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

November 16, 2022—Anonymous Was A Woman (AWAW) today announced the recipients of its 2022 awards, which recognize 15 women-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 per year for 2021, 2022, and 2023 are 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.

Until last year, the funding for AWAW came solely from Susan Unterberg, the founder of Anonymous Was A Woman, who herself was “anonymous” until 2018, when she revealed her identity in order to become a more vocal champion of women artists. Anonymous Was A Woman has awarded $7 million to 280 artists since 1996.

The 2022 Award recipients are:

Dr. micha cárdenas, 45, California – Installation/Sculpture/AR
Syd Carpenter, 69, Pennsylvania – Sculpture
Yreina D. Cervántez, 69, California – Painting/Drawing, Murals
Donna Conlon, 56, Panama – Interdisciplinary
Abigail DeVille, 41, New Jersey – Installation/Sculpture, Painting, Set Design
Leslie Hewitt, 45, New York – Photography/Sculpture
Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, 50, Puerto Rico – Film/Video (Moving Image)
Mary Lovelace O’Neal, 80, California – Painting/Mixed Media
Jaune Quick-to-see-Smith, 82, New Mexico – Painting/Printmaking
Wendy Red Star, 41, Oregon – Photography, Painting/Drawing  
Mira Schor, 72, New York – Painting  
Coreen Simpson, 80, New York – Photography/Design  
Ka-Man Tse, 41, New York – Photography/Video  
Philemona Williamson, 70, New Jersey – Painting  
Shirley Woodson, 86, Michigan – Painting

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 2022 award recipients range in age from 41 to 86, 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.

“I am delighted to congratulate this year’s award recipients—a group of artists who represent a multitude of viewpoints, backgrounds, and formal practices,” said Unterberg. “We are able to honor five additional artists this year, thanks to the generosity of three donors—two of whom are anonymous. When I started Anonymous Was A Woman, I did so to address a need that I felt personally and observed among my peers. I am encouraged that it has inspired other individuals to join us in advancing our mission—particularly as commercial and institutional support for women-identifying artists remains insufficient, with recent data studies revealing that only eleven percent of art acquired by the country’s leading museums was by women, and that the sale of women’s artwork makes up only two percent of the global auction market.”

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 junctions 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.

Anonymous Was A Woman  
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**


Wendy Red Star, *Her Dreams Are True (Julia Bad Boy)*, 2021, Lithograph.

2022 Anonymous Was A Woman Award Recipients

Dr. micha cárdenas, Ph.D., (b 1977, Miami, FL) is an artist, and Associate Chair and Associate Professor of Performance, Play & Design, and Associate Professor of Critical Race & Ethnic Studies, at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she directs the Critical Realities Studio. Her book Poetic Operations (Duke UP 2022) proposes algorithmic analysis as a method for developing a trans of color poetics. Poetic Operations won the Gloria Anzaldúa Book Prize in 2022 from the National Women’s Studies Association. cárdenas’ augmented reality artwork Sin Sol won the 2020 Impact Award at the Indiecade Festival. She is currently working on Oceanic, a multi-disciplinary artwork about climate change’s effects on the oceans and a science fiction novel about the many worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics. She is a first generation Colombian American. Her solo and collaborative artworks have been presented in museums, galleries, and biennials including Tangled Arts + Disability in Toronto (2022), Transmediale in Berlin (2021), the alt_cph Copenhagen Biennial (2020); the Stamps Gallery (2020) in Ann Arbor; the Thessaloniki Biennial (2019) in Greece; Arnolfini Gallery (2019); De La Warr Pavillion (2019).

Syd Carpenter (b. 1953, Pittsburgh, PA) is a sculptor living in Philadelphia. She studied painting and ceramics at the Tyler School of Art, receiving her MFA degree in 1976. Her work, focusing on African-American farms and gardens, has been shown at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian, Fuller Craft Museum, the Tang Museum of Skidmore College, the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, the James A Michener Museum, Woodmere Art Museum, Montreal Museum of Art, the Swedish National Museum, the Everson Museum, and the Canton Museum of Art, all of whom have acquired her work for their permanent collections. She has been a resident artist at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Penland School of Crafts, Anderson Ranch, the Vermont Studio School and the Watershed Center. She has received grants from the Pew Fellowships in the Arts, National Endowments for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Leeway Foundation, and been awarded a James Renwick Distinguished Educator Award. She is Professor Emerita at Swarthmore College.

Yreina D. Cervántez (b. 1952, Garden City, KS) is a third-generation Chicana raised in rural Southern California. She is based in Los Angeles. She works primarily in painting, printmaking and muralism. She earned a BA in Fine Arts from U.C. Santa Cruz (1975) and an MFA from U.C.L.A. (1989). A Professor Emeritus, she taught in the Department of Chicana/o/x Studies at California State University at Northridge from 1999–2019. Through her art, teaching and community activism, she has contributed to the discourse on an ever evolving Chicanx aesthetic. Her body of work reflects nearly fifty years of exploration and the development of an iconography influenced by diverse creative expressions. Her art is informed by Native Mesoamerican mythology and cosmology, Mexican art traditions, Chicanx poetics, as well as issues of social and environmental justice, and contemporary Xicana-Indigena feminist thought and perspective. Ms. Cervántez’ work is written
about and appears in numerous books, catalogues, and scholarly publications, and her art is in several permanent collections including the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas, Austin, the Tweed Museum of Art at the University of Minnesota, MOMA San Francisco, the National Hispanic Cultural Center of Art in Albuquerque, the Mexican Museum in San Francisco, and the Alta-Med Foundation Collection.

**Donna Conlon** (b. 1966, Atlanta, GA) lives and works in Panama City, Panama. Her practice is based on observations of her everyday surroundings, analyzing the meaning in the ordinary and the overlooked. Like an archaeologist of the present, she focuses on details of her immediate environment to reveal the social, political and environmental contradictions inherent to our contemporary lifestyle. Conlon has exhibited widely, both her individual work and collaborations with fellow artist Jonathan Harker, including at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2022), Tate St. Ives (2021), Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2020), Met Breuer, NY (2019), Kadist, San Francisco (2018), Pérez Art Museum, Miami (2014), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2014), El Museo del Barrio, New York (2011), Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach (2011), Istanbul Modern Art Museum (2006), and in events such as Prospect New Orleans (2017), the Asunción Biennale, Paraguay (2015), Mercosul Biennale, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2011), and the Venice Biennale (2005). Conlon received a Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation grant for emerging artists (2007). Her individual and collaborative works are in collections including the Kadist Foundation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museo de Arte de Lima, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Tate Modern. Conlon earned an M.A. in Biology from the University of Kansas and an MFA in Sculpture from Maryland Institute College of Art.

Leslie Hewitt (b. 1977, New York, NY)’s approach to photography and sculpture reimagines the art historical still life genre from a post-minimalist perspective. Her geometric compositions, which she frames and crystallizes through the disciplines of photography and film theory, respectively, are spare assemblages of ordinary effects and materials, suggesting the porosity between intimate and sociopolitical histories. Interested in the mechanisms behind the construction of meaning and memory, she decisively challenges both by unfolding manifestly formal, rather than didactic, connections. Her distinct play on syncopation and juxtaposition makes her work discursive and layered. She also works with site-specific installation, autonomous sculptures, collage and the moving image as modalities to contend equally with shifting notions of space and time. Hewitt has held residencies at the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Project Row Houses, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, Konstspidemin in Göteborg, Sweden and the American Academy in Berlin, Germany amongst others.

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz (b. 1972, San Juan, Puerto Rico) is an artist whose expanded moving image work is entangled with Boalian theater, expanded cinema and feminist practices. She tends to work with non-actors, and incorporates improvisation into her process. Her recent work is on the sensorial unconscious of anti-colonial movements, with everyday poetic thought and feminist experiments with language and narrative. Recent solo exhibitions include: Oriana in PIVO, Sao Paulo, the 34th Sao Paulo Biennial; The Navel of the Dream at Kuunstnstitut Melly; Poetic Disorder in the Momenta Biennale; and Gosila in Der Tank, Basel. Her work is part of public and private collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, Kadist and Guggenheim, among others. She has received a Creative Capital grant, a USA Fellowship, a Herb Alpert Award in the Arts and the 2021 Artes Mundi Prize, shared among all seven nominees.

Mary Lovelace O’Neal (b. 1942, Jackson, Mississippi) is a revolutionary figure in abstraction since the 1970s, has roots in Minimalism and Expressionism. In the late 1970s her vibrant compositions expanded to include references to real imagery, varying between pure abstraction and narrative figuration. Considered one of the greatest living painters, she is a printmaker, educator and storyteller celebrated for her powerful compositions that employ vibrant hues and a generous and masterful application of paint, with the social and political consciousness of the Civil Rights and Black Arts movements. Lovelace O’Neal’s work is in collections including the Art Institute of Chicago; Baltimore Museum of Art; Brooklyn Museum of Art; de Young Museum; Mississippi Museum, Jackson; National Museum of Fine Arts Santiago, Chile; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Joyner/Giuffrida Collection. Lovelace O’Neal has a BFA from Howard University where she was a student of James A. Porter and the late great artist, scholar, and educator Dr. David C. Driskell. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and earned an MFA from Columbia University. Since the 1970s she has taught at Northern California institutions including San Francisco Art Institute, California College of Arts and Crafts, Humboldt State University, and the University of California, Berkeley, where she was the Chair of the Art Practice Department. She lives and works in Oakland, California and Merida, Mexico.
Jaune Quick-to-see-Smith (b. 1940, Saint Ignatius Mission, MT) calls herself a cultural arts worker. She uses humor and satire to examine myths, stereotypes and the paradox of American Indian life in contrast to the consumerism of American society. Her work is philosophically centered by her strong traditional beliefs and political activism. Smith is internationally known as an artist, curator, lecturer, printmaker and free-lance professor as well as a mentor for she believes that “Giving Back” is a life philosophy. She was born at St. Ignatius Mission, raised by her father who was an illiterate horse trader. She had her Social Security card at age eight when she started work as a field hand year-round; she worked as a waitress and in the canneries through high school. Smith earned an Art Ed degree at Framingham State, MA (now University) and an MA in art at the University of New Mexico. Before completing her degree, Smith began exhibiting in New York at the Kornblee Gallery and organizing Native exhibitions. Smith organized and curated over thirty Native exhibitions in four decades. She has given over 200 lectures at museums and universities internationally and has shown in over 125 solo exhibits and over 650 group exhibits. Her work is in collections such as Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Brooklyn Museum; the Museum of Modern Art, Quito Ecuador; the Whitney Museum, New York; the Walker, Minneapolis; Berlin Museum of Ethnology; University of Regina, Canada; and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Smith holds five honorary degrees and has received awards including the 1987 Academy of Art and Letters, Purchase Award, NY; 1995 Painting Award, Fourth International Bienal, Cuenca, Ecuador S.A.; 1996 Joan Mitchell Foundation Award; 1997 Women’s Caucus for Art, Lifetime Achievement; 2005 New Mexico Governor’s Award; 2011 Inducted into the National Academy of Design; 2012 Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Living Artist of Distinction; Honorary BA Degree, Salish Kootenai College, MT; 2018 Montana Governor’s Award; 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award in Printmaking, Southern Graphics Council International; 2019 Murray Reich Award, NY; 2020 United States Artists Fellowship; and the 2021 Brazilian Biennial.

Wendy Red Star (b. 1981, Billings, MT) is an artist raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation in Montana. Her work is informed both by her cultural heritage and her engagement with many forms of creative expression, including photography, sculpture, video, fiber arts, and performance. An avid researcher of archives and historical narratives, Red Star seeks to incorporate and recast her research, offering new and unexpected perspectives in work that is at once inquisitive, witty and unsettling. Red Star has exhibited in the United States and abroad at venues including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY), Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY), both of which have her works in their permanent collections; Fondation Cartier pour l’Art Contemporain (Paris, France), Domaine de Kerguéhennec (Bignan, France), Portland Art Museum (Portland, OR), Hood Art Museum (Hanover, NH), St. Louis Art Museum (St. Louis, MO), Minneapolis Institute of Art (Minneapolis, MN), the Frost Art Museum (Miami, FL), among others, many of which hold her work in their permanent collections. Red Star holds a BFA from Montana State University, Bozeman, and an MFA in sculpture from University of California, Los Angeles. She lives and works in Portland, OR.
**Mira Schor** (b. 1950, New York, NY) is a painter and writer. She received her MFA from CalArts where she was a member of the CalArts Feminist Art Program and a participant in the historic feminist art installation Womanhouse. She is the author of *Wet: On Painting, Feminism, and Art Culture*, and *A Decade of Negative Thinking: Essays on Art, Politics, and Daily Life*. Schor is the recipient of awards in painting from the Guggenheim and Pollock-Krasner Foundations, as well as the College Art Association's Frank Jewett Mather Award for Art Criticism. She is a recipient of the 2019 Women’s Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award for her work as a feminist painter, art historian and critic. Schor was co-editor with painter Susan Bee of the journal and thirty-year editorial project *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* including *M/E/A/N/I/N/G: An Anthology of Artists' Writings, Theory, and Criticism* and *M/E/A/N/I/N/G Online*. Operating in the nexus of language, painting, and feminist theory, Schor imbues formalism with political urgency and reminds viewers that written discourse and physical form are inherently linked. The central theme in her recent work is the experience of living in a moment of incipient fascism, climate collapse, and accelerated time, set against the powerful pull of older notions of craft, and visual pleasure. Schor is represented by Lyles & King in New York and Marcelle Alix in Paris.

**Coreen Simpson** (b. 1942, New York, NY) is a photographer and jewelry designer, who has been honored in both fields throughout her career. In 1978, as Assistant Curator of Photography at The Studio Museum in Harlem, she made dynamic portraits of fellow artists in her small office/studio. Making jewelry supported her art and in 1990 she created her signature collection ‘The Black Cameo® for women of color. It is the first American modern cameo pin honoring the strength, beauty and resiliency of the black woman. Her B-Boy series of hip-hop style landed her ‘impact visuals’ on New York’s Broadway stage for the 1996 Tony Award-winning musical ‘Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk.’ Ms. Simpson’s images are represented in The Smithsonian Museum of African-American Culture, D.C.; The Library of Congress, D.C.; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Museum-Over-Holland, Amsterdam; The International Center of Photograph (ICP), New York; Le Musee de la Photographie a’ Charleroi, Belgium; and the permanent collections of The Studio Museum in Harlem and The Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, among other institutions. She is a fellow of LIGHTWORK (Syracuse University), NYSCA (New York State Council for the Arts), NYFA (New York Foundation for the Arts) and Franklin Furnace’s (1983 commission) and the ‘2021 Humanities N.Y. grant “Her Eyes Only”. Ms. Simpson’s photography installation is currently on view at the JAM exhibit at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Ms. Simpson studied at F.I.T. and The New School, New York.

**Ka-Man Tse** (b. Kowloon, Hong Kong, 1981) is a photographer and video artist living in Brooklyn. Her work is informed by questions of longing and belonging. Her images are made within the intersection of Asian and Asian American (AAPI) and LGBTQ+ communities and are made through a queer lens. Ka-Man Tse has exhibited work at Para Site, Videotage, Lumensivum, and Eaton Workshop, in Hong Kong. She has mounted solo shows at Aperture in New York, the Silver Eye Center for Photography in Pittsburgh, PA, and at the New York Public Library. Recent exhibitions and screenings include *LOVE+: Awakening*, at Hong Kong Arts Centre, in Hong Kong, *Art on the*
Stoop: Sunset Screenings at the Brooklyn Museum, Chosen at Leslie Lohman Museum in New York, and Tate Lates at the Tate Museum. She is the recipient of the Aaron Siskind Fellowship, the Robert Giard Fellowship, and the Aperture Portfolio Prize. Her monograph, narrow distances, was published by Candor Arts. Her work is in public and private collections including the Harvard Art Museums, Library of Congress, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Tai Kwun Contemporary Artists’ Book Library in Hong Kong, and the Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong. She received her BA from Bard College and her MFA from Yale.

Philemona Williamson (b. 1951, New York, NY)’s narrative paintings explore the tenuous bridge between adolescence and adulthood, encapsulating the intersection of innocence and experience at its most piercing and poignant moment when personal discovery and awareness collide with the force of worldly knowledge. She has shown widely, with recent solo shows at June Kelly Gallery in New York and Jenkins-Johnson Gallery in San Francisco along with a mid-career retrospective at the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey in 2017. She is the recipient of numerous awards and residencies including The Joan Mitchell Foundation, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, National Endowment For The Arts, New York Foundation For The Arts and The Millay Colony. In 2022, she received a Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Her work has been shown in many solo and group exhibitions such as The Queens Museum of Art, Wisconsin's Kohler Art Center, The Sheldon Museum in Nebraska, The Bass Museum in Miami, The Mint Museum in North Carolina, The Forum of Contemporary Art in St. Louis, and The International Bienal of Painting in Cuenca, Ecuador. She is represented in numerous private and public collections, including The Montclair Art Museum; The Kalamazoo Art Institute; The Mint Museum of Art; Smith College Museum of Art; Hampton University Museum; Sheldon Art Museum; Mott-Warsh Art Collection, and AT&T. Her public works include fused-glass murals created for the MTA Arts in Transit Program at the Livonia Avenue Subway Station in Brooklyn, a painting used by the MTA’s Poetry In Motion and, for the NYC School Authority, a mosaic mural in Queens. Last year, she created a series of paintings for the children’s book “Lubaya’s Quiet Roar” from Penguin Random House. Philemona has taught Painting & Drawing at Hunter College, Pratt Institute, SVA, Bard College, RISD, Cooper Union and Parsons as well as serving on the advisory board of the Getty Center for Education.

Shirley Woodson, (b. 1936, Pulaski, TN) known for her brilliant and intense color paintings, has developed over her long career many themes that reflect her perspective on African American culture and the diaspora. Woodson’s residencies include MacDowell Colony Fellowship, Peterborough, NH; the Fabric Workshop and Museum and the Brandywine Printmaking Workshop and Archives in Philadelphia, PA; the Heritage House Museum in Detroit, MI. Most recently Woodson was named the 2021 Kresge Imminent Artist by Kresge Arts in Detroit. Her works are in many public and private collections including the Detroit Institute of Arts; Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Wayne State University, Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Art, Boston, MA; Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NY; Florida A and M University; African American Library, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.; Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville,
NC; the Williams Museum, Scripps College, Claremont, CA; the Mott Warsh Collection of Contemporary Art, Flint, MI. Woodson’s work was recently featured in a solo exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts entitled “Shield of the Nile Reflections”. Woodson received a BFA and MA in painting from Wayne State University including graduate studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in painting and art history.