15), James Opinski (A ’77), Sarah Oppenheim (F ’15), Janet Paxton Gardner (A ’60), Liza Phillips (A ’89), David & Susan Rockefeller, Sean Ryan (A ’03), Carolee Schneemann (F ’01), Beverly Semmes (A ’82, F ’01, ’05), Carolee Server, Lisa Sigal (A ’86, F ’06), Avery Singer (A ’13), Ursula von Rydingstorf (F ’88), and Cullen Washington, Jr. (A ’10).

A limited edition, 70th Anniversary Poster by Matthew Brannon (F ’13), generously underwritten by Samuels Creative & Co., will be released at the event and available for sale.

For 70 years, Skowhegan has brought together emerging and established artists on its remote Maine campus for an intense and immersive summer of artmaking. The early roster of impressive attendees—paired with the founders’ commitment to aesthetic and intellectual freedom—established the school as a prominent force in American art. Today, it remains a profound experience where artists can push the boundaries of their practice and learn from a diverse group of peers and mentors within a rural landscape steeped in the legacy of those artists who came before.

Attendance at the dinner is by pre-registration only. Tickets begin at $1,000; tables begin at $10,000. Dinner proceeds support Skowhegan’s mission and sustain its need-blind admissions.

A – Skowhegan alumni
F – Skowhegan faculty

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Press coverage by advance confirmation only.

www.skowheganart.org/awardsdinner2016