

PRESS RELEASE

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FINALISTS SELECTED FOR THE 2016 BETTY BOWEN AWARD

Five Northwest artists being considered for award administered by SAM

SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) and the Betty Bowen Committee, chaired by Gary Glant, announced today the five artists selected as finalists for this year's Betty Bowen Award. The juried award honors a Northwest artist for their original, exceptional, and compelling work. Administered by SAM, the award was created in 1977 by friends of Washington native and supporter of Northwest artists, Betty Bowen (1918-1977).

The Betty Bowen Committee—comprising Northwest curators, collectors, and former Betty Bowen Award winners—reviewed 446 applications from visual artists residing in the Pacific Northwest. One of this year's finalists will receive an unrestricted cash award in the amount of \$15,000 and will have their work displayed at the Seattle Art Museum beginning November 10. At the discretion of the Betty Bowen Committee, up to two Special Recognition Awards in the amount of \$2,500 may be granted.

Exceeding previous years, almost half of the applicants this year—including two of the finalists—were first-time applicants. The award is open to all visual artists residing in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Artists of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

The winner is selected in a two-part jury process. In the first round, the applicants are reviewed anonymously. Over the course of two days, five or six finalists are selected from the pool of applicants. The finalists are then invited to present their work to the committee in person during the second round.

The winner of the 38th Annual Betty Bowen Award will be announced in a press release in September. The award will be formally presented in a celebration at the Seattle Art Museum on November 10, which will also inaugurate the exhibition of the winning artist's work. The event will be free and open to the public.

FINALISTS

Evan Baden - Albany, OR



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SAM

Photographer Evan Baden's work examines the fictions, exaggerations, and lies constructed by photographs posted on social media. For the young people who navigate this relatively new environment, reality is indelibly blended with these half-truths. Baden's series *The _____ High School Yearbook Project* focuses on a consistent group of teens in photographs that appear to be real documents of high school—but their school, activities, and the connections between them are all works of fiction.

Dawn Cerny - Seattle, WA



Working in a wide array of mediums including printmaking, collage, and sculpture, Dawn Cerny is interested in the placement of objects as visual evidence of cultural and behavioral value systems, especially in the context of the home. In her recent work, Cerny is increasingly exploring strategies to present objects informally, relating an understanding of art as something lived within daily life.

Mark Mitchell - Seattle, WA



Mark Mitchell works in hand-sewn textiles to examine issues of ceremony, tribute, and mourning, often using the tropes of funeral traditions. In his recent body of work, *Burial*, Mitchell explored these ideas through a series of intricate burial garments. His current project, *Burial 2*, tackles issues of mass incarceration, prison reform, and the racial disparity of the prison system—imbuing mourning with an activist intention.

Wendy Red Star - Portland, OR



Wendy Red Star's work addresses the intersections of traditional Native American culture and colonialist structures and imagery. Raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation in Montana, Red Star works in a wide variety of mediums including photography, sculpture, video, fiber arts, and performance, and makes use of extensive archival research and historical narratives to address issues both historical and contemporary.

Sadie Wechsler - Seattle, WA



Sadie Wechsler explores the limits of photography as a medium, creating images that blur the line between the real and the fantastical. By introducing unexpected features such as collage and reflection, she transforms the once flat and steady picture plane into something fluid and three-dimensional. In her current body of work, Wechsler is turning her focus to the Arctic Circle in an exploration of the region's histories of exploitation, survival, destruction, desire, and its unstable future as climate temperatures rise.

2016 BETTY BOWEN COMMITTEE

Gary Glant (Chair; SAM Trustee), Mark Calderon, Luis Croquer, Victoria Haven, Mike Hess, Sonal Khullar, Isaac Layman, Mark Levine, Catharina Manchanda (SAM's Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art), Llewelyn Pritchard, Greg Robinson, Norie Sato, Bill True, Maggie Walker (SAM Trustee), Dan Webb, Merrill Wright

Honorary Members:

Jeffrey Bishop, Peggy Golberg

ABOUT THE BETTY BOWEN AWARD

Betty Bowen (1918-1977) was a Washington native and enthusiastic supporter of Northwest artists. Her friends established the annual Betty Bowen Award as a celebration of her life and to honor and continue her efforts to provide financial support to the artists of the region. Since 1977, SAM has hosted the yearly grant application process by which the selection committee chooses one artist from the Northwest to receive an unrestricted cash award, eligible to visual artists living and working in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Image credits: Evan Baden, *George*, from the series *The ___ High School Yearbook Project*, 2016, pigmented inkjet print, 56 x 42 in., Courtesy of the artist, ©Evan Baden, Photo courtesy Evan Baden, Dawn Cerny, *Mantel Totem (no history all pharmaceuticals)*, 2015, etching, silkscreen, flocking, wood, aqua resin, and fiberglass, 21 x 18 x 17 in., Courtesy of the artist ©Dawn Cerny, Photo courtesy Dawn Cerny, Mark Mitchell, *The Choking Kind or White Wash*, 2015, silk, cotton, wool, leather and wood, 73 x 46 x 8 in., Courtesy of the artist ©Mark Mitchell, Photo courtesy Mark Mitchell, Wendy Red Star, *Apsáalooke Feminist 1*, 2016, digital print on silver rag, 34 x 40 in., Courtesy of the artist ©Wendy Red Star, Photo courtesy Wendy Red Star, Sadie Wechsler, *Shibon's Departure*, 2016, inkjet paper and transparency print, mirrored Plexi, 17 x 22 x 2 in., Courtesy of the artist ©Sadie Wechsler, Photo courtesy Sadie Wechsler

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a "museum without walls," free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of more than 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.