

Oct. 24, 2024

Media website: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

Senga Nengudi, Richard Tuttle and Ann Philbin Announced as Distinguished Honorees for Archives of American Art Annual Gala

Gala Celebrates 70 Years of Preserving the Visual Arts

The Smithsonian's Archives of American Art has announced the distinguished honorees for its upcoming annual fall gala. The three recipients—Senga Nengudi, Richard Tuttle and Ann Philbin—will be awarded the Archives' highest honors during the Oct. 29 evening event celebrating leading American artists and art advocates from across the field. This year's gala also celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art, the world's preeminent resource for collecting and preserving the records of visual arts in the United States.

"The Archives of American Art is thrilled to be able to celebrate the contributions of these remarkable individuals who have rethought and reinvented the very possibilities of art," said Anne Helmreich, director of the Archives of American Art. "They have championed art as activism, provocation, invitation and education. They have reimaged the forms, materials and spaces of art. Their extraordinary and groundbreaking contributions have transformed the art world, leaving an indelible mark on society. We are privileged to honor such visionary leaders."

Nengudi and Tuttle will each receive an Archives of American Art Medal and Philbin will receive the Lawrence A. Fleischman Award for Scholarly Excellence in the Field of American Art History.

New to the gala and in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Archives, this year's event will award an additional eight honorees, whose vision and gifts have been transformational for the Archives. These honorees include Alice Walton, Ann Kinney, Barbara G. Fleischman, Frank and Katherine Martucci, Nina W. Werblow Charitable Trust, Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Terra Foundation for American Art and The Henry Luce Foundation.

The 2024 Archives of American Art Gala will take place Tuesday, Oct. 29, at the Rainbow Room, located at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, 65th floor, New York City. The evening will begin with cocktails at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. For more information about the gala and the Archives of American Art, visit [its website](https://www.si.edu/AAAGala) or contact the Archives directly at AAAGala@si.edu.

Recipients of the Archives of American Art Medal

Nengudi is an African American conceptual and performance artist. She is renowned for her innovative sculptures that blend found objects with choreographed performances. Known for abstract-poetic work that uses ordinary materials, Nengudi casts new light on the relationship between work and viewer while critically exploring sociopolitical realities' effects on the body. In 2020, she was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2023, she was named Nasher Prize Laureate for excellence in modern sculpture. Her most recent career retrospective was on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2021. Nengudi's work is included in a number of collections, both national and international: the Museum of Modern Art, Dia Art Foundation, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art and the Lenbachhaus Museum in Munich. She completed an oral history interview for the Archives of American Art in 2013 and donated her papers to the Archives in 2018 and 2019.

“Being primarily a conceptual, performance and installation artist, it has always been my mantra to Document, Document, Document,” Nengudi said. “The value of the Archives is it's a place to house that documentation to prove something did happen and the when, where and how. It allows all interested parties access to that information free of charge.”

Tuttle, a postminimalist artist and author based in New York City and New Mexico, is celebrated for his boundary-crossing art. Tuttle's first exhibition was at the Betty Parsons Gallery in 1965, and his first major museum exhibition took place at the Whitney Museum in 1975. He has since been featured in exhibitions at prominent national and international museums and is represented by the Pace Gallery. In 2013, Tuttle was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The artist completed an oral history interview for the Archives of American Art in 2016 and donated his papers to the Archives in 2017, 2018 and 2020.

“The Archives unites through the arts,” Tuttle said.

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

Philbin, director of the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, will retire in November after 25 years of transformative leadership. Before her tenure at the Hammer, she was the director of The Drawing Center in New York. Under Philbin's guidance, the Hammer has become a powerhouse in contemporary art both locally and internationally. She has integrated the UCLA campus into the museum's activities, revolutionizing its collections, programs and audiences. Philbin launched the “Made in LA” biennial, which has been instrumental in the careers of many

contemporary artists. She also presented groundbreaking exhibitions, such as “Now Dig This!: Art and Black Los Angeles 1960–1980,” a PST initiative curated by Kellie Jones, which introduced many to the work of Nengudi.

“Art museums and archives are now our town squares, and through the power of art and culture we can seek to promote dialogue, truth, empathy, freedom of expression and the principles of democracy,” Philbin said.

About the Gala

The Archives of American Art annual gala, launched in 1984, recognizes those who exemplify the Archives’ mission to collect, preserve and make available primary sources that document the history of American art. Past honorees include Chuck Close, the Ford Foundation, Agnes Gund, Roy Lichtenstein, Glenn Ligon, Richard J. Powell, Lowery Stokes Sims and Alice L. Walton.

George Frederick Mead Merck, chair of the Archives of American Art’s advisory board of trustees, and board of trustees member Amanda Quinn Olivar serve as co-chairs of the gala committee, whose members also include Diane A. Fogg, Karen Z. Gray-Krehbiel, Evelyn Day Lasry, Deborah Schmidt Robinson and Migs Wright.

Proceeds from the Archives of American Art Gala provide critical unrestricted support for the Archives.

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 20 million items that enliven the extraordinary human stories behind America’s art and artists.

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