

# PRESS RELEASE

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Press Contact

**Rachel Eggers**  
Manager of Public Relations  
rachele@seattleartmuseum.org  
206.654.3151

## FINALISTS SELECTED FOR THE 40TH ANNUAL BETTY BOWEN AWARD

Five Northwest artists being considered for award administered by SAM that includes \$15,000 and a solo exhibition

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: Natalie Ball, Amy Bernstein, Bruce Burris, Deborah Lawrence, and George Rodriguez. The juried award honors a Northwest artist for their original, exceptional, and compelling work. The award was founded in 1977 to honor the legacy of Betty Bowen (1918-1977), who was an avid champion of artists in the Pacific Northwest. Founded by Bowen's friends, the award is administered by SAM.

The Betty Bowen Committee—comprising Northwest curators, collectors, and artists—reviewed 461 applications from visual artists residing in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. 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. At the discretion of the committee, up to two Special Recognition Awards of \$2,500 may be granted.

Last year's winner was Jono Vaughan, whose work memorializes transgender individuals whose lives were cut short by violence. Her solo exhibition (April 21-August 5, 2018) featured her ongoing series *Project 42*, in which she creates handmade garments that are then worn in collaborative public performances.

The winner of the 40th Annual Betty Bowen Award will be announced in September 2018. The award will be formally presented in a free and open to the public celebration at the Seattle Art Museum on November 8, 2018. The winner's solo exhibition will be on view at SAM in spring 2019.

### FINALISTS

**Natalie Ball** - Chiloquin, OR



Natalie Ball was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, but has since relocated to her ancestral homelands of Chiloquin. As a multidisciplinary artist, Ball positions her work as a reorientation of conversations that shape Native American

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1300 First Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98101

206.625.8900

seattleartmuseum.org

SAM

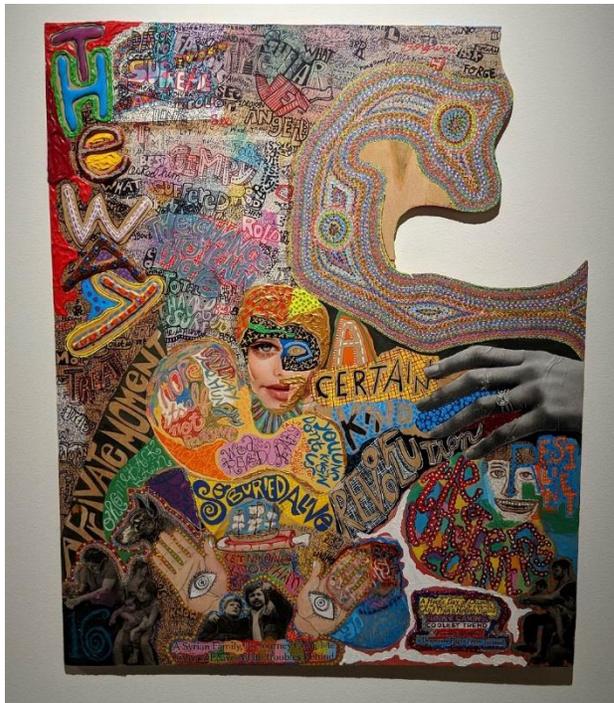
identities. Through figurative sculpture and assemblage, Ball makes installations that deconstruct dominant narratives to create new texts, new histories, and new manifestations that add to the discussion of a complex racial narrative.

**Amy Bernstein - Portland, OR**



Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Amy Bernstein is an artist and writer living and working in Portland, Oregon. Bernstein's abstract paintings encourage the viewer to reposition themselves in relation to who they are, what they see, and where the body exists in time and space. The works vacillate between the histories of philosophies, art, and design, searching for the space in which we will discover new vision and thus new thinking.

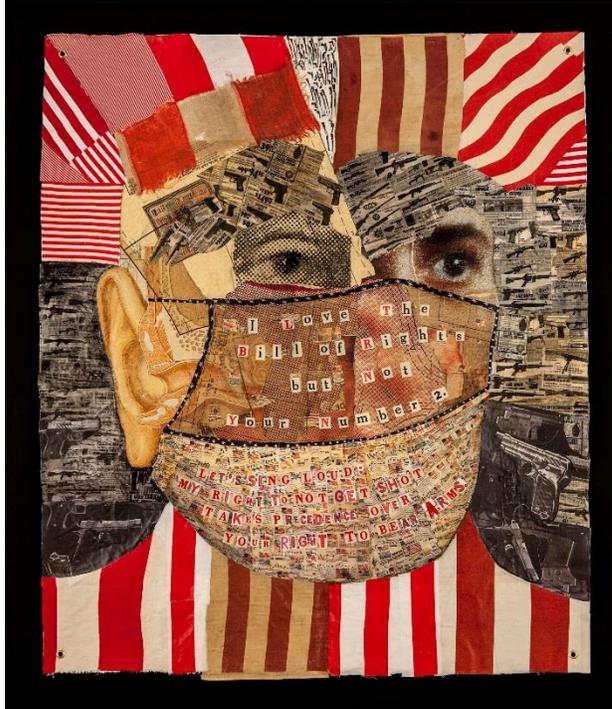
**Bruce Burris - Corvallis, OR**



Bruce Burris has worked at the intersection of art and cultural equity for marginalized groups for over 35 years. Born in Wilmington, Delaware, Burris has served as founder, director, or owner of a number of agencies and programs in Kentucky and Oregon noted for creating innovative supports that enable people to assume roles of significance in their communities. Burris' current work of collage and found objects stems from observations of class and philosophical divides between those who are proponents of dying industries,

including coal and logging, and those who are adamant that these industries must adapt.

**Deborah Lawrence** - Seattle, WA



Deborah Faye Lawrence uses the medium of collage to analyze, categorize, and make meaning. She boldly reports and comments on social, historical, and current events through the process of cutting, manipulating, and composing found information. Her appropriation and re-contextualization of found images, including maps and flags, points to a tradition of politically engaged collage, while satirically and incisively addressing contemporary concerns.

**George Rodriguez** - Seattle, WA



George Rodriguez was born in El Paso, Texas and currently lives and works in Seattle. As a sculptor, his large-scale ceramics are a celebration of the individual against the backdrop of community and the modern world against the backdrop of the ancient. Through the creation of guardian figures, tomb

sculptures, and shrines, Rodriguez depicts his community current and forthcoming. His most recent works explore themes of protection, inclusion, and sanctity using the Chinese Zodiac as framework.

### **2018 BETTY BOWEN COMMITTEE**

Gary Glant (Chair), Mark Calderon, Mike Hess, Denzil Hurley, Sonal Khullar, Isaac Layman, Mark Levine, Catharina Manchanda, Llewelyn Pritchard, Greg Robinson, Norie Sato, Bill True, Maggie Walker, Dan Webb, and Merrill Wright.

**Honorary Member:** Jeffrey Bishop

### **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:** *Pussy Hat series*, 2018, mixed media, 13 x 9 x 4.25 in. Courtesy of artist, © Natalie Ball. *Fair Green*, Amy Bernstein, 2018, oil on canvas, 46 x 52 in. Courtesy of artist, © Amy Bernstein. *A Certain Type of Revolution*, Bruce Burris, 2017, mixed media collage on wood, 40 x 26 x 3 in. Courtesy of artist, © Bruce Burris. *Open Carry*, Deborah Faye Lawrence, 2017, fabric, paper, acrylic collage on canvas, 41 x 35 in. Courtesy of artist, © Deborah Lawrence. *Hands Up*, George Rodriguez, 2017, stoneware with glaze, 50 x 25.5 x 14 in. Courtesy of artist, © George Rodriguez.

### **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 Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994. 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. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

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 approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.