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Contact: Lauren Shenfield, Director
lauren@philanthropyadvisorsny.org
M 914-419-3729

Anonymous Was A Woman Award

**2017 Winners include Amy Sherald and
Nine Other Women Artists 40 – 84**



Mirrored Masks

Photo by Marisa Moran Jahn of Darlyn Komukama, 2017



What's Going On, WGO Series,
Dyptich Painting, 2010, 6ftx8ft. by Stefanie Jackson

Anonymous Was A Woman announced today the recipients of its 2017 Awards. Winners include Amy Sherald, 43, commissioned to paint the portrait of Michelle Obama for the National Portrait Gallery, and nine other distinguished artists selected for their originality and potential. Each year, the Award recognizes women over 40 years of age who have made significant contributions in their fields to date, while continuing to create new work.

2017 Award Winners

Nancy Bowen, 62
Martha Diamond, 73
Stefanie Jackson, 59
Marisa Moran Jahn, 40
Jennie C. Jones, 48
Amalia Mesa-Bains, 73
Mia Westerlund Roosen, 74
Amy Sherald, 43
Michelle Stuart, 84
Carrie Yamaoka, 59

Winners are chosen from among a competitive pool of applicants recommended by a group of distinguished art historians, curators, writers, and artists who serve as anonymous nominators. This year's list of winners work in painting, sculpture, film/video/digital media, photography, drawing, installation and performance. Images and information about each artist can be found at <http://www.anonymouswasawoman.org/>.

"I am over the moon excited," said Stephanie Jackson, 59, of Athens, Georgia. "For someone who doesn't show that much in New York, it means so much to know that my work stands up. It can be lonely. That people saw the work and responded has a lot of meaning. The validation is important to me. I'll work ever so much harder now."

Recipients of the Anonymous Was A Woman Award receive a "no strings-attached" grant of \$25,000 intended to provide them freedom to continue development of their creative vision. The only requirement of the Award is that recipients inform the program how the gift affected their life or work. Wrote Rachel Harrison:

"I received the Anonymous Was a Woman Award in 2015, at a time when I felt like I was on a hamster wheel of exhibition making. It was very exciting for me, that my work was being acknowledged by a respected organization with a long and known history of also remaining anonymous. The following year when I was asked to nominate someone it was extra exciting to understand that another woman artist had possibly nominated me, this really means so much. It's also significant that your organization asks nothing back from the artist—no exhibit, no interview, no dinner with awkward speeches...It places art safely in a zone of neutrality, without an expectation for performance. I hope that this uniquely unrestricted grant continues to allow other women the freedom to pursue their interests without outside pressures, as it did for me."

Lauren Shenfield, director of the program, explains, "Anonymous Was A Woman Awards provide important recognition to artists on the spectrum between 'emerging and established.' The grants fuel both personal and artistic development. The financial gift helps artists buy time, space, materials, and equipment, often at early stages of a new project, as well as important emotional support. Perhaps most significant, it helps those with inordinate talent and accomplishment to achieve greater recognition."

The name of the grant program refers to a line in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. As the name implies, nominators and those associated with the program are unnamed. After 22 years of grant-making and 220 awards totaling over \$5 million, the program's donor remains anonymous. A complete list of past winners can be found at <http://www.anonymouswasawoman.org/past-award-winners.html>.

Anonymous Was A Woman, a program of FJC-A Foundation of Philanthropic Funds, is administered by Philanthropy Advisors, LLC, a comprehensive consulting and management organization for private philanthropy.

For more information please visit www.anonymouswasawoman.org.

Women supporting women...as natural as breathing.