

**Mildred Howard Receives Artists' Legacy Foundation
2026 Artist Award**

Annual \$25,000 Award Honors Artist with Unrestricted Gift



Mildred Howard, *Black Has Always Been a Color*, 2024, glass bottles, wood, glue, high heels, 20 1/4 x 28 3/4 x 22 inches. Image: Chris Grunder, courtesy of Anglim/Trimble, San Francisco.

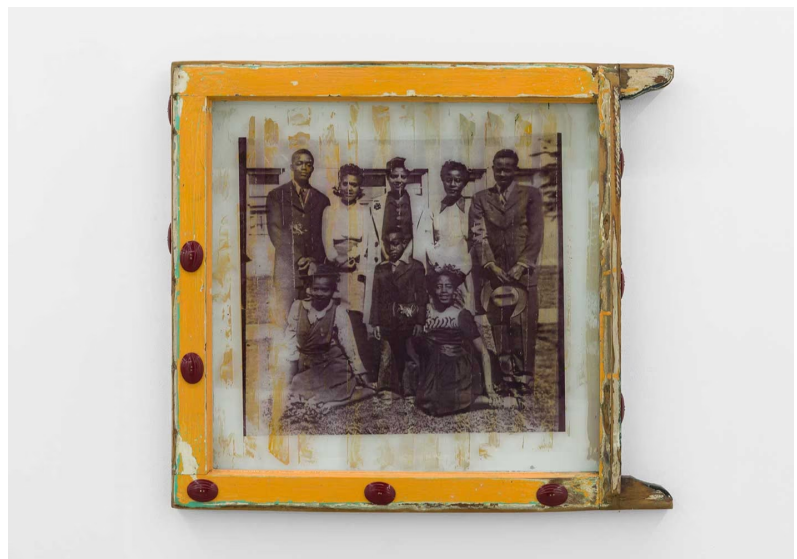
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA—The Artists' Legacy Foundation is pleased to announce Mildred Howard (b.1945, San Francisco) as the recipient of the 2026 Artist Award. Howard's sculptures, public artworks, installations, and collages evoke memory, place, pain, and belonging through their powerful visual sensibilities. Through a sophisticated and dynamic use of material and commentary, Howard's distinctive style of assemblage is purposeful in its mission to elicit feeling from her audience, "My work has evolved out of a desire to communicate and remember in a world that regularly forces silence and amnesia upon large groups of people—especially people of color—and in which both actors and spectators are numb to the pain of the other side," said Howard in 2021. On winning the award, Howard shared, "Today within the context of the Artist Legacy Foundation and the award given to me, I am thrilled. I had no idea I was being considered. It was a complete surprise and it comes at the perfect time. The award will assist in helping me to continue my practice. To be able to have support in these unsettling times is crucial to most artists."

This year's jurors include Anna Katz, Doris and Donald Fisher Senior Curator of Sculpture and Painting at SFMOMA, Jessica Bell Brown, Executive Director of the ICA and Virginia Commonwealth University, and Mary Weatherford, artist and 2014 Artist Award winner. Bell Brown stated, "Mildred Howard has been a vital force in the Bay Area for decades, and has made a profound commitment to expansive approaches to art and community. As jurors, we are honored to recognize an artist whose visionary work is an example of enduring generosity and achievement as a practicing artist and educator."

Katz stated, "Mildred Howard's distinctive use of found objects over her long and enduringly relevant career constitutes a major contribution to the intertwined art histories of collage, assemblage, installation, and conceptual art, and to the intersecting American histories of Black, working people's, and women's experiences. I am delighted for this opportunity to join my fellow jurors in recognizing and honoring the material precision and aesthetic imagination of Howard's art."

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, artists are proposed for the Award by anonymous nominators. Like the nominators, the jury of three comprises artworld peers who make the final decision.

Howard is currently the subject of her first major retrospective at the Oakland Museum of California, *Poetics of Memory*, curated by Carin Adams and on view through October 18, 2026. Her work is distinctly her own, and a personal interpretation of the Black Arts Movement, Bay Area expressionism, West Coast Conceptual art and San Francisco Funk. The Artists' Legacy Foundation is honored to present Mildred Howard with this award.



Left: Mildred Howard, *The Time and Space of Now*, 2021, mixed media installation, dimensions variable. Commissioned by the New Mexico Museum of Art, 2021. Right: Mildred Howard, *Untitled*, 2000, photo emulsion and mixed media on glass with wood, 23 7/8 x 26 3/4 inches. Image: Franklin Parrasch Gallery.

About Mildred Howard

Mildred Howard (b. 1945, San Francisco, CA) is best known for her multimedia assemblage work and installations. Howard completed her Associates of Arts Degree & Certificate in Fashion Art at the College of Alameda, Alameda, CA in 1977 and received her M.F.A. from Fiberworks Center for the Textile Arts at John F. Kennedy University in Berkeley, CA in 1985. Howard has received honorary PhD's from California College of Arts and Cal State Hayward. In 2015, she received the Lee Krasner Award in recognition of a lifetime of artistic achievement. She has also been the recipient of the Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists (2017), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2004/5), a fellowship from the California Arts Council (2003), the Adaline Kent Award from San Francisco Art Institute (1991), the Douglas G. MacAgy Distinguished Achievement Award at San Francisco Art Institute (2018), and, most recently, Howard received the 2025 Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Art. In June 2026, a major retrospective of her work opened at the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA).

Her large-scale installations have been mounted at: Creative Time in New York, InSITE in San Diego, CA; the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, WA; the National Museum of Women in the Arts; the New Museum in New York, the City of Oakland; and the San Francisco Arts Commission and International Airport. Her works reside in the permanent collections of: the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Museum, Washington D.C.; New York Public Library, New York; the Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA; the de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA; the Museum of Glass and Contemporary Art, Tacoma, WA; the Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA; SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA; and the San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA, among others.

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 \$450,000. To learn more about the Artist Award and its impact on recipients, watch this video: <https://vimeo.com/187242534>

About the Artists' Legacy Foundation

In 2000 painter Squeak Carnwath, sculptor Viola Frey, and community advocate Gary Knecht, incorporated the Artists' Legacy Foundation (ALF). The founders' vision centered on painters and sculptors coming together to support and encourage fellow artists through awards and grants, promoting and protecting the legacy of deceased "Legacy Artists," and generally supporting the visual arts, especially where the hand of the artist is a significant factor in making art.

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