

NEWS RELEASE

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for the Artist Award
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NANCY CHUNN TO RECEIVE ARTISTS' LEGACY FOUNDATION 2018 ARTIST AWARD

Unrestricted gift of \$25,000 given to an accomplished painter or sculptor where evidence of the hand is a significant factor in making art



Nancy Chunn, *Four Seasons: Spring Cleaning* (Spring 1999), 2000, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 102 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York

Chunn (b. 1941) will use the award to work in her New York City studio. In a resilient and four-decade long career during which she has consistently produced a highly accomplished body of work, Chunn said that she has “never stopped working, except when I teach my classes at The School of Visual Arts,” where the artist is on faculty. Chunn said she typically “gets ideas through

Oakland, California—August 28, 2018—Artists' Legacy Foundation announced today that New York City painter Nancy Chunn is the recipient of the 2018 Artist Award. Chunn is acclaimed for her intricate, multilayered narrative paintings in which she wryly documents world events, history, and the power of the news media. Introduced more than a decade ago, the unrestricted \$25,000 merit award is given annually to a painter or sculptor who has made contributions to their field and where evidence of the hand is a significant factor in making art.



Nancy Chunn, *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear, Scene V: The Jail*, 2014-16, acrylic and giclee print on canvas, 27 canvases, 134 x 244 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York

words” and then begins “working seven days a week” on labor-intensive cycles of paintings that take years to complete. She listed the nightmarish, large-scale Black Paintings (c. 1820-23) made by Francisco Goya, the 19th century Spanish painter, as an early influence. Asked to comment on modern and contemporary influences, Chunn cited the “brilliant artists, humorists, and satirists” from Lenny Bruce, Elaine May, and Mike Nichols to Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert.



Nancy Chunn, *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear, Scene V: The Jail*, 2014-16, acrylic and giclee print on canvas, 27 canvases, 134 x 244 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York

The 2018 panel of jurors includes Palm Springs Art Museum JoAnn McGrath Executive Director Elizabeth Armstrong; painter and educator Hung Liu; and painter, critic, and contributing editor at *Art in America* Stephen Westfall.

“The Artist Award could have been designed for Nancy Chunn,” said Armstrong. “Mixing caustic humor, political wit, and an unwavering commitment to truth-speaking through art, she

has created an oeuvre of history painting relevant to our times.”

“In every single stroke, she has thought about all the details, handling each panel with attention and intensity,” said Liu.

“The level of craft in her paintings is marvelous,” said Westfall. “She has tremendous control of her surfaces, and when she applies collage to large paintings the combination of painting and collage is virtually seamless.”

A self-described “political junkie,” Chunn satirically documents world events, social and political issues, and systems of power in her graphic and pictorial narrative paintings and installations. She is renowned for a monumental project in which she applied text and imagery to the front pages of *The New York Times* from January 1 to December 31, 1996; the project was the subject of a Rizzoli monograph. Art critic David Frankel, writing at the time in *Artforum* on Chunn’s “Front Pages” series, called the work “dense and detailed” and “provocative, gorgeous.” More recently, Bridget Gleeson in *Artsy* described Chunn’s satirical reworking of the folktale Chicken Little that explores the news media’s use of fear as “darkly comical and vividly rendered. It’s also technically impressive.” This ambitious and multipaneled narrative painting installation, *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear* (2003-2016), features more than 500 acrylic and digitally printed cartoon-like paintings adapting found clip art images to represent a Kafkaesque world post

9/11. Of the cycle, Holland Cotter of *The New York Times* likened Chunn to Michelangelo, asserting that, “the Sistine ceiling is about salvation; Ms. Chunn’s rich, funny, furious project is about her growing desperation, and she’s by no means finished with it yet.” Parme Giuntini, Meg Lington, and Marco Nocella, in their scholarly essay that accompanied the artist’s Jennifer Howard Colman Distinguished Lectureship and Residency in the Fine Arts Department at Otis College of Art and Design (2007) and *Nancy Chunn: Media Madness*, also 2007 at the college’s Ben Maltz Gallery, enthused that Chunn is an “epic history painter, a reporter of record, and a personal commentator...surfing the channels of ‘today’s news and yesterday’s history.’”

About Nancy Chunn

Nancy Chunn was born in California in 1941. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from California Institute of the Arts in 1969. Chunn began her career in Los Angeles before moving to New York in the 1970s. She joined the faculty of the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY in 1990, where she continues to teach. She has exhibited widely in the U.S. and internationally, including solo exhibitions at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI (2011); Otis College of Art and Design (2007); and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (1987); among others. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including, in 2018, “Hold These Truths” at Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY; in 2017, “The Times” at Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY; and in 2009, “The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984” at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Chunn is the recipient of two painting grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1985, 1995); a Jennifer Howard Colman Distinguished Lectureship and Residency Award (2007); a Guggenheim Fellowship (2009), and the Anonymous Was a Woman Award (2005). In 1997, her work was the subject of a monograph published by Rizzoli. In 1995, she was commissioned by the City of New York to produce a permanent painting for PS 125, Queens, NY. Her work is held in many permanent collections, including the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia PA; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; The Tang Museum at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY; and The New York Times Company, New York, NY.

Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York, NY has represented her work since 1985.

About the Artist Award

In the late 1990s, painter Squeak Carnwath, sculptor Viola Frey, and community advocate Gary Knecht created Artists’ Legacy Foundation to encourage artists to think about their legacies and how their estates might support other artists. Viola Frey (1933 -2004) became a Legacy Artist after her death; her bequest launched the annual Artist Award, designed to encourage professional enrichment and allow recipients to spend more time in their studios.

Painters and sculptors are anonymously nominated and candidates are unaware that they are under consideration. Nominators and jurors are distinguished thinkers and makers with a depth of expertise in their milieus and fields. In 2016, on the release of the 10th Anniversary Artist Award video, Taylor Dafoe, writing in ARTINFO, said the “Artist Award [is] one of the more significant—though lesser-known—grants given to visual artists.” To view the video and learn more about the pioneering, physically inventive, and tactile Artist Award recipients over the last decade, visit artistslegacyfoundation.org.

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 find us on Twitter at @Artists_Legacy and Instagram at @artistslegacyfoundation and follow #ArtistLegacyAward.