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**Martin Puryear, Ann Temkin and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation
Announced as Distinguished Honorees for Archives of
American Art's Annual Gala**

Gala Honors Visionary Leaders Who Have Shaped the Story of American Art

The Smithsonian's Archives of American Art has named the distinguished honorees for its upcoming annual fall gala. At the evening celebration Thursday, Sept. 17, the Archives' highest honors will be presented to three recipients—Martin Puryear, Ann Temkin and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation—in recognition of their outstanding contributions as leading American artists and art advocates.

Puryear will receive an Archives of American Art Medal, Temkin will receive the Lawrence A. Fleischman Award for Scholarly Excellence in the Field of American Art History and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation will receive the Archives of American Art Award for Philanthropic Leadership.

“For decades, our honorees have generously shared their gifts of transformative vision with the public and reimagined ways of making and interpreting art,” said Anne Helmreich, director of the Archives of American Art. “We are thrilled to have this opportunity to recognize and thank them.”

The 2026 Archives of American Art Gala will take place Thursday, Sept. 17, at the Rainbow Room in New York City. The festive evening will begin with cocktails at 6:30 p.m. followed by the program and dinner at 7:30 p.m. For more information about the gala and the Archives of American Art, visit its website or contact the Archives directly at AAAGala@si.edu.

Recipient of the Archives of American Art Medal

Puryear is an American sculptor renowned for his elegant, handcrafted works that combine traditional woodworking techniques with modern abstract forms. Drawing inspiration from a wide range of cultural, architectural and craft traditions, Puryear creates sculptures that emphasize material, form and meticulous craftsmanship. Over six decades, his work has been exhibited internationally and is held in the collections of major museums around the world. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential contemporary sculptors of his generation.

Puryear was born in 1941 in Washington, D.C., and studied at the Catholic University of America, the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts and Yale University. He was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1982, a MacArthur Foundation Award in 1989 and the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama in 2011. In 2019, Puryear represented the United States at the 58th Venice Biennale.

Puryear's current traveling exhibition, "Martin Puryear: Nexus," will open at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta Friday, Sept. 25.

Recipient of the Lawrence A. Fleischman Award for Scholarly Excellence in the Field of American Art History

Temkin is the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Her distinguished history of exhibitions and scholarship encompasses retrospectives of artists, including Marcel Duchamp, Robert Gober, Donald Judd, Alice Neel and Barnett Newman. Under her leadership, MoMA's holdings of paintings and sculpture have dramatically broadened in scope and viewpoint. Temkin also has focused on the transformation of the museum's collection galleries from a siloed and authoritative narrative into an interdisciplinary and continually renewing presentation, designed as ongoing conversations providing a multiplicity of histories and perspectives. Temkin is co-editor of *Inventing the Modern: Untold Stories of the Women Who Shaped The Museum of Modern Art* (2024), a revelatory account of the museum's early years. Before joining MoMA in 2003, Temkin was the Muriel and Philip Berman Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, she received a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University and a doctorate in the history of art from Yale University.

Recipient of the Archives of American Art Award for Philanthropic Leadership

Established and endowed by Helen Frankenthaler during her lifetime, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation is dedicated to promoting greater public interest in, and understanding of, the visual arts through a range of philanthropic, educational, curatorial and research initiatives. Since becoming active in 2013, the foundation's philanthropic practice has awarded more than \$65 million in grants to museums, universities and arts organizations, from multiyear initiatives to rapid-response support in moments of crisis.

The foundation supports exhibitions and publications broadly focused on modern and

contemporary art; sustains fellowships and educational programs in art history, studio practice and curatorial training; and collaborates with peer funders and national arts organizations on initiatives that strengthen the field. Alongside this work, the foundation has expanded its program of gifts and loans of Frankenthaler's work to cultural institutions worldwide. As the primary resource on the artist, it stewards an extensive collection of her artwork and archives while making these resources available to scholars, students, artists and the greater public.

Presenters and Guests

Distinguished curator and scholar Ruth Fine and past recipient of the Lawrence A. Fleischman Award for Scholarly Excellence in the Field of American Art History will present the award to Puryear; businesswoman and collector Pamela J. Joyner will present the award to Temkin; and Lisa Phillips, director emeritus at the New Museum, will present the award to the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation.

Also in attendance that evening will be Ronald Lauder, Jo Carole Lauder and Eden Rafshoon of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies; Lise Motherwell, director and chair of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation; Barbara Castelli, president of Castelli Gallery; artists Kiki Smith and Clifford Ross; and others.

About the Gala

The Archives of American Art's [annual gala](#), launched in 1984, recognizes those who exemplify, at the highest level, lasting contributions to the field of American art. Past honorees include Alex Katz, Adam D. Weinberg, Senga Nengudi, Richard Tuttle, Ann Philbin, Chuck Close, the Ford Foundation, Agnes Gund, the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Glenn Ligon, Richard J. Powell, Lowery Stokes Sims and Alice L. Walton.

Amanda Quinn Olivar and Migs Wright serve as co-chairs of the gala committee, which also includes fellow members of the Archives of American Art's advisory board Hannah Byers, Yng-Ru Chen, Torrey Cope, Diane A. Fogg and George Frederick Mead Merck.

Proceeds from this signature annual fundraising event provide support for the Archives' critically important and singular mission.

About the Archives of American Art

The [Archives of American Art](#), a part of the Smithsonian Institution, is the world's largest resource dedicated to collecting, preserving and making accessible primary sources documenting the history of the visual arts in the United States. Since its founding in 1954, the Archives of American Art has collected over 30 million items that enliven the extraordinary human stories behind America's art and artists.

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