



Art Basel  
Awards

# MEDALISTS

# ART BASEL AWARDS UNVEIL 2026 MEDALISTS:

## 33 VISIONARIES SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ART AND CULTURE

This year's cycle of the annual Awards program – presented in partnership with BOSS – recognizes a global cohort of artists, innovators, and institutions whose work is leading the most forward-thinking practices shaping art and cultural production today.

The Art Basel Awards are the first global initiative to recognize the **full breadth of the contemporary art ecosystem**, spanning nine categories that honor both **artistic excellence** and the **individuals and institutions that shape and sustain it**. From artists to curators, patrons, media figures, and cultural platforms, the Awards reflect a field in which influence is increasingly distributed across disciplines and forms of practice.

Entering its **second year**, the initiative's cross-industry perspective is further underscored by the **continued support of BOSS as presenting partner**, whose longstanding engagement with art and culture reinforces the Awards' commitment to dialogue across creative fields at the intersection of fashion and art.

The Awards are **rooted in celebration, peer recognition, and a community-led selection process**. Each cycle starts with anonymous nominations by industry leaders and influential voices from around the world, from which the jury of nine international experts selects 33 medalists for their vision, skill, and impact. The 2026 medalists embody an expanded vision: they are a cross-generational and cross-disciplinary group whose practices actively reshape how art is produced, experienced, and connected to wider cultural and societal frameworks.

**Fifteen artists** are recognized in the Emerging, Established and Icon categories, while **eighteen medalists** are honored across Cross-Disciplinary, Museum and Institution, Media and Storyteller, Patron, Allies, and Curator. Rather than focusing on singular achievements, **the Awards identify and support practices with lasting influence** - those that shape cultural narratives across borders, disciplines, and industries.

**The 2026 medalists span an expansive geographic and cultural spectrum**, with roots in the United States, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, Hong Kong, France, Italy, United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Cuba, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Bangladesh, among others. Many of these practitioners are deeply engaged with histories, communities, and urgencies that extend well beyond national borders, reflecting a distinctly global outlook. There is a particularly **strong presence of artists, curators, and institutions connected to the Global South**, whose practices foreground postcolonial histories, migration, climate justice, and urban transformation, and whose **practices spill out across disciplines** - from visual art, film and performance, to music, theatre, design, architecture, and publishing - and whose patronage is redefining exhibition-making and research.

Medalists will be **recognized during Art Basel's historic flagship fair** in Switzerland in June and through year-round global campaigns and initiatives. Later this year, **Gold Awardees** will be selected through an independent peer-review process and announced at the **Official Art Basel Awards Night during Art Basel Miami Beach**.

Redefining the traditional prize model in the creative fields, Gold Awardees in the artist categories confer **immediate, flexible support by distributing a total of over USD 250,000 annually** in honorariums and philanthropic gifts, alongside global networking, tailored partnerships, and high-profile commissions designed to propel artists' work onto new global platforms.


**On the launch of the second Awards cycle, Vincenzo de Bellis, Chief Artistic Officer and Global Director of Art Basel Fairs, said:**

‘With the second edition of the Art Basel Awards, we begin to see the initiative take shape in practice – from new commissions to long-term support and deeper engagement with our growing community of medalists. Building on last year’s momentum, it is especially rewarding to see how these connections evolve into tangible outcomes across the field.

Through this initiative, Art Basel reaffirms its role as a global platform for the advancement, discovery, and production of art – not only recognizing excellence but actively creating the conditions for it to grow. We are deeply grateful to our jury, nominators, and the many experts whose insight and commitment make this process both rigorous and collaborative. It is this community-driven approach that defines the Awards, reflecting the breadth and complexity of today’s cultural landscape.’



Vincenzo de Bellis, 2025. Photo by Mathieu Croizier for Art Basel. Courtesy of Art Basel.



‘This year’s cohort spans geographies, disciplines, and generations, reflecting a truly interconnected art world,’ said Vincenzo de Bellis, Chair of Awards Jury. ‘The Awards are designed to capture a broad cross-section of the ecosystem, grounded in the belief that meaningful progress depends on exchange across disciplines and perspectives. From emerging voices to established figures, the 2026 cohort represents those advancing some of the most compelling and forward-looking ideas in the industry today, setting the foundation for future generations and expanding what the art world can become.’

# ART BASEL AWARDS 2026 MEDALISTS

## EMERGING ARTIST

Aziza Kadyri  
Carla Gueye  
Diego Marcon  
Farah Al Qasimi  
Precious Okoyomon  
Tiffany Sia

## ESTABLISHED ARTIST

Apichatpong Weerasethakul  
Arthur Jafa  
Julie Mehretu  
María Magdalena Campos-Pons  
Rirkrit Tiravanija  
Theaster Gates

## ICON ARTIST

Barbara Kruger  
Howardena Pindell  
Jenny Holzer

## CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CREATOR

Kulapat Yantrasast  
Laurie Anderson  
Sumayya Vally

## MUSEUM AND INSTITUTION

Diriyah Biennale Foundation  
SAVVY Contemporary  
The Brick

## MEDIA AND STORYTELLER

Anton Vidokle  
Hilton Als  
Siddhartha Mitter

## PATRON

Mercedes Vilardell  
Pamela J. Joyner  
Teiger Foundation

## ALLIES

Independent Curators International  
New Curators  
Studio Museum in Harlem:  
Artist-in-Residence Program

## CURATOR

Azu Nwagbogu  
Diana Campbell  
Stuart Comer

In the Emerging Artist category, the 2026 Awards spotlight artists reimagining systems, communities, and form. **Farah Al Qasimi** (b. 1991, UAE) explores identity, colonialism, and taste across image, film, and sound; **Carla Gueye** (b. 1997, France) builds intimate material worlds bridging personal and collective histories while advocating for artist-defined ecosystems. **Diego Marcon** (b. 1985, Italy) creates psychologically charged films that disrupt narrative conventions, and **Aziza Kadyri** (b. 1994, Russia) merges textile traditions with emerging technologies to reframe Central Asian identity through collaboration. **Precious Okoyomon** (b. 1993, UK) grounds their practice in ecology, while **Tiffany Sia** (b. 1988, Hong Kong) interrogates systems of visibility, power, and law. Together, they reflect practices that are porous, relational, and responsive to contemporary conditions.

In the Established Artist category, **María Magdalena Campos-Pons** (b. 1959, Cuba) traces histories of migration and colonialism across disciplines. **Arthur Jafa** (b. 1960, United States) uses film and music to examine Black life while rejecting convention, while **Theaster Gates** (b. 1973, USA) expands artistic practice through socially engaged work spanning sculpture and urbanism. **Rirkrit Tiravanija** (b. 1961, Argentina) foregrounds participation, and **Apichatpong Weerasethakul** (b. 1970, Thailand) reshapes cinematic language through memory and perception. **Julie Mehretu** (b. 1970, Ethiopia) maps contemporary complexity while extending her work through community-building.

Cross Disciplinary Creator medalists include experimental music pioneer **Laurie Anderson** (b. 1947, United States) and architect-artist **Sumayya Vally** (b. 1990, South Africa), founder of Counterspace, whose work redefines urban design through African and Islamic cultural frameworks, and architect **Kulapat Yantrasast** (b. Thailand), Founder and Creative Director of WHY Architecture, an interdisciplinary practice working at the

intersection of art, architecture, landscape, objects, and cultural life.

Among medalists in the Patron category, **Mercedes Vilardell** has advanced the visibility of African art through her work with institutions including Tate, Centre Pompidou, and the Reina Sofia Foundation, alongside support for artists worldwide. **Pamela J. Joyner** has driven recognition of artists of the African diaspora through collecting, institutional leadership, and founding the Black Trustee Alliance for Art Museums. **The Teiger Foundation** supports curators through research, experimentation, and equitable structures.

Museum and Institution medalists include **The Brick** in Los Angeles, led by Hamza Walker, addressing urgent cultural debates; the **Diriyah Biennale Foundation** in Saudi Arabia, a key platform for regional artistic development; and **SAVVY Contemporary** in Berlin, a research-driven, collective space engaging diverse knowledge systems.

In the Media and Storyteller category, **Siddhartha Mitter** bridges criticism and curatorial work, contributing to the realization of Koyo Kouoh's Venice Biennale vision. **Anton Vidokle**, artist, curator, and founder of e-flux, spans filmmaking, exhibitions, and publishing, while **Hilton Als** moves between criticism, literature, and academia, shaping cultural discourse.

Allies include **Independent Curators International (ICI)**, led by Renaud Proch, supporting curatorial exchange globally; **New Curators**, led by Kerry Greenberg and Mark Godfrey, developing emerging curatorial voices; and the **Studio Museum in Harlem's Artist-in-Residence program**, sustaining artistic development.

Medalists honored in the Curator category include **Azu Nwagbogu**, founder of the African Artists' Foundation and LagosPhoto Biennale; **Stuart Comer** of MoMA, shaping contemporary art presentation across media;

and **Diana Campbell**, whose work with the Dhaka Art Summit and Samdani Art Foundation emphasizes collaboration and research-driven exhibition-making.

## THE ICON ARTISTS

The Artist Icon category honors artists whose practices have fundamentally reshaped the cultural landscape, extending far beyond the boundaries of the art world to influence how we see, think, and engage with power, language, and history. This year's medalists bring particular focus to the enduring impact of women artists whose work has not only challenged dominant narratives, but redefined them entirely. These are figures whose work has endured over decades and continues to define the terms of contemporary discourse.

Among them is **Barbara Kruger** (b. 1945, USA), whose incisive use of text and image since the 1970s has exposed and resisted the structures that shape visibility, authority, and belief, confronting viewers with the question of who speaks and who is silenced.

**Howardena Pindell** (b. 1943, USA), whose six-decade career spans painting, video, and curatorial work, has consistently challenged the exclusions of the art world while advancing a deeply experimental and politically engaged practice.

**Jenny Holzer** (b. 1950, USA), working across public space and institutional contexts, has spent more than forty years bringing language into the open, using text as both medium and message to confront ignorance and violence with what she describes as "humor, kindness, and courage."



**EMERGING ARTIST**  
**RISING TALENTS DEMONSTRATING EXCEPTIONAL  
POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CONTEMPORARY  
ART**

## EMERGING ARTIST

### AZIZA KADYRI

#### LONDON, UK



Photo by Ekaterina Timko. Courtesy of the artist.

Aziza Kadyri (b. 1994) is a multidisciplinary artist working across textiles, sculpture, installation, performance, and creative technologies. Her practice examines migration, displacement, decolonisation, industry, and identity formation, with a particular focus on women in Central Asia and its diaspora. Through textile languages, participatory methods, and digital tools, Kadyri reactivates cultural memory while opening new spaces for speculative thought.

Combining traditional craft with technologies such as AI, extended reality, and machine learning, Kadyri develops immersive works that reimagine cultural heritage through speculative narratives. Textiles and costume function as both material and conceptual frameworks, carrying histories of labor, memory, and transmission while opening new possibilities for storytelling. Her work moves between analogue and digital realms, constructing alternative mythologies that challenge erasure and reframe cultural identity within a global context.

A collaborative ethos runs throughout her work, as she frequently engages local communities and artisans, situating her practice within broader conversations around decolonial aesthetics, feminist technologies, and socially engaged production. This commitment extends beyond her individual projects through Qizlar – the grassroots collective she co-founded with artists and activists from Uzbekistan and its diaspora. For Kadyri, art's future lies not in isolated objects, but in the relationships that form around them: 'When I think about the future of art, I think about connection – and about world-building. I don't think art fixes things, not the large systemic issues, but it can reveal them and create space for people to imagine something different together.'

Kadyri's practice challenges categorization by medium – a conviction she made clear when asked which art-world rule should be broken: 'Probably the idea that disciplines need clearly defined borders.' Having come to art through fashion, costume, theatre, set design, and immersive technology, she describes her practice as one that moves instinctively between forms. 'My work often brings analogue material practices and craft traditions such as suzani embroidery and soft sculpture into conversation with extended reality, AI models, and game engines. It's the most honest way I know to work, letting the form follow the research and the world-building.' Kadyri represented Uzbekistan at the 60th Venice Biennale in 2024 and has exhibited internationally across Europe and Asia.

## EMERGING ARTIST

### CARLA GUEYE

#### PARIS, FRANCE



Courtesy of the artist. © Jean-Louis Carli.

Carla Gueye (b. 1997) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores intimacy, transculturality, and the ways identities are formed within familial and collective contexts. Working across sculpture and installation, she constructs sensitive material and narrative spaces in which memory, affect, and cultural transmission come into relation.

Using materials such as lime and clay, Gueye moves beyond their formal or physical properties to build works that reconfigure cultural knowledge and imagination. Themes of memory, the feminine figure, and processes of excavation and reclamation run throughout her practice, often through gestures that evoke domesticity, manual labor, and embodied attention. These material processes become ways of approaching histories that have been partially confiscated, muted, or left unresolved, while also allowing the artist to re-inscribe and better understand her own lineage.

‘The idea that legitimacy comes only through specific institutions or validation systems’ is, for Gueye, one of the rules that needs breaking. ‘There’s still a tendency to measure value through visibility in certain spaces or approval from a narrow circle. I think that needs to be challenged.’ Instead, she argues for artists defining ‘their own ecosystems, their own audiences, and their own pace without constantly aligning with external expectations.’

Gueye has described the future of art as ‘less about the medium and more about shared experience.’ For her, what matters is ‘how art can create spaces of connection between people, stories, and sensibilities.’ That orientation toward relation and encounter is fundamental to her practice, which privileges listening, collective resonance, and porous forms of authorship.

Gueye’s recent research and collaborations include her work in Senegal with designer Bibi Seck and a residency with artist Seyni Awa Camara, with whom she is developing new sculptural work in partnership with women working in oyster farming.

## EMERGING ARTIST

### DIEGO MARCON

#### ITALY



Photo by Chiara Fossati. Courtesy of the artist.

Diego Marcon's (b. 1985) practice is rooted in moving image, with works spanning film, video, and installation. Drawing on cinematic vocabularies from musicals, melodrama, horror, and slapstick comedy, he constructs unsettling and highly controlled visual worlds in which emotional intensity, estrangement, and ambiguity coexist.

His works often combine theoretical and structural approaches to filmmaking with the affective qualities of popular cinema. Through the use of looping structures, commissioned soundtracks, scripted dialogue, and advanced technical processes such as CGI and robotics, Marcon examines how narrative and emotion are constructed within the cinematic form. Words, gestures, and sound are carefully orchestrated to produce a sense of instability, where meaning remains deliberately unresolved.

Across his work, empathy and vulnerability are presented with ambiguity, challenging viewers' expectations and complicating conventional readings of character and narrative. This approach contributes to a broader investigation into the mechanics of representation and spectatorship, situating his practice within ongoing developments in contemporary moving image.

Marcon has presented solo exhibitions at institutions including Kunsthalle Wien, Kunstverein in Hamburg, Kunsthalle Basel, Centro Pecci, and Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, among others. His films have also screened internationally at venues and festivals including the Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, the Viennale, Festival du nouveau cinéma, and the BFI London Film Festival. Across these settings, he has developed a body of work marked by strong formal identity and a singular tonal register.

## EMERGING ARTIST

### FARAH AL QASIMI

#### NEW YORK, USA & ABU DHABI, UAE



Photo by Carolyne Loreé Teston. Courtesy of the artist.

Farah Al Qasimi (b. 1991) makes photographs, films and music. Often working with large-scale vinyl imagery and a multiplicity of photographic prints and screens, she is interested in the internet and its hierarchies of information and emotion. Many of her video works include primary narrators who are anthropomorphized. Through a highly collaborative practice, she has worked with hand-sewn puppets, falcons, African Land Snails, exorcists, and most recently, a Jack Sparrow impersonator.

Underlying this work is a broader attention to the social and political conditions shaping artistic production today. 'The best thing art can do is deepen our compassion for others and transform that compassion into action,' she noted, expressing a desire for a future 'closer to collectivism and further from siloed individuality.'

Al Qasimi's work is in the collections of MoMA New York, Tate Modern, Guggenheim New York and Abu Dhabi, and she has participated in residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, Delfina Foundation in London, and the Chinati Foundation in Marfa. In 2025, she was selected as a Guggenheim Fellow, awarded by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

## EMERGING ARTIST PRECIOUS OKOYOMON

NEW YORK, USA



Photo by Mariano Bocanegra. Courtesy of the artist.

Through a multidisciplinary practice spanning poetry, installation, and performance, Precious Okoyomon (b. 1993) explores the entanglements of ecology, migration, and the historical construction of race. Working with organic materials and living systems, they create immersive environments in which decay, regeneration, and transformation unfold over time.

Raised in the American Midwest, Okoyomon's early connection to the natural world continues to shape a practice grounded in soil, growth, and ecological cycles. 'My first love is very much the earth, the soil,' they have said. Their installations frequently incorporate plants such as kudzu – the fast-growing vine introduced to the American South after slavery – which becomes in their work a charged metaphor for colonization, repair, and uncontrolled proliferation. Organic matter is allowed to shift and decompose, foregrounding the cyclical processes through which histories remain materially present.

Poetry remains a connective thread across all of Okoyomon's mediums, shaping how language, material, and experience come together across different forms. Ritual, dream logic, and collective experience recur throughout their installations, which often function as spaces for reflection, relation, and unguarded encounter. 'The future of art is miracles and endless desire!' Okoyomon said. That same expansive spirit animates a practice that resists rigid categories and fixed rules: 'Less rules more wonder more awe.. so maybe I'm for chaos .. and mischief .. letting a lot of Love in'.

## EMERGING ARTIST

### TIFFANY SIA

#### NEW YORK, USA



Courtesy of the artist.

Tiffany Sia (b. 1988) is an artist, filmmaker, and writer whose work examines how images and material culture shape power, governance, and historical understanding. Working across film, video, writing, and research-based practice, she explores the infrastructures underlying visual culture, with particular attention to what remains unseen, illegible, or structurally excluded. Her work engages with the relationship between representation and political reality, investigating how images function not only as records, but as mechanisms through which meaning, geography, and authority are constructed.

‘The future of art is entangled with the future of law,’ she wrote, pointing to the systems – legal, economic, and institutional – that shape how art is made and circulated. Rather than focusing on aesthetic prediction, her work interrogates the material conditions of production, from intellectual property and market speculation to institutional frameworks and contractual systems.

Sia is equally critical of how art is mediated and perceived. ‘The rule that needs breaking is the assumption that visibility is legibility,’ she noted, challenging the idea that public presence or digital circulation can stand in for deeper engagement with artistic practice. For Sia, encountering work directly remains irreducible, resisting the flattening effects of visibility-driven systems.

Her work has been shown at Artists Space, the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, and Mudam Luxembourg, among other venues, and her films have screened at TIFF, MoMA Doc Fortnight, and the New York Film Festival. Across these contexts, Sia has built a practice that remains rigorously attentive to the politics of circulation, the fragility of record, and the structures that determine what can be seen, said, and sustained.

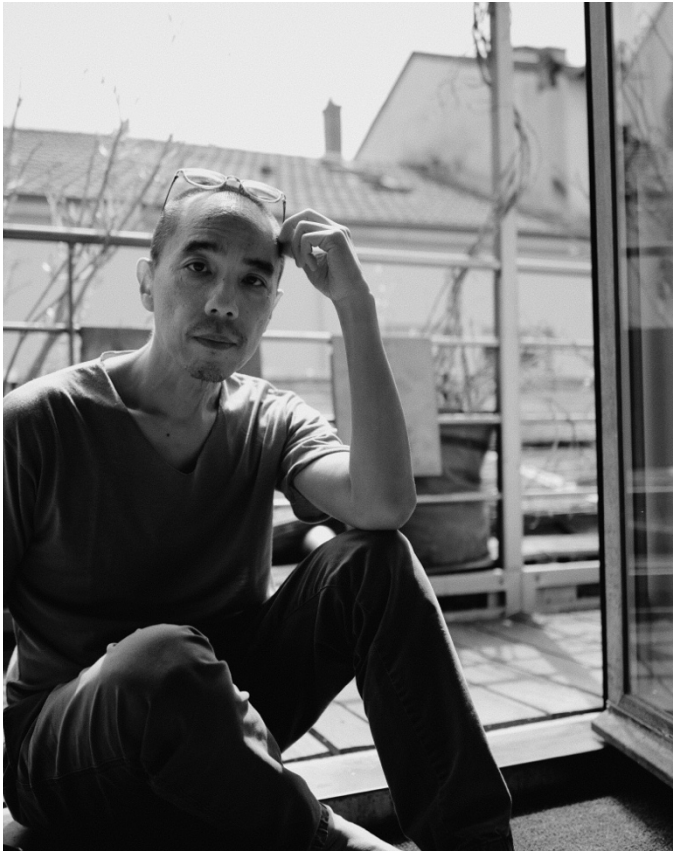


# **ESTABLISHED ARTIST**

**MID-CAREER ARTISTS WHO HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ART WORLD AND CONTINUE TO  
EVOLVE THEIR PRACTICE**

**ESTABLISHED ARTIST**  
**APICHATPONG WEERASETHAKUL**

**CHIANG MAI, THAILAND**



Courtesy of Kick the Machine Films.

Few artists have reshaped the language of cinema as quietly and profoundly as Apichatpong Weerasethakul (b. 1970). Moving between film and installation, his work unfolds through atmosphere, duration, and a logic that resists linear narration, inviting viewers into states of perception that are closer to drifting than decoding.

Rooted in the social and political realities of Thailand, his films often draw on memory, folklore, and the unseen, blurring distinctions between past and present, dream and waking life. Rather than presenting images as fixed meaning, he allows them to dissolve, to linger, and to remain unresolved.

That sensibility extends into his broader thinking about art itself. 'The future of art is in unlearning how we see,' he wrote – a proposition that mirrors a practice built on slowing perception down, loosening certainty, and opening space for other ways of knowing.



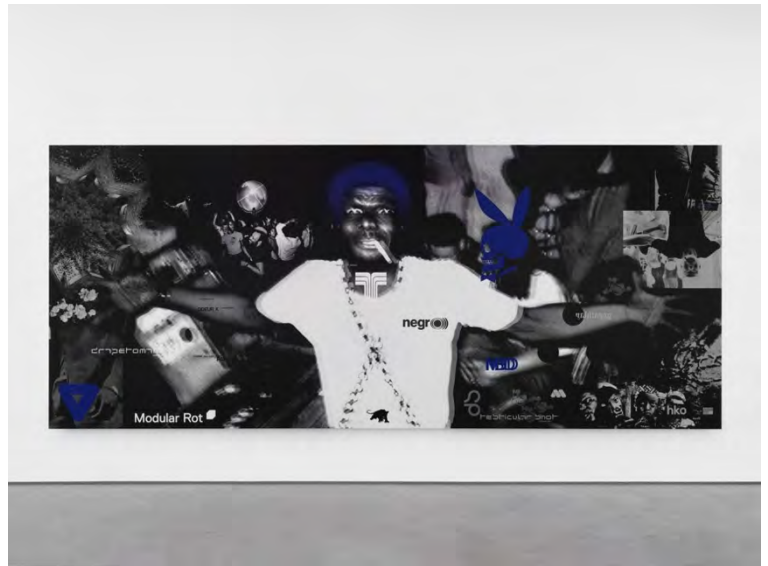
Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *Memoria*, 2021, Film still. Courtesy of Kick the Machine Films.

**ESTABLISHED ARTIST**  
**ARTHUR JAJA**

**LOS ANGELES, USA**



Courtesy of the artist.



Arthur Jafa, *Drapetomania*, 2025. Courtesy of the artist.

Arthur Jafa (b. 1960) has spent decades developing a visual language capable of carrying the emotional and cultural weight of Black life. Working across film, objects, and installation, his practice draws on the structure and intensity of Black music – seeking, as he has often framed it, an equivalent in images.

His works move between archival footage and newly produced material, assembling sequences that are at once poetic and confrontational. The result is a form of montage that resists resolution, holding together beauty, violence, and complexity without flattening them.

When asked which rule of the art world should be broken, Jafa's answer is characteristically direct: 'Following the rules.'

## ESTABLISHED ARTIST

**JULIE MEHRETU**

**NEW YORK, USA**



Julie Mehretu. Photo by: Josefina Santos.

Working across painting, drawing, and printmaking, Julie Mehretu (b. 1970) builds compositions that draw from architecture, cartography, media imagery, and abstraction, creating works that feel both immediate and sedimented. Her paintings are at once expansive and precise – dense visual fields in with layered and reassembled histories of time, space, and social behavior.

Photographic source material frequently underpins her work, even when it is no longer visible. These traces remain embedded within the surface, shaping compositions that hold together presence and erasure, clarity, and instability.

Drawing sits at the core of her practice, not only as technique but as position. As she has noted, it can operate as ‘an activist gesture’ – a way of asserting agency within complex social and political landscapes. That understanding extends beyond the studio into her broader commitments, from artist-led initiatives to projects supporting cultural preservation and justice.

## ESTABLISHED ARTIST

### MARÍA MAGDALENA CAMPOS-PONS

#### NASHVILLE, USA



María Magdalena Campos-Pons. Photo Credit: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. MacArthur Foundation.

María Magdalena Campos-Pons (b. 1959) works across performance, photography, painting, sculpture, and installation, developing an interdisciplinary practice that explores memory, identity, and the legacies of diaspora. Drawing on her Afro-Cuban, Chinese, and Hispanic heritage, her work weaves together personal and collective histories shaped by slavery, migration, and colonialism.

Rooted in the cultural syncretism of her upbringing in Matanzas, Cuba, Campos-Pons's practice engages with spiritual traditions, including Yoruba and Santería, as frameworks for understanding continuity, resilience, and transformation. Her work often centers on the body as a site of memory, where histories are carried, performed, and reimagined across generations.

Part of the New Cuban Art movement, she has long approached her work as a form of visual resistance, introducing a feminist perspective into contexts where such frameworks were historically underrepresented. Through installations, performances, and images, she constructs narratives that connect past and present, foregrounding the persistence of cultural knowledge and lived experience. As the artist wrote, she collects and tells 'stories of forgotten people in order to foster a dialogue to better understand and propose a poetic, compassionate reading of our time.'

Campos-Pons' work has been exhibited extensively at major international institutions and biennials, contributing to a broader understanding of diasporic identity and the role of art in shaping historical and cultural memory.

## ESTABLISHED ARTIST

### RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA

#### NEW YORK, USA; BERLIN, GERMANY; CHIANG MAI, THAILAND



Photo by: Pauline Assathiary. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.

Rirkrit Tiravanija (b. 1961) is known for his participatory installations that foreground shared experience, social interaction, and communal rituals. Since the early 1990s, his work has been central to the development of practices often associated with 'relational aesthetics,' shifting the focus of art from objects to encounters.

His installations frequently take the form of open environments in which visitors are invited to gather, cook, eat, and spend time together, dissolving the boundaries between artist and audience. Through these gestures, Tiravanija repositions art as a space of exchange, where meaning emerges through collective presence rather than fixed form.

While rooted in everyday actions, his work often engages with broader social and political contexts, including protest movements and global cultural dynamics. Over the course of his career, he has expanded his practice to include painting, printmaking, video, and large-scale installations, while maintaining a consistent focus on participation and shared experience.

# ESTABLISHED ARTIST THEASTER GATES

## CHICAGO, USA



Portrait of Theaster Gates at his Chicago studio, 2024. Courtesy of Theaster Gates Studio. Photo by: Lyndon French.

Theaster Gates (b. 1973) approaches art not as an isolated object, but as a lived and spatial practice – one that reshapes how places function and how histories are held. Trained as both an artist and an urban planner, he has built a body of work that moves between sculpture, archive, architecture, and civic transformation.

Over the past decade, Gates has become known for reactivating disinvested buildings and neglected cultural materials, transforming them into spaces for gathering, performance, and exchange. His work operates through acts of reuse and stewardship, where archives, objects, and entire sites are repositioned and given new life. What emerges is a practice grounded not in representation, but in long-term engagement with communities, memory, and place.



Theaster Gates, Installation view of *Walking Prayer*, 2018–20.  
Photo Credit: Robert McKeever, Courtesy of Theaster Gates Studio and Gagolian.

‘The future of the art is the history of art,’ Gates noted, a line that resonates across a practice in which materials and narratives are continuously reworked rather than replaced. His relationship to Basel is similarly tied to a moment of institutional recognition: ‘I’m deeply thankful to Josef Helfenstein and Elena Filipovic who have supported my practice through a major solo exhibition, ‘Black Madonna’, at Kunstmuseum Basel. That moment changed my life and career.’

# ICON ARTIST

LEGENDARY ARTISTS WHOSE CAREERS HAVE A  
PROFOUND, ENDURING IMPACT ON THE ART LANDSCAPE

## ICON ARTIST BARBARA KRUGER

### NEW YORK & LOS ANGELES, USA



Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, 1989.  
Courtesy the artist, Sprüth Magers, and The Broad Art Foundation.

Barbara Kruger (b. 1945) is an artist who works with pictures and words in the hopes of revealing and resisting socially ingrained assumptions about power: how it determines who lives and who dies, who is healed and who is housed, who speaks and who is silenced, who is visible and who is marginalized. Since the mid-1970s, she has juxtaposed her own texts with found images in her effort to expose the machinations of capitalism, politics, and gender that often go unquestioned.

Kruger's texts – often rendered in bold text over photographic images – can become image elements in their own right. Phrases such as 'Your body is a battleground' and 'I shop therefore I am' have become part of a broader cultural lexicon, reflecting her ability to operate simultaneously within and against dominant visual systems.

When words and pictures appear together, the texts dismantle the found image's pictorial plane,

making room for an abundance of echoes, effects, contradictions, and implications.

Her oeuvre spans photomontages and complex video and sound projects, as well as installations in the public realm. Frequently working outside the bounds of the museum or art gallery, Kruger has always managed to find new ways to reach the public, from traditional pictorial formats to vast architectural installations that transform the walls, ceilings, and floors of entire spaces. Her work remains a critical point of reference for understanding how images and language shape collective perception and social structures.

Kruger's practice is rooted in a strategy of subversion: adopting the tools of visual culture to critique it from within. Her works do not prescribe a single interpretation, but instead confront viewers with the assumptions and contradictions that shape their own positions. Across decades, she has consistently challenged systems of representation, creating a body of work that remains both widely recognizable and critically engaged.



Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (I shop therefore I am)*, 1987.  
Courtesy the artist, Sprüth Magers, and Pinault Collection

## ICON ARTIST HOWARDENA PINDELL

### NEW YORK, USA

Howardena Pindell (b. 1943) has developed a practice that moves between abstraction and political engagement, working across painting, video, and installation. Trained at Boston University and Yale University, she began her career at the Museum of Modern Art, where she became the institution's first African American curator, before turning fully to teaching and artistic practice.

As part of a generation of African American abstractionists, Pindell worked within a field dominated by overwhelmingly white institutions, a tension that has informed both her formal and political concerns. Her early works, including the Spray Dot paintings of the 1970s, explore surface, repetition, and color through labor-intensive processes, while later works incorporate cutting, stitching, and layering as ways of constructing complex visual fields.



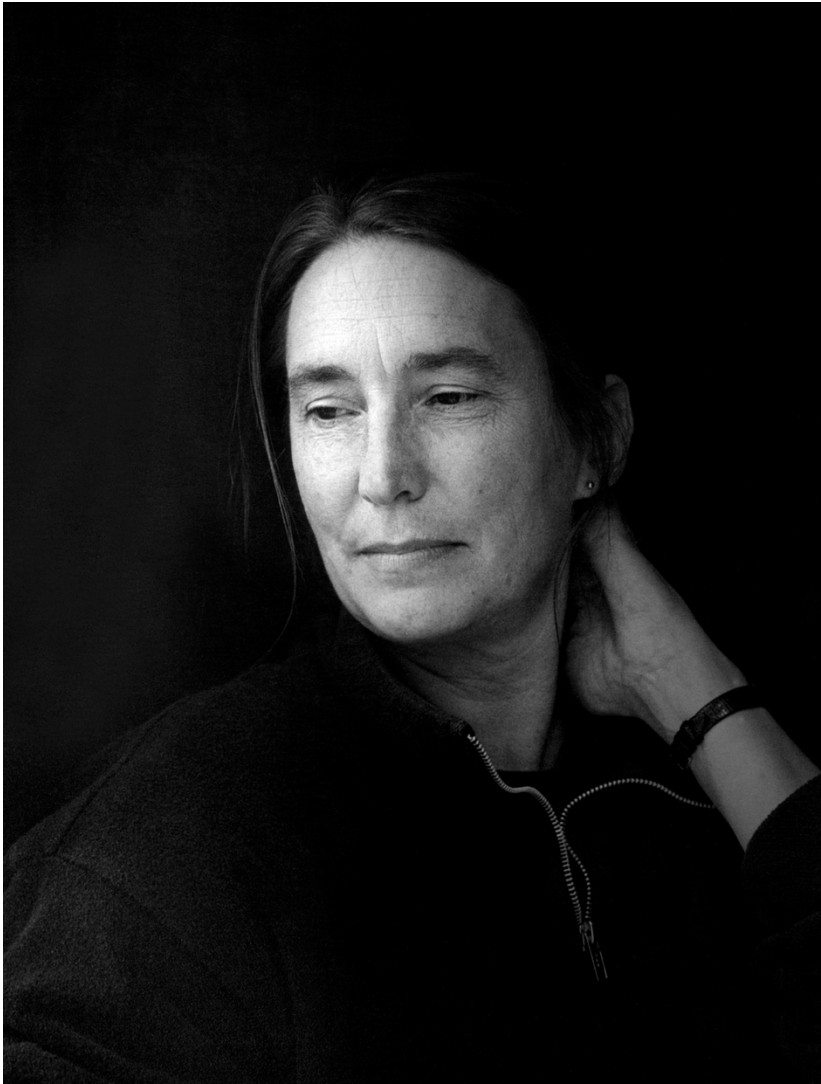
Howardena Pindell 2024. Photo Credit: White Cube.

A car accident in 1979, which resulted in memory loss, marked a turning point in her work. Subsequent pieces began to engage more directly with autobiography, fragmentation, and reconstruction, often incorporating photographic material and personal archives. At the same time, Pindell developed a body of explicitly political work addressing racism, sexism, war, and inequality, alongside essays that critically examine the structures of the art world itself.

Across more than six decades, Pindell's practice has maintained a dual commitment to formal innovation and critical reflection, producing a body of work that is both materially intricate and socially engaged.

# ICON ARTIST JENNY HOLZER

NEW YORK & LOS ANGELES, USA



Jenny Holzer (b. 1950) has been probing the aesthetic and political intersection of language, installation, and painting since the late 1970s. Holzer displays her own and other texts in a variety of media, including LED tickers and light projections in public spaces, confronting current events and topics such as war and sexual violence in a way that defies didacticism and challenges the viewer's passivity.

Early series such as *Truisms* (1977–79) and *Inflammatory Essays* (1979–82) established her approach: concise, often contradictory statements placed in public space. For these works, the artist printed enigmatic epigrams on posters and secretly affixed them to the walls of buildings and subway stations in New York, addressing anonymous passersby. Drawing on philosophical and literary sources, these texts challenge the authority of language itself, requiring viewers to navigate ambiguity and interpretation.

Photo Credit: Nanda Lanfranco.

Over time, Holzer has expanded both her materials and sources, incorporating everything from poetry to declassified government documents. Her work often engages with themes of war, violence, and power, bringing language into direct confrontation with public space. Whether projected onto buildings or embedded within architectural environments, her texts transform reading into a shared and embodied experience.

Holzer creates aesthetic experiences between meditation and incantation, denunciation, and assurance. In doing so, she succeeds in transforming nothing less than the traditional process of reading, inviting viewers to become conscious of its associative, intellectual, and emotional consequences. She exposes entrenched assumptions and behavioral patterns in our shared understanding, penetrating deep into the collective unease of our times.

# CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CREATOR

INDIVIDUALS, COLLECTIVES, OR ORGANIZATIONS  
SHAPING CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AT THE JUNCTION  
OF VISUAL ART AND OTHER CREATIVE FIELDS

# CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CREATOR KULAPAT YANTRASAST

## THAILAND & USA



Kulapat Yantrasast. Photo Courtesy: WHY.

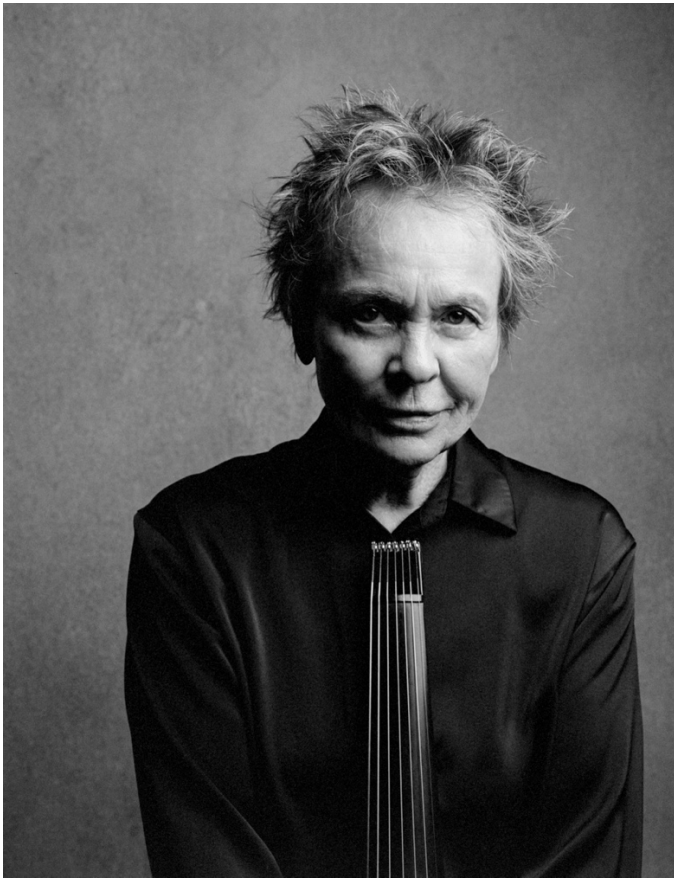
Kulapat Yantrasast (b. 1969) is the Founder and Creative Director of WHY Architecture, an interdisciplinary practice based in New York and Los Angeles, working at the intersection of art, architecture, landscape, objects, and cultural life. Born in Thailand and trained in Tokyo under Tadao Ando, Yantrasast approaches architecture as a form of cultural translation – an attentive process of shaping space so that memory, ritual, and contemporary experience can coexist.

His work often begins with listening: to institutions in transition, to collections in motion, to the subtle ways people inhabit space together. Major commissions include private residences and projects for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre Museum, Dib Bangkok, and Delhi's Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum – contexts in which architecture becomes a quiet framework for encounter, allowing art and audience to meet with clarity and presence.

Across museums, cultural institutions, and emerging forms of hospitality, Yantrasast's work reflects an ongoing interest in how environments shape perception – how scale, light, material, and sequence can create conditions for attention in an age defined by distraction. His practice moves fluidly between building, exhibition, and object, guided by the belief that architecture is not only a discipline, but a way of thinking about how we live together.

# CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CREATOR LAURIE ANDERSON

USA



Courtesy of Laurie Anderson. Photo Credit: Ebru Yildiz.

Laurie Anderson (b. 1947) is one of the most influential figures in contemporary interdisciplinary practice, working across music, performance, film, visual art, and technology. Since the 1970s, she has developed a body of work that moves fluidly between mediums, combining storytelling, sound, and image into immersive and often experimental forms.

Her practice is grounded in language – spoken, sung, or mediated through technology – through which she explores memory, identity, and the shifting relationship between human and machine. Her breakthrough work *O Superman* (1980) brought experimental sound into a wider cultural context, while subsequent multimedia performances have continued to expand the possibilities of narrative and performance.

Operating between popular culture and experimental practice, her work resists fixed categorization, shaping how artists engage with technology and storytelling across disciplines. Over decades, Anderson has established a model for working across forms that continues to influence contemporary artistic production.

## CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CREATOR SUMAYYA VALLY

### SOUTH AFRICA



Photo by Lou Jasmine. Courtesy of Sumayya Vally.

Sumayya Vally (b. 1990) is an architect-artist who recently produced a large-scale public artwork for the inaugural Art Basel Qatar. She is the founder of South African studio Counterspace, a practice redefining urban design for Africa, hinged on African and Islamic culture, community-building, and ecology. For Vally, art's future is 'in the places we've been told not to look', pointing out that, 'there are an infinite number of artistic universes'.

Sumayya Vally approaches architecture as something lived rather than fixed – less a question of form than of memory, ritual, and belonging. Through Counterspace, she works across design and research to explore how space can hold fragmented histories and hybrid identities, often drawing on overlooked or erased narratives.

Her projects resist the idea of architecture as a stabilizing force. Instead, they remain open - assembling and reassembling spatial language to reflect the realities of migration, diaspora, and layered cultural experience. 'The future of art is in the places we have been taught not to look,' she wrote, pointing to the many worlds that exist beyond established canons.

That challenge extends to the structures that define legitimacy. Rather than asking new voices to adapt to existing frameworks, Vally argues for entirely new languages – capable of holding different ways of knowing, making, and being.

# MUSEUM AND INSTITUTION

MUSEUMS, ART CENTERS, NON-PROFIT SPACES, OR OTHER CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS CONSISTENTLY STAGING GROUNDBREAKING EXHIBITIONS, FOSTERING INNOVATIVE CONTEMPORARY WORK, AND EXPANDING AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

# MUSEUM AND INSTITUTION DIRIYAH BIENNALE FOUNDATION

## DIRIYAH, SAUDI ARABIA



Courtesy of Diriyah Biennale Foundation

The Diriyah Biennale Foundation in Saudi Arabia, which presents the Islamic Arts Biennale and the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale, has become a nexus for the region's rapidly developing cultural scene, nurturing creative expression and the burgeoning local artist communities.

Inspired by the changes taking place in Saudi Arabia and the heritage site of Diriyah, the Diriyah Biennale Foundation assumes a critical role in nurturing creative expression and instilling an appreciation for culture and the arts and their transformative potential. The Foundation aspires to be a catalyst for lifelong learning and serves Saudi Arabia's communities by offering opportunities to engage with the burgeoning local art scene.

Operating at a moment of significant cultural transformation, the Foundation contributes to building new infrastructures for art in the region, expanding opportunities for artists and audiences alike.

# MUSEUM AND INSTITUTION SAVVY CONTEMPORARY

BERLIN, GERMANY



Courtesy of Savvy Contemporary. Photo Credit: Architektur.

SAVVY Contemporary is a discursive platform that brings together exhibition-making, research, and public programming across geographies and knowledge systems.

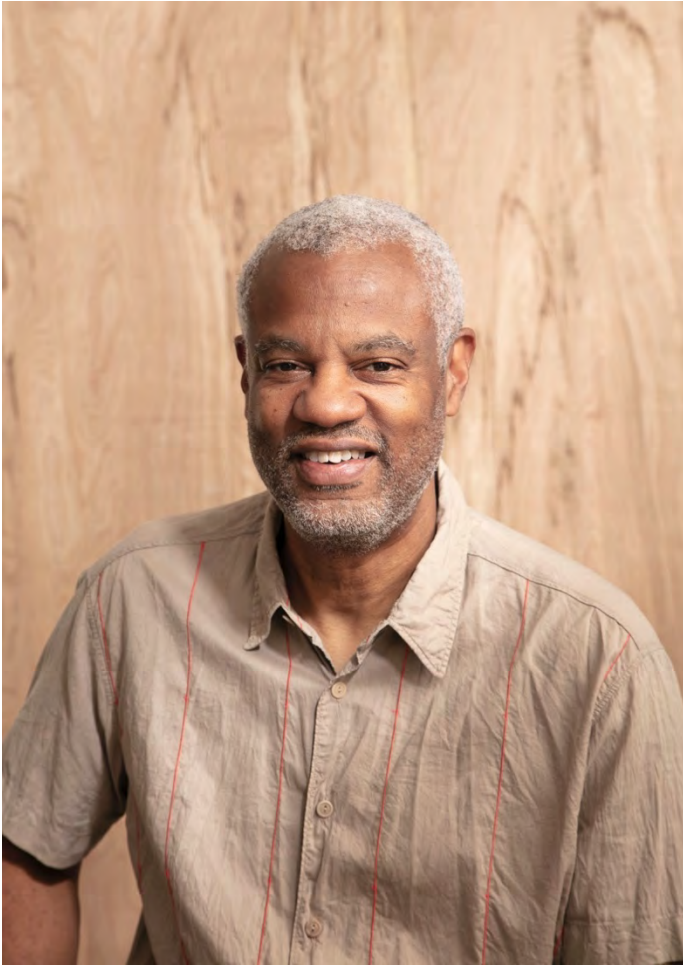
Its approach is grounded in collectivity and continuous questioning. The future, as the institution described it, is 'uncertain and constantly unfolding,' shaped through shared processes and an awareness of the power dynamics that structure art and its dissemination.

This position extends to a critique of hierarchy itself. 'The hierarchization of art and artists is a rule worth breaking,' they note – an ethos reflected in a program that prioritizes plurality and dialogue over fixed categories. Their connection to Basel is layered, encompassing an awareness of its colonial entanglements, and a more personal association with the late Koyo Kouoh, whose presence during Art Basel created moments of gathering and exchange that continue to resonate.

## MUSEUM AND INSTITUTION

### THE BRICK

#### LOS ANGELES, USA



Hamza Walker. Photo Credit: Todd Gray

Under the direction of Hamza Walker, The Brick operates as a space where exhibition-making becomes a form of inquiry. Walker – a curator, writer, and long-time contributor to contemporary art discourse – brings an approach shaped by close attention to how exhibitions produce meaning, both socially and materially.

At The Brick, this translates into a program that privileges artists' voices while allowing for experimentation in format and presentation. Exhibitions unfold less as statements than as propositions: open, responsive, and shaped through dialogue.

Walker's perspective on the art world is characteristically succinct. Asked which rule should be broken, his response is direct: 'The notion that there are rules.' His connection to Basel, meanwhile, is disarmingly simple: 'I've always wanted to take a dip in the Rhine.'

# MEDIA AND STORYTELLER

CRITICS, PUBLISHERS, EDITORS, WRITERS, OR DIGITAL  
STORYTELLERS ADVANCING ART DISCOURSE

## **MEDIA AND STORYTELLER**

### **ANTON VIDOKLE**

**USA**

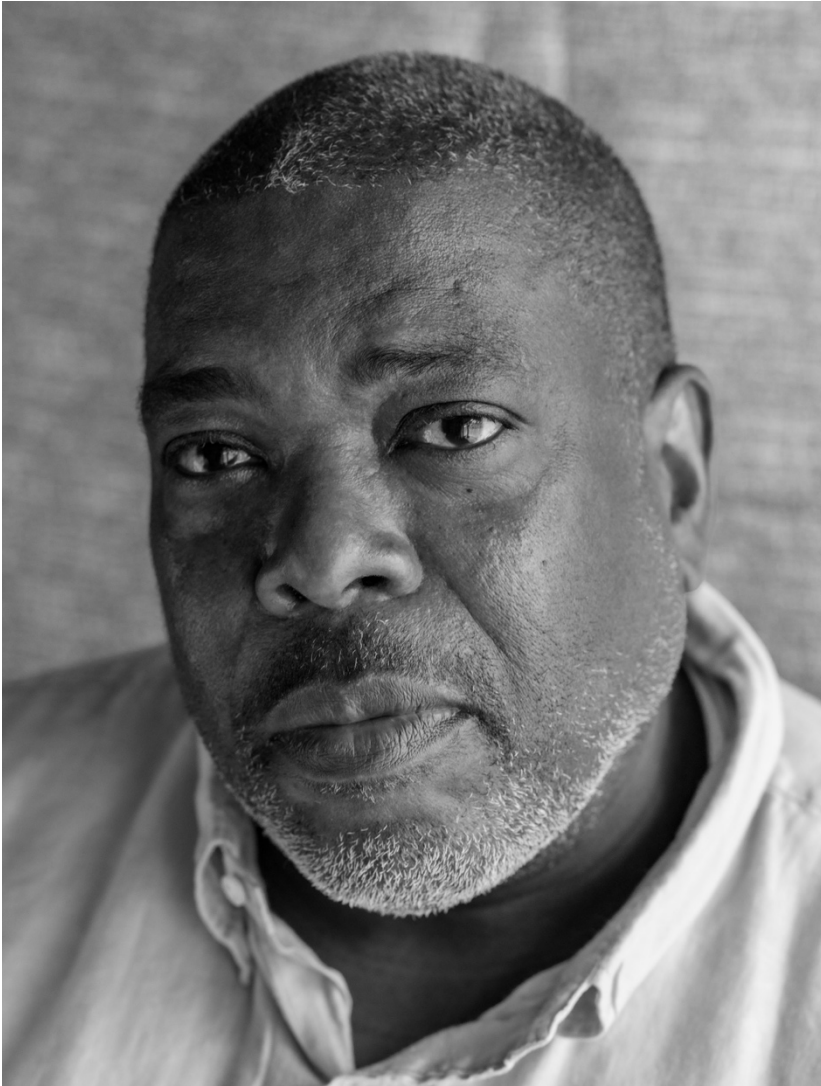


Courtesy of Anton Vidokle

Anton Vidokle is an artist, curator, and founder of e-flux, a publishing and exhibition platform established in New York in 1998. His practice spans film, exhibition making, and writing, often engaging philosophy and the politics of knowledge. His films and installations have been presented internationally, including at documenta and the Venice Biennale. Through e-flux, he has developed an infrastructure for contemporary art discourse, including e-flux Journal, one of the most widely read publications on contemporary art. He was artistic director of the 14th Shanghai Biennale and the 13th Seoul Mediacity Biennale.

## **MEDIA AND STORYTELLER HILTON ALS**

**USA**



Hilton Als. Image by Jack Pierson

Hilton Als is a Pulitzer-Prize-winning writer who moves between criticism, literature, and academia, shaping cultural conversations through his writing at *The New Yorker* and his work as an author and educator. He has received a number of awards, including a Guggenheim, a George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism, and the Windham Campbell prize from Yale University. He is the author of three acclaimed books – *The Women*, *White Girls*, and *My Pinup*; *White Girls* was shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and won the LAMBDA Literary Award. His next book, *I Don't Remember*, is forthcoming in March 2027. Als is a teaching professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

**MEDIA AND STORYTELLER**  
**SIDDHARTHA MITTER**

**UNITED STATES**



Siddhartha Mitter. Photo Credit: RogWalkerPaperMonday.

Siddhartha Mitter is an independent writer and editor on contemporary art, based in New York City and addressing practices in the Americas, Africa and worldwide. His journalism and essays often appear in The New York Times and in many other press outlets and institutional publications.

He is a member of Koyo Kouoh's organizing team for the 61st International Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2026), and editor-in-chief of the catalogue. In 2024, he received a Rabkin Prize for art writing. Initially trained in the social sciences, Siddhartha has worked in culture journalism and projects for over 20 years.

# **PATRON**

**FOUNDATIONS, COLLECTORS, OR PHILANTHROPISTS  
WHO HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT THROUGH  
SUPPORTING STRATEGIES**

**PATRON**  
**MERCEDES VILARDELL**

**SPAIN**



Courtesy of Mercedes Vilardell.

Mercedes Vilardell, born in Barcelona, is a trained lawyer with a master's degree in contemporary art. She has played a significant role in advancing the visibility of African art through her longstanding institutional engagement, including serving as Chair of Tate's African Acquisitions Committee for a decade, and contributing to initiatives at Centre Pompidou and the Reina Sofía Foundation.

Her work extends across a wide network of organizations, as Trustee of Gasworks in London and supporter of Delfina Foundation, Chisenhale Gallery, and the Rijksakademie, where she funds an annual scholarship for a student from the African continent.

Vilardell is also involved in numerous international initiatives, supporting biennials such as Bamako Encounters and the Lubumbashi Biennale, as well as artist-led projects like Ibrahim Mahama's Red Clay in Tamale. Her philanthropic efforts include backing curatorial grants through CIMAM, recently expanding to include Palestinian curators, and supporting Earshot, the NGO founded by Lawrence Abu Hamdan. Across her work, she is consistently committed to championing artists and institutions connected to the African continent.

**PATRON**  
**PAMELA J. JOYNER**

**USA**



Courtesy of Pamela Joyner. Photo by Drew Altizer.

Pamela J. Joyner has played a defining role in advancing the recognition of artists of the African diaspora, bringing a strategic and long-term approach to collecting and cultural philanthropy. With a background in finance, she has applied a systems-oriented perspective to the question of how art is supported, contextualized, and sustained.

Her work is closely tied to institutional engagement, including roles at MoMA and SFMOMA, and the founding of the Black Trustee Alliance for Art Museums. Across these efforts, she has advocated for a more complete art historical canon.

Her connection to Basel is marked by a specific encounter: Leonardo Drew's presentation at Unlimited in 2022, which not only resonated deeply but led to a new way of living with his work. 'When you see excellence, then you need to pursue that irrespective of the system or structure,' she notes.

**PATRON  
TEIGER FOUNDATION**

**USA**



Courtesy of Teiger Foundation

Teiger Foundation supports contemporary visual art with a primary focus on curators. It honors the vision of founder David Teiger, who, in his lifetime, championed professionals who pursued their own paths in making exhibitions, leading organizations, conducting research, and pursuing other aspects of curatorial practice.

In dialogue with artists and other art workers, curators are thinkers and leaders who play multiple and changing roles in their organizations and communities. Teiger Foundation's goal is to support these activities and their continued reinvention. Acknowledging uncertainty, fear, and loss in a time of enormous change, Teiger Foundation is committed to experimentation and creativity in exhibitions and programs, innovative curatorial research and partnerships, and new perspectives on community-building and positive structural change within the field of visual art. Teiger Foundation positions its work in support of racial justice and against white supremacy, in support of free expression, and towards an equitable transition from fossil fuels amidst the climate crisis.

# ALLIES

THE UNSUNG HEROES WHOSE BEHIND-THE-SCENES  
WORK FACILITATES EXTRAORDINARY ARTISTIC  
PROJECTS AND CAREERS

## ALLIES

### INDEPENDENT CURATORS INTERNATIONAL (ICI)

#### NEW YORK, USA



Renaud Proch with Glenn Kaino's *Now Do I Repay a Period Won (Libya) 01*, 2015, Photo Credit: Yuko Torihara.

Independent Curators International (ICI) is a global organization supporting curators through exhibitions, research, and professional development. Under the leadership of Renaud Proch, it has built an international network dedicated to advancing curatorial practice and fostering exchange across contexts.

ICI functions as a critical infrastructure within the art ecosystem, foregrounding curatorial practice as a driver of dialogue and cultural production. At its core is a belief in art's capacity to bring people together, creating what Proch describes as 'more cohesive, united, and open-hearted communities.'

## ALLIES

### NEW CURATORS

#### LONDON, UK

New Curators, led by Kerry Greenberg and Mark Godfrey, is a platform dedicated to expanding access to curatorial practice through education, mentorship, and professional development. Drawing on deep institutional experience, the initiative supports emerging curators in navigating and reshaping the field.

Kerry Greenberg is an international curator with 20 years' experience and is the co-founder and co-director of New Curators. In 2023, Greenberg was Associate Curator of the 14th Gwangju Biennale and curated the two-part exhibition 'The Struggle of Memory' at Palais Populaire, Berlin. As Head of International Collection Exhibitions at Tate from 2019–21, she oversaw the successful delivery of 15 exhibitions at partner venues as far afield as Quebec and Hong Kong, and curated 'Light', the inaugural exhibition for the Museum of Art Pudong, Shanghai in 2021. In her previous role as Curator (International Art) at Tate Modern, she was responsible for establishing Tate's Africa Acquisitions Committee in 2011. Additional curated and co-curated exhibitions at Tate include 'Nicholas Hlobo: Uhambo', 2008; 'Francis Alys: A Story of Deception', 2010; 'Contested Terrains', 2011; 'Joan Miró: The Ladder of Escape', 2011; 'Meschac Gaba: Museum of Contemporary African Art', 2013; 'Marlene Dumas: The Image as Burden', 2015; 'Fahrelnissa Zeid', 2017, 'The Head & the Load', 2018 and 'Zanele Muholi', 2020.



Kerry Greenberg. Courtesy of New Curators.



Mark Godfrey. Courtesy of New Curators.

Mark Godfrey is a curator and art historian based in London and co-director of New Curators. As Senior Curator at Tate Modern, he organized retrospectives of Roni Horn, Francis Alys, Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Alighiero Boetti, Franz West, Richard Hamilton, and Olafur Eliasson, as well as the survey show 'Soul of a Nation'. Since 2021 he curated exhibitions by Nicole Eisenman, Laura Owens, Jacqueline Humphries, and Pino Pascali. His show 'Kerry James Marshall: The Histories' is on show at the Kunsthau Zurich now.

## **ALLIES**

### **STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM'S ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM**

#### **NEW YORK, USA**



Exterior view of the Studio Museum in Harlem's new building. Photo Credit: Dror Baldinger FAIA. Courtesy Studio Museum in Harlem.

The Studio Museum in Harlem's Artist-in-Residence program is one of the most influential platforms for supporting artists of African and Afro-Latinx descent. Since its founding in 1969, it has provided artists with studio space, institutional support, and a community of peers.

Rooted in Harlem's cultural history, the program operates as both a site of production and exchange, enabling artists to develop their work in dialogue with audiences and one another. As a long-standing initiative, it has played a central role in shaping generations of artists and continues to underscore the importance of sustained support structures within the contemporary art ecosystem.

# CURATOR

LEADING CURATORS WHO HAVE ORGANIZED  
TRAILBLAZING EXHIBITIONS OR PROGRAMS THAT HAVE  
RESHAPED THE WAY AUDIENCES EXPERIENCE ART

**CURATOR**  
**AZU NWAGBOGU**

**NIGERIA**



Azu Nwagbogu. Photo Credit: Ana Flores x Vogue Italia.

Azu Nwagbogu's work spans curating, publishing, and institution-building, with a focus on developing new frameworks for engaging with contemporary art from Africa and beyond. As founder of the African Artists' Foundation and LagosPhoto Biennale, he has created platforms that extend beyond exhibition-making into research, discourse, and long-term cultural infrastructure.

His thinking on the future of art centers on what he describes as 'Happy Survival' - a mode grounded in resilience, collective experience, and the creation of beauty within challenging conditions. For Nwagbogu, meaning emerges not only from artworks themselves, but from the systems and materials through which they are produced.

He is equally critical of institutional authority. 'The idea that institutions decide what is worth remembering' is, for him, a rule that must be broken. In its place, he points to community archives, oral knowledge systems, and collaborative practices as sites where future cultural meaning will be generated.

## CURATOR

**DIANA CAMPBELL**

**BANGLADESH & USA**



Diana Campbell's curatorial practice is shaped by long-term engagement with context – geographical, cultural, and environmental. As Artistic Director of the Samdani Art Foundation and Chief Curator of the Dhaka Art Summit, she has developed approaches to exhibition-making that move away from imposed formats and toward working with existing conditions.

Diana Campbell. Photo Credit: Luke Scott Fernandez

Her projects often unfold through collaboration, bringing together artists, architects, and communities in processes that rethink how exhibitions are produced and experienced. 'The future of art is collaborative,' she wrote, describing a shift away from the idea of the individual author and toward practices that engage more directly with life.

Campbell also challenges inherited hierarchies within the field, particularly the division between thinking and making. She argues for recognizing material practice as a form of intelligence in its own right – one that cannot be reduced to institutional markers of legitimacy.

**CURATOR**  
**STUART COMER**

**USA**



Stuart Comer. © 2021 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photo by Peter Ross.

Stuart Comer is The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance at MoMA, New York. In addition to directing the collection, exhibitions, and programs of the Department of Media and Performance, he steers the Museum's contemporary collection galleries, leads the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio, and chairs the Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives (C-MAP) Southeast Asia research group.

Previously Curator of Film at Tate Modern and co-curator of the 2014 Whitney Biennial, Comer has consistently contributed to redefining how contemporary art is presented within institutional contexts. His practice reflects a broader shift toward interdisciplinary approaches within museum programming and collection-building.

# THE JURY

## THE JURY

Chaired by Vincenzo de Bellis, **the international Art Basel Awards jury is comprised of nine industry leaders and experts**, carefully chosen for their expertise, influence, and demonstrated commitment to shaping the future of art.

In 2026, the Awards welcome a new jury member: **Prof. Dr. Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung**, Director and Chief Curator of Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. He joins the jury following the passing of the esteemed curator Koyo Kouoh, who was part of the jury in the first cycle of the Awards and played an integral role in their inaugural cycle.

## HOOR AL QASIMI



Hoor Al Qasimi is President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, the public art institution she established in 2009 as a catalyst and advocate for the arts in Sharjah, the UAE, and around the world. Director of Sharjah Biennial since 2003, she has curated and co-curated major exhibitions for the Foundation and numerous international institutions, including the critically acclaimed Sharjah Biennial 15 (2023), the major touring retrospective 'Hassan Sharif: I Am The Single Work Artist' (2017-2018), and solo exhibitions of artists Simone Fattal, Rasheed Araeen, Yayoi Kusama, Farideh Lashai, Khalil Rabah, Bouchra Khalili, Emily Karaka, Antonio Dias, and William Kentridge. Al Qasimi also serves as President of the International Biennial Association; President of The Africa Institute, Sharjah; Director of the Sharjah Architecture

Triennial; head of Sharjah's Global Studies University; and President of the Sharjah Creative Quarter. Al Qasimi curated the 2020 Lahore Biennial and is Artistic Director of the 6th Aichi Triennale (2025), and the 25th Biennale of Sydney (2026).

## VINCENZO DE BELLIS



Vincenzo de Bellis is Director of Fairs and Exhibition Platforms at Art Basel. In his role, he oversees the leadership teams of Art Basel's four shows in Basel, Miami Beach, Hong Kong, Paris, and Qatar and spearheads new events and initiatives in the physical realm. He also leads the strategic direction of the Art Basel Awards, for which he serves as Chair of the International Jury.

From 2016 to 2022, de Bellis served as Curator and Associate Director of Programs, Visual Arts at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. During his tenure at the Walker Art Center, he organized exhibitions including a Jannis Kounellis retrospective (2022); the group show *The Paradox of Stillness: Art, Object, and Performance* (2021); and solo shows of work by Mario Garcia Torres (2018), and Nairy Baghramian (2017). From 2012 to 2016, de Bellis was Artistic Director of Miart, Milan's international Modern and contemporary art fair. From 2009 to 2016, de Bellis served as Founding Director and Curator of the Peep-Hole Art Center in Milan. He was the curator of the first two editions of Panorama, the itinerant exhibition held by Italics, a consortium of over sixty of Italy's leading art galleries. He also co-curated the inaugural edition of Noor Riyadh, an annual festival of

light and art in Riyadh.

De Bellis holds an MA in Curatorial Studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York; an MA in Management for Museums of Contemporary Art and Architecture from Sapienza Università di Roma; and a BA in Cultural Heritage from Università degli Studi di Lecce.

## ELENA FILIPOVIC



Elena Filipovic is Director of Kunstmuseum Basel. From 2014 to 2024, she served as director and curator of Kunsthalle Basel and prior to that, she served as senior curator of WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels. She was curator of the Croatian Pavilion of the Venice Biennale of Art in 2022, and was co-curator, with Adam Szymczyk, of the 5th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2008. She writes widely about art, has edited several compendiums on exhibition histories, and is the author of *David Hammons, Bliz-aard Ball Sale* (Afterall Books, 2017) and *The Apparent/y Marginal Activities of Marcel Duchamp* (MIT Press, 2016). Filipovic holds a PhD in art history from Princeton University.

## JESSICA MORGAN



Jessica Morgan joined Dia Art Foundation as Director in January 2015 and was named Nathalie de Gunzburg Director in October 2017. Morgan is responsible for strengthening and activating all parts of Dia's multivalent program, including its pioneering land art projects, site-specific commissions, and collections and programming across its constellation of sites. Since assuming directorship, Morgan has led a series of initiatives reaffirming and reinvigorating the non-profit's founding vision and principles. Since 2018, she has led a comprehensive, multi-year project to upgrade and revitalize Dia's programmatic spaces.

Prior to Dia, Morgan was The Daskalopoulos Curator, International Art, at Tate Modern in London from 2010 to 2014, and was Curator at Tate from 2002 to 2010. In addition to her work on exhibitions, Morgan played a key role in the growth of Tate's collection – driving the development of the museum's holdings of mid-century and emerging art from North America, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Morgan was previously Chief Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, and a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Morgan curated the 2020-22 Verbier Art Summits and served as the artistic director of the 10th Gwangju Biennale in 2014. She is on numerous international advisory boards, including the Sounding Board for Haus der Kunst, Munich; the Advisory Committee for the Collection, MACBA, Barcelona; the Selection Committee for the Artist Protection Fund, Institute of

International Education, New York; and the Advisory Board for the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, Mumbai.

## HANS ULRICH OBRIST



Hans Ulrich Obrist is Artistic Director of the Serpentine in London and Senior Advisor at LUMA Arles. Prior to this, he was Curator of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Since his first show *World Soup* (The Kitchen Show) in 1991, he has curated more than 350 exhibitions, including recent exhibitions *Enzo Mariat Triennale Milano* (2020) and *WORLDBUILD/NG* at Centre Pompidou-Metz (2023) and *Julia Stoschek Collection*, Dusseldorf (2022). The *Handwriting Project*, which protests the disappearance of handwriting in the digital age, has been taking place on Instagram since 2013 (@hansulrichobrist).

In 2011 Obrist received the ces Bard Award for Curatorial Excellence, and in 2015 he was awarded the International Folkwang Prize.

Most recently, he was honored by the Appraisers Association of America with the 2018 Award for Excellence in the Arts.

Obrist has lectured internationally at academic and art institutions and is contributing editor to several magazines and journals. Obrist's recent publications include *Ways of Curating* (2015); *The Age of Earthquakes* (2015); *Lives of the Artists, Lives of Architects* (2015); *The Extreme Self: Age of You* (2021); *140 Ideas for Planet Earth* (2021); *Edouard Glissant: Archipelago*

(2021); *James Lovelock: Ever Gaia* (2023); *Remember to Dream* (2023); and *Une vie in Progress* (2023).

## ADRIANO PEDROSA



Adriano Pedrosa has been the Artistic Director of Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, since 2014. He was adjunct curator of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo (1998), co-curator of the 27th Bienal de São Paulo (2006), curator of *InSite\_05* (San Diego, Tijuana, 2005), artistic director of the 2nd Trienal de San Juan (2009), curator of *31st Panorama da Arte Brasileira-Mamõyaguara opá mamõ pupé* (Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, 2009). In 2023, he received the Audrey Irmes Award for Curatorial Excellence from Bard College, and was the curator of the Biennale Arte 2024, in Venice.

## SUHANYA RAFFEL



Suhanya Raffel is the Museum Director of M+ in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District. Since her appointment in 2016, she has overseen all museum activities at M+ including acquisitions, programming, collections care, development, research, institutional collaborations, and museum operations. Raffel has defined the museum's mission, broadening its international reach, and championing its deep connection with the local community.

Before joining M+, Raffel was the Director of Collections and then Deputy Director at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2013-2016). She has held many senior curatorial positions, including Deputy Director of Curatorial and Collection Development from 2010 and Acting Director in 2012 at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (1994-2013). There, she was instrumental in building the contemporary Asia Pacific collection and led its Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art.

Raffel is the President of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (2023-2025), and she has served on its board since 2016. She is also a member of the Bizot Group (2021-ongoing) and a trustee of the Geoffrey Bawa Trust and the Lunuganga Trust, Sri Lanka (1994-ongoing). She is a member of the scientific committee for the Fondazione per l'Arte Moderna e

Contemporanea CRT, Turin, (2023-ongoing); the International Advisory Committee of the

Mari Art Museum, Tokyo (2023-ongoing); and the Royal Board of Trustees of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2024-ongoing). She was awarded the title of Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 2020, and the Sydney University Alumni Achievement Award for Cultural Contribution in 2022.

## FRANKLIN SIRMANS



Franklin Sirmans became the Director of the Pérez Art Museum Miami in 2015. Under his leadership, the collection and endowment have doubled in size. Prior to his appointment, he was the department head and curator of contemporary art at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the head of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Menil Collection in Houston. Prior to his work as a museum director and curator, he was an editor at Flash Art Magazine in Milan and New York and Publications Assistant at Dia Center for the Arts.

## PHILIP TINARI



Philip Tinari is Deputy Director and Head of Art at Tai Kwun in Hong Kong. Prior to joining Tai Kwun in 2026, he was Director and Chief Executive of UCCA Center for Contemporary Art. After joining UCCA in 2011, he led its growth and transformation from a founder-owned private establishment into China's premier institution of modern and contemporary art, operating across a constellation of four locations in Beijing, Shanghai, Beidaihe, and Yixing. His program featured major Chinese and international artists including Cao Fei, William Kentridge, Luc Tuymans, and Xu Bing alongside emerging talents and historical figures such as Marcel Duchamp, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Andy Warhol. Tinari co-curated the landmark exhibition "Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World" (2017) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and organized the inaugural Diriyah Biennale (2021) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

## PROF. DR. BONAVENTURE SOH BEJENG NDIKUNG



Prof. Dr. Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung is a curator, author, and biotechnologist, currently serving as director and chief curator of Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin, Germany and chief curator of the the 36th Bienal de São Paulo. He is the founder and was artistic director of SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin, as well as the artistic director of sonsbeek20–24, a quadrennial contemporary art exhibition in Arnhem, the Netherlands. He also worked as curator-at-large for Adam Szymczyk's documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel in 2017 and was guest curator of the Dak'Art biennial in Dakar, in 2018. Additionally, he served as the artistic director for the 12th and 13th editions of the Bamako Encounters photography biennial in Mali, taking on this role in 2019 and 2022. Together with the Miracle Workers Collective, he curated the Finland Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. Prof. Dr. Ndikung was a guest professor in curatorial studies and sound art at the Städelschule in Frankfurt, and he is currently a professor in and head of the faculty of Spatial Strategies Master's program at the Weissensee Academy of Art in Berlin. He was the recipient of the first OCAD University International Curators Residency fellowship in Toronto in 2020. His published works include *The Delusions of Care* (2021), *An Ongoing-Offcoming Tale: Ruminations on Art, Culture, Politics and Us/Others* (2022), and *Pidginization as Curatorial Method* (2023).

## ART BASEL AWARDS: AN ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT



Art Basel Awards Night 2025. Courtesy of Art Basel.

The 2026 medalists will be **honored during Art Basel's flagship show in Basel, Switzerland, this June**, where they will take an active role across the program. A selection of medalists will headline a public, **artist-led Conversations series**, offering audiences direct access to some of the most influential voices shaping contemporary culture today, including **Arthur Jafa, Maria Magdalena Campos Pons, Mercedes Vilardell, and Precious Okoyomon**.

Later this year, **Gold Awardees** will be selected through an **independent peer-driven review process** and announced - together with the BOSS AWARD for Outstanding Achievement winner - at the **Official Art Basel Awards Night during Art Basel Miami Beach** in December. In a model that moves beyond traditional prize structures, **Gold Awards in the artist categories provide over USD 250,000 annually in flexible support** - spanning honorariums, philanthropic contributions, and public commissions - creating new opportunities for artists to realize work on a global stage. Medalists also receive access to Art Basel's global network, personalized mentorship, partnership opportunities, and customized support to help their work reach a global audience.

Gold Awardees in the Emerging Artist category will each receive an unrestricted honorarium of USD 50,000; Gold Awardees in the Established Artist category will each be awarded an honorarium of USD 50,000, alongside a large-scale public commission to debut during Art Basel in Basel in June 2026; and for Gold Awardees in the Icon Artist category, a donation of USD 50,000 will be made by Art Basel to an organization of the medalist's choosing, in their name.

## 2025 MEDALISTS: IMPACT IN ACTION

The impact of the Art Basel Awards is already unfolding across institutions, exhibitions, and new commissions worldwide. As part of the inaugural group of medalists, **Nairy Baghramian** (Gold Award, Established Artist) and **Ibrahim Mahama** (Gold Award, Established Artist) will unveil two major new public works in Basel this June, marking the first time that commissions stemming from the Awards program premiere in the city where their recognition first took shape. Baghramian's work will unfold on the Messeplatz, while Mahama will present a large-scale installation on the Münsterplatz, extending Art Basel's presence into the public realm and reinforcing its commitment to supporting artists beyond the exhibition hall.

Further developments from the 2025 cohort underline the Awards' role as a catalyst for ongoing visibility and production. **Cao Fei** (Established Artist) will open a major exhibition at Kunstmuseum Basel in May 2026 – coinciding with the fair – while **Ibrahim Mahama** (Established Artist) will also present a significant exhibition at Fondation Cartier in Paris later in the year. **Saodat Ismailova's** (Emerging Artist) recent exhibition at the Swiss Institute in New York marked her first solo show in the United States, and **Lydia Ourahmane** (Emerging Artist) will present a major new body of work at the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation in Venice. **Lubaina Himid** (Gold Award, Icon Artist) will represent the United Kingdom at the 2026 Venice Biennale, while **Raw Material Company** (Museum and Institution), founded by Koyo Kouoh, plays a central role in the Venice Biennale's 2026 edition through Marie Hélène Pereira's curatorial involvement in the international exhibition.

The Awards' model of flexible support continues to generate tangible outcomes. In the Icon category, 2025 Gold Awardee **Cecilia Vicuña** has dedicated her USD 50,000 Gold Award donation to the **Fungi Foundation**, extending the impact of the Awards into environmental research and advocacy.

This year also marks the launch of the **Koyo Kouoh Fellowship**, developed in collaboration with RAW Material Company. The three-year program supports emerging curators, writers, and cultural practitioners, and will debut during Art Basel in Basel in 2026.



Icon Artist Gold Awardee Cecilia Vicuña at the Official Art Basel Awards Night in Miami Beach 2025. Courtesy of Art Basel

Art Basel is pleased to announce the inaugural fellow: **Aisha Aliyu-Bima**. Aisha Aliyu-Bima is a curator, writer, photographer, researcher, and archivist whose work engages contemporary art through an anthropological and geographical lens. Her practice spans research, writing, and exhibition-making, with projects presented across Lagos, Abuja, Kaduna, Kano, and Budapest. Her writing has appeared in Republic Journal, Za! Magazine, Alewa House, and Radr Africa.

Established in loving memory of Koyo Kouoh (December 24, 1967-May 10, 2025), the Fellowship honors her enduring commitment to critical discourse, institutional innovation, and the support of emerging voices.

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BOSS



Amplifying contemporary artistic practice among fashion's global cultural audience, the Art Basel Awards are **presented in partnership with renowned fashion brand BOSS, the core brand of HUGO BOSS**. The Art Basel Awards embody the Group's longstanding commitment to driving innovation and dialog in the arts and its related fields.

In December 2025, the **inaugural BOSS AWARD for Outstanding Achievement** was presented to **Meriem Bennani**, recognizing a practice that resonates across and beyond the art ecosystem. The award celebrates work that reflects the BOSS spirit of boldness, personal authenticity, ambition, and responsibility.

The next BOSS AWARD will be presented at the Official Art Basel Awards Night during Art Basel Miami Beach in December 2026.

## AWARD CATEGORIES

The Art Basel Awards include three categories dedicated to artists:

1. **Emerging**, for rising talents demonstrating exceptional potential to shape the future of contemporary art
2. **Established**, for mid-career artists who have made significant contributions to the art world and continue to evolve their practice
3. **Icon**, for legendary artists whose careers have had a profound, enduring impact on the global art landscape

Six additional categories recognize figures in the contemporary art world and beyond:

4. **Cross-Disciplinary Creator**, for the individuals, collectives, or organizations shaping contemporary culture at the junction of visual art and other creative industries, such as fashion, design, film, architecture, or music
5. **Museum and Institution**, for museums, art centers, non-profit spaces, or other cultural institutions consistently staging groundbreaking exhibitions, fostering innovative contemporary work, and expanding audience engagement or accessibility
6. **Curator**, for leading curators who have organized trailblazing exhibitions or programs that have reshaped the way audiences experience art
7. **Patron**, for foundations, collectors, or philanthropists who have made a significant impact through supporting strategies, including grants, acquisitions, or commissions

8. **Allies**, for the unsung heroes whose behind-the-scenes work supports and facilitates extraordinary artistic projects and careers, including in the fields of studio management, logistics, art handling, production, technical execution, exhibition design, architecture, technology, digital platforms, conservation and preservation, and professional services
9. **Media and Storyteller**, for critics, publishers, editors, writers, or digital storytellers advancing art discourse

# NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

## STAGE 1

A group of anonymous observers appointed by Art Basel individually nominate candidates from across the art ecosystem for further consideration. Nominations are secret.

## STAGE 2

The international jury selects 33 medalists, based on individual assessments and group deliberations, against four key criteria: Vision and innovation, engagement, skill and execution, and broader impact. Medalists are announced in spring.

## STAGE 3

Through independent peer review, the medalists vote to select up to 11 Gold Awardees from among themselves whose efforts best exemplify the Art Basel Awards' values and standards of excellence. Gold Awardees are revealed in December at Art Basel Miami Beach.



*In loving memory of Koyo Kouoh,  
December 24, 1967-May 10, 2025*

The Art Basel Awards are deeply grateful for Koyo's spirited participation as a juror of last year's edition and her unwavering commitment to the Awards' mission to uplift the next generation of cultural changemakers, of which she was emblematic.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About the Art Basel Awards

Launched by Art Basel in 2025, the Art Basel Awards are the world's first global honors dedicated to recognizing excellence across the contemporary art world. Each year, an international jury of experts awards medals to individuals and organizations spanning the industry whose practices and contributions are shaping the future of art. Medalists are selected against four key pillars: vision and innovation, skill and execution, engagement, and broader impact. The Art Basel Awards confer both immediate, flexible support in the form of honorariums alongside global networking, philanthropic initiatives, tailored partnerships, and high-profile commissions designed to propel medalists' work onto new platforms. Medalists are recognized globally by Art Basel through year-round campaigns and initiatives, including the Art Basel Awards Summit, the annual thought leadership conference for the most influential figures in the global art world and neighboring creative industries, held in Basel. The Art Basel Awards are presented in partnership with BOSS. For more information, visit [artbaselawards.com](https://artbaselawards.com).

For the latest updates, follow @artbasel on Instagram and WeChat.

#ArtBaselAwards

### About BOSS and HUGO BOSS

BOSS is made for bold, self-determined individuals who live life on their own terms, with passion, style, and purpose. Collections offer dynamic, modern designs for those that embrace who they are fully and unapologetically: as their own BOSS. The brand's heritage tailoring, performance suiting, casualwear, denim, athleisure, and accessories cater to the style needs of the discerning consumer. Licensed fragrances, eyewear, watches, and kidswear complete the brand. The world of BOSS can be experienced in 485 own stores worldwide. BOSS is the core brand of HUGO BOSS, one of the leading companies positioned in the premium segment of the global apparel market. The group offers collections in 128

countries at around 8,000 points of sale and online in 74 markets via [hugoboss.com](https://hugoboss.com). With more than 17,500 employees worldwide, the company, based in Metzingen (Germany), posted sales of EUR 4.3 billion in the fiscal year 2025.

### About Art Basel

Founded in 1970 by gallerists from Basel, Art Basel today stages the world's premier art shows for Modern and contemporary art, sited in Basel, Miami Beach, Hong Kong, Paris, and Doha. Defined by its host city and region, each show is unique, which is reflected in its participating galleries, artworks presented, and the content of parallel programming produced in collaboration with local institutions for each edition. Art Basel's engagement has expanded beyond art fairs through new digital platforms including the Art Basel App and initiatives such as the *Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report*, the Art Basel Awards, and the Art Basel Shop. Art Basel's Global Lead Partner is UBS. For more information, visit [artbasel.com](https://artbasel.com).

Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/artbasel](https://facebook.com/artbasel), or follow @artbasel on Instagram and WeChat.

### Media Information and Images

Press releases and high-resolution images can be downloaded directly from [artbasel.com/press](https://artbasel.com/press).

## **Upcoming Art Basel shows**

Basel, June 18-21, 2026

Paris, October 23-25, 2026

Miami Beach, December 4-7, 2026

Qatar, January 2027

Hong Kong, March 25-27, 2027

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