
ARTISTS' LEGACY FOUNDATION

Mildred Howard: Recipient of the 2026 Artist Award



SEPTEMBER 3, 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 artist."



Mildred Howard, *Do We Have the Right to Remain Silent*, 2021-2026, Bronze, globe, red acrylic paint, 14 × 18 × 11 in | 35.6 × 45.7 × 27.9 cm; Image: Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco

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.

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."



Mildred Howard, *Slamming Bones*, 2026, Bronze, 36 x 52 x 48 in (91.4 x 132.1 x 121.9 cm), Image: Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco

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.



Mildred Howard, *Volume I & II: The History of the United States with a few Parts Missing*, 2007, 13 ¼ x 9 ½ x 2 ½ inches each, Altered books with folding cases, Image: parrasch heijnen, Los Angeles

About the Artists' Legacy Foundation

In 2000 painter Squeak Carnwath, sculptor Viola Frey, and community advocate Gary Knecht, founded Artists' Legacy Foundation. 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," especially where the hand of the artist is a significant factor in making art.

Viola Frey became a Legacy Artist after her death in 2004. Through publications, research, and exhibitions, the Foundation serves as a resource for scholars, curators and the general public by deepening their understanding of the work of Viola Frey.

The Board of Directors includes Caroline Black, Sahar Khoury, Alicia McCarthy, Daniel Nevers, Jordan Stein, and Jodi Throckmorton. Daisy Murray Holman is

Executive Director.

Learn More about the Artists' Legacy Foundation



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