

NEWS RELEASE

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HOWARDENA PINDELL TO RECEIVE ARTISTS' LEGACY FOUNDATION 2019 ARTIST AWARD



Howardena Pindell, *Untitled #7*, 1975. Ink on paper collage, 6 x 10 ½ in.
Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

Oakland, California – August 29, 2019 – The Artists' Legacy Foundation is pleased to announce Howardena Pindell (b. 1943) as the recipient of the 2019 Artist Award. Pindell's multifaceted practice explores composition and color, as well as political topics including racism, feminism, and exploitation.

The Artist Award is an unrestricted merit award of \$25,000 given annually to a painter or sculptor who has made significant contributions to their field and whose work shows evidence of the hand.

Pindell says, "I am very thrilled to receive the Artist Award.... I am used to being under the radar." She cites the support of dealer Garth Greenan and the encouragement of friends, family, and colleagues who never give up.

Throughout her five-decade career, Pindell has created artworks with richly textured surfaces that explore complex and coded narratives. Her practice spans many media, including painting, works on paper, photography, film, and performance.

In 1979, after a serious auto accident, Pindell's artwork took on an autobiographical focus. Tracing her body, she created cutouts that she incorporated into large paintings. The resulting *Memory Test* and *Autobiography* series were a way to physically put herself back together, but also to explore aspects of selfhood. She further explored ideas of identity and racial injustices in the film *Free White and 21*, which recounted personal experiences and influential moments of racism. Even in the progressive halls of the art community, the film was not widely exhibited. Instead, it found an audience in college campus screenings and underground film venues.

Among Pindell's most recognized bodies of work are meticulously assembled paintings and works on paper utilizing hole-punched dots, numbered and embedded in handmade paper or laid within tight grids on canvases. In artworks from the 1980s, the dots are repositioned to stand on end, creating textural surfaces that incorporate light and shadow as formal elements. Pindell has described the work as "metaphorical processes of destruction/reconstruction".

Pindell's ongoing interest in circles partly stems from childhood road trips with her family, during which she noticed that their chilled root beer mugs had red circles on the bases. Her father explained that silverware, dishes, and glasses were marked with circles to indicate they were for serving non-white customers. Over the ensuing decades, Pindell came to see circles in other contexts, not just as a symbol of exclusion or separation, and her ongoing exploration of the shape shares a complex and diverse symbolism with a wider audience.

Pindell's work reminds us that there is always more to explore through the lens of abstraction. In an artist's statement she describes her series *Separate but Equal* as reflections on "universal struggles for dignity, civil and human rights, as well as some of my personal agonies."

Pindell has contributed to the art community in myriad ways. Four decades of students at the State University of New York, Stony Brook have benefited from her teaching. As a co-founder of A.I.R. Gallery in 1972, she and 19 other artists created a New York City gallery space focused on female artists. Pindell has also been a prolific writer, whose insightful essays draw attention to intersectional topics, often using personal anecdotes to look closely at racism and feminism.

The 2019 jury panel included three artists: painter and sculptor Greg Colson, performance artist and educator T.J. Dedeaux-Norris, and painter Melissa Meyer.

"Pindell's visual work, writing, institutional critique, and service to others are admirable and truly a lesson in authenticity and rigor for younger careered artists," says Dedeaux-Norris. "I'm filled with unquantifiable joy knowing I played a small part in acknowledging a more than deserving artist whose work has influenced me profoundly."

Meyer comments, "I think of her as a courageous and important artist who makes beautiful work and is contributing to the tradition of abstraction through a long and productive career."

"As an artist, museum curator, university professor, and co-founder of A.I.R. Gallery, Howardena Pindell has been an essential force in the art world for over fifty years," Colson

asserts. “Her textured abstractions, constructed of numbered paper dots, are at once, visually captivating and a pointed reflection on racism.”



Left: Howardena Pindell, *#108 Memory Series: Sorry, It Was an Accident*, 1979. Mixed media, 14 x 17 in.
 Right: Howardena Pindell, *Separate But Equal Genocide: AIDS*, 1991-92. Mixed media on canvas, 75 1/2 x 91 in.
 Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York.

About Howardena Pindell

Born in Philadelphia in 1943, Howardena Pindell studied painting at Boston University and Yale University. After graduating, she accepted a job at the Museum of Modern Art, where she worked for 12 years (1967–1979) as an exhibition assistant in the Department of National and International Traveling Exhibitions and as an Assistant Curator, Associate Curator and Acting Director in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books.

In 1979, she began teaching at the State University of New York, Stony Brook where she is now a full professor. Throughout her career, Pindell has exhibited extensively. Notable solo-exhibitions include: Spelman College (1971, Atlanta), A.I.R. Gallery (1973, 1983, New York), Just Above Midtown (1977, New York), Lerner-Heller Gallery (1980, 1981, New York), The Studio Museum in Harlem (1986, New York), the Wadsworth Atheneum (1989, Hartford), Cyrus Gallery (1989, New York), G.R. N’Namdi Gallery (1992, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2002, 2006, Chicago, Detroit, and New York), Garth Greenan Gallery, New York (2014), Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta (2015), and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2018).

Howardena Pindell’s work has been featured in many landmark museum exhibitions, such as: Contemporary Black Artists in America (1971, Whitney Museum of American Art), Rooms (1976, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center), Another Generation (1979, The Studio Museum in Harlem), Afro-American Abstraction (1980, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center), The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s (1990, New Museum of Contemporary Art), and Bearing Witness: Contemporary Works by African-American Women Artists (1996, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta).

Pindell's work is in the permanent collections of major museums internationally, including: the Brooklyn Museum; the Corcoran Gallery of Art; the Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Modern Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Studio Museum in Harlem; the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Whitney Museum of American Art; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

Pindell's work is represented by Garth Greenan Gallery in New York and Victoria Miro Gallery in London.

About the Artist Award

The Artist Award was launched in 2007 to recognize and honor outstanding visual artists whose primary medium is painting or sculpture. Every year, ten painters or sculptors are proposed for the ALF Artist Award by five anonymous nominators selected by the board. Artist Award nominators and jurors are art world peers chosen for their expertise. A jury of three peers makes the final selection. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed over \$300,000.

To learn more about the Artist Award and its impact on recipients, watch this video:
<https://vimeo.com/187242534>

About Artists' Legacy Foundation

Artists' Legacy Foundation stewards the work of Legacy Artists and facilitates their posthumous philanthropy; recognizes outstanding painters and sculptors through awards and grants; and serves as an educational resource for artists, scholars, and the general public.

For more information, please visit artistslegacyfoundation.org, or on Twitter (@Artists_Legacy) and Instagram (@artistslegacyfoundation).