Marie Watt Receives Artists' Legacy Foundation
2024 Artist Award

Annual $25,000 Award Honors Multidisciplinary Native American Artist

Marie Watt, *Singing Everything: Crescendo (Flood)*, 2023, reclaimed wool blankets, tin jingles, embroidery floss, and thread, 102 x 144 inches. Embroidered in sewing circles at the Whitney Museum of American Art, March 8-12, 2022. Photo: Kevin McConnell. Image courtesy of the artist.

Oakland, CA … The Artists' Legacy Foundation is pleased to announce Marie Watt (b. 1967) as the recipient of the 2024 Artist Award. Watt's multidisciplinary practice explores identity,

history, and connections to the greater world. She often collaborates with craftspeople and local communities to create regional dialogues and encourage links between generations.

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. Each year, ten artists are proposed for the Award by five anonymous peers from around the country, and one is selected by a panel of three jurors. Over $400,000 in grants have been distributed to artists since 2007.

Board president Squeak Carnwath states, "The first time I saw Marie Watt's work was at the Seattle Art Museum. I loved that she was able to marry the traditional ceremonial with contemporary visual culture. I have since made it a point to see as much of her work as I can. Her work is generous in its beauty and deep in its conceptual form."

The 2024 jury consisted of William Moreno, arts administrator and consultant; Michelle Yun Mapplethorpe, Executive Director of the Katonah Art Museum in Katonah, NY; and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, artist, activist, and recipient of the 2023 Artist Award.

Michelle Yun Mapplethorpe states, "Marie Watt's compelling meditations deftly and seamlessly engage history, memory, place, and social practice. The impressive formal mastery exemplified across her practice, along with her many accomplishments in the field, merit Watt the ideal recipient of the 2024 Artist Award."

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith says, "Marie Watt stands out in a crowd of artists with her storytelling that relates history to contemporary culture. Further, her materials are all recycled, blankets, cedar and steel, but made into objects that are outstandingly elegant."

"Employing a variety of elements such as blankets, cedar, neon, steel and beads, she takes the ordinary and transforms them into formidable cultural avatars," says William Moreno. "The results are meditative and emotionally arresting– a metamorphosing of traditional domestic textiles into transfixing, urgent totems. Watt's work is confident, resonant and determined, both in materiality and message."

Watt states, "I am so honored to receive this 'artist's artist' award and recognition from my respected peers. I have long admired the Artists' Legacy Foundation for leading generative conversations around archiving and legacy planning, and I am grateful for their support not only through this award but also through the work they do every day."

Watt is renowned for her methods of storytelling through objects and materials. Her totemic sculptures comprised of blankets reflect on shared experiences, generosity, and humanity, and honor the blanket donors by including their individual stories. Her recent work with jingle cones reflects on the origin and meaning of the jingle dance, and the way traditions spread over time. Jingle cones have been used as adornments since the late 1800s, and were traditionally made from the lids of tobacco cans. While there are various stories of the jingle dance's origin, Watt

has referred to one about an Ojibwa nation woman whose dream directed her to create dresses with jingles and dance around her sick granddaughter as a method of healing. This practice spread to other tribal communities, likely due to positive outcomes.

The Artists' Legacy Foundation will host an online program on Thursday, October 17 at 4:00 pm PT (7 pm ET) featuring Watt in conversation with Dr. Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander, the Robert M. and Ruth L. Halperin Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University.

Please visit artistslegacyfoundation.org for more information about this free event.

Marie Watt's work will be on view in three solo exhibitions this month:
Land Stitches Water Sky, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA, through September 22
Sky Dances Light, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX, through October 20
Marie Watt: Telegraph, Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, CA, September 21 – November 16

Left: Marie Watt, *Sky Dances Light*, 2024, tin jingles, cotton twill tape, polyester mesh, and steel, dimensions variable. Made in collaboration with Portland Garment Factory, Portland, OR. Installation at the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX. Photo: Blanton Museum of Art. Image courtesy of the artist.

Right: Marie Watt, *Blanket Stories: Great Grandmother, Pandemic, Daybreak*, 2021, 105 reclaimed blankets from 21 states and cedar, 108 x 38.25 x 40 inches. Collection of Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, Portland, OR. Photo: Kevin McConnell. Image courtesy of the artist.

About Marie Watt
Marie Watt (b. 1967, Seattle, WA) is a member of the Turtle Clan of the Seneca Nation of Indians, and also has German-Scot ancestry. Her interdisciplinary work draws from history, biography, Haudenosaunee protofeminism, and Indigenous teachings; in it, she explores the intersection of history, community, and storytelling. Through collaborative actions, she

instigates multigenerational and cross-disciplinary conversations that might create a lens and conversation for understanding connectedness to place, one another, and the universe.

Watt holds an MFA in painting and printmaking from Yale University. She also has degrees from Willamette University and the Institute of American Indian Arts, and in 2016 she was awarded a Doctor Honoris Causa from Willamette University.

She has attended residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and the Vermont Studio Center, and has received fellowships from Anonymous Was a Woman, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, the Harpo Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation, and the Native Arts and Culture Foundation, among others.

Watt served two terms on the board of VoCA (Voices in Contemporary Art) from 2017–2023. She serves on the Native Advisory Committee at the Portland Art Museum, where she also became a member of the Board of Trustees in 2020.

Selected collections include: the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Seattle Art Museum; the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Buffalo AKG Art Museum; Yale University Art Gallery; the Crystal Bridges Museum; the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian and National Museum of American Art; the Tacoma Art Museum; the Denver Art Museum, and the Portland Art Museum. She is represented by PDX Contemporary Art in Portland, OR; Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco, CA; and Marc Straus Gallery in New York, NY.

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. Each year, ten artists are nominated by a selected group of anonymous arts professionals and reviewed by a three-member jury of peers. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed over $400,000.

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

About The Artists' Legacy Foundation
The 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 Instagram (@artistslegacyfoundation).

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