

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **ANTHONY WHITE WINS THE 2021 BETTY BOWEN AWARD**

White wins \$15,000 and a solo exhibition at SAM in 2022

Special recognition for Humaira Abid and Tariqa Waters



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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) and Betty Bowen Committee, chaired by Gary Glant, announced today that Anthony White is the winner of the 2021 Betty Bowen Award. The juried award comes with an unrestricted cash award of \$15,000 and a solo exhibition at SAM. Founded in 1977 to continue the legacy of local arts advocate and supporter Betty Bowen, the annual award honors a Northwest artist for their original, exceptional, and compelling work.

In Anthony White's work, composed of PLA plastic, consumer items and brand symbols that define our moment coalesce to offer a reflection of society through the lens of social media, cell phones, and selfies. In 2019, White was the recipient of the Kayla Skinner Special Recognition Award, and in 2020 he won the Neddy at Cornish Painting Award. Recent exhibitions include *Queer Visibility: Dean Sameshima & Anthony White* at the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle and solo shows at Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle and PUBLIC Gallery, London. White's work will be featured at the Seattle Art Museum in a solo exhibition in 2022, with dates to be announced.

In addition, Humaira Abid won the Kayla Skinner Special Recognition Award and Tariqa Waters won the Gary Glant Special Recognition Award, with awards in the amount of \$2,500 each. Finalists Barry Johnson, Howard L. Mitchell, and Kimisha Turner will each receive Special Commendation Awards in the amount of \$1,500, added by the committee last year and continuing this year. The six finalists were chosen from a pool of 420 applicants from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho to compete for the \$24,500 in awards.

"I have dreamt of one day exhibiting my work at the Seattle Art Museum, and it's exciting that the opportunity is now in sight," says White. "I look forward to sharing this experience with my family and friends; Seattle and the Seattle art community; anyone who is interested in slowing down and participating with my work; and most importantly, with those who look, sound, and act like me."



Being selected for this award is an incredible honor, and I thank the selection committee and the Seattle Art Museum. I am so motivated and I know my abilities as an artist will be pushed because of this.”

The 2020 winner was Dawn Cerny. Her solo exhibition of sculptures *Les Choses* is currently on view at the Seattle Art Museum and closes September 26.

### 2021 BETTY BOWEN WINNER

**Anthony White** - Seattle, WA

White identifies personal memorabilia and brand icons within domestic and digital spaces, seeking to discover why certain consumer objects and ideas are idealized. Ranging from luxury to lowbrow and painstakingly “painted” with PLA (a melted biodegradable plastic), the consumer items and symbols in his densely packed still lifes and portraits form an identity of desire. Often these scenes examine the framing of social media and selfies, capturing moments from behind the cell phone lens.

### KAYLA SKINNER SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



**Humaira Abid** - Seattle, WA

Abid uses woodworking techniques and South Asian miniature painting in her sculptures and installations, exploring women’s issues that she identifies as typically taboo or overlooked: miscarriage, family, relationships, violence, and freedom. Using everyday objects as symbols, she brings attention to pressing social issues such as migration and displacement. Abid lives and works in both the United States and Pakistan, where she was born.

### GARY GLANT SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



**Tariqa Waters** - Seattle, WA

Waters’ whimsical, Pop-inspired work references childhood memories where vanity and self-preservation collide to mask systemic and generational pain. Her work examines ideas of femininity, beauty, race, sexuality, and inclusion. Using photography, videography, and sculptural fabrication, Waters attempts to

create innovative ways to distort reality to the point where marginalization is impossible.

### SPECIAL COMMENDATION AWARDS



#### **Barry Johnson** – Seattle, WA

Johnson's bold, colorful portraits address the omission of Black figures in canonical western history. The faces of his figures are often obscured, covered, or otherwise altered, alluding to the erasure of Black history and identity while also seeking to reclaim it. His recent work includes large-scale murals and architectural interventions, envisioning ways to activate nontraditional art spaces.



#### **Howard L. Mitchell** – Portland, OR

Mitchell analyzes the relationships between identity, class, and power in his videos. His layered works are visually rich and sensuous, ranging from the essayistic to dramatic short story formats. Communication (or the inability to connect) sits at the heart of recent works including *Saudade* (Portuguese, meaning a state of melancholic longing), which traces the chance encounter of two strangers and *Forgive Us Our Debt*, a tightly edited film about a Black family threatened by foreclosure and eviction.



### **Kimisha Turner – Seattle, WA**

Turner’s work focuses on loss, grieving, and healing that connect the personal with widely shared experiences. Her intimate sculptures touch on traditions such as reliquaries and symbolic objects for healing, practices that she deepens in her ceremonial rituals. A distinctive approach to materials and transformative processes, including growing sugar crystals using the ashes of family members who passed away, imbue her objects with deep symbolic meaning.

### **2021 BETTY BOWEN COMMITTEE**

Gary Glant (Chair), Elisheba Johnson, Mark Levine, Catharina Manchanda, Alison Milliman, Greg Robinson, Norie Sato

### **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:** *AT THE SURFACE*, 2021, Anthony White, PLA (polylactic acid) on panel, 60 x 48 x 1 ½ in., Courtesy of the artist and Greg Kucera Gallery, © Anthony White. *QUIET HOUR*, 2021, Anthony White, PLA (polylactic acid) on panel, 60 x 60 x 1 ½ in., Courtesy of the artist and Greg Kucera Gallery, © Anthony White. *Borders and Boundaries* (detail), 2017, Humaira Abid, carved mahogany and pine wood, red stain, 7 x 30 x 4 ft., Courtesy of the artist, © Humaira Abid. *Julia*, 2020, Tariqa Waters, mixed media installation, 7 x 8 x 3 ft., Courtesy of the artist, © Tariqa Waters. *rue* (detail), 2021, Barry Johnson, latex, Courtesy of the artist, © Barry Johnson. *Treyvon 3*, 2020, Howard Mitchell, film still, Courtesy of the artist, © Howard Mitchell. *Ancestral Reclamation*, 2021, Kimisha Turner, resin, 24kt gold, copper, rose gold, carbon crystals, hair, 10 x 28 x 1 in., Courtesy of the artist, © Kimisha Turner

### **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 rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020 following an extensive renovation and expansion. 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.