Lee Bontecou Lynn Hershman Leeson Gloria Orenstein Renée Stout



2018 National Lifetime Achievement Awards

Saturday, February 24, 2018

Golden State Ballroom, DoubleTree Hotel, Los Angeles, CA

Welcome and Introduction

Susan M. King

WCA National Board President, 2016–18

Presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards

Lee Bontecou

Essay by Joan Banach. Presentation by Susan M. King.

Lynn Hershman Leeson

Essay by Lucía Sanromán. Presentation by Connie Butler.

Gloria Orenstein

Essay by Ilene Fort and Susan L. Aberth. Presentation by Cheri Gaulke.

Renée Stout

Essay and Presentation by Tosha Grantham.

Presentation of President's Awards for Art & Activism

Kathy Gallegos

Presentation by Susan M. King.

Amelia Jones

Presentation by Susan M. King.

Foreword and Acknowledgments

This last year has been an awakening for women. The injustices inherent in our social, economic and political structures became too much to bear and exploded into marches and rallies across the country that have resulted in movement and social action. But this awakening did not just appear, it was born out of the actions and voices of those who had come before. Those who were shut out, told to shut up, yet, they persisted. For over forty-six years, the Women's Caucus for Art (WCA) has persisted, giving voice to women, and working for recognition, inclusion, and equity for women in the arts. It has been a catalyst for social action and change.

In 1979, WCA held its first Lifetime Achievement Awards, and since then over 198 women have been honored with the award. These women and their work are our foundation. They are the pioneers, the innovators who spoke their truth, made their work, took pen to page, lent their voices and persisted despite all obstacles. WCA's 2018 theme is Art Speaks! Lend Your Voice and the theme for National Women's History Month is Nevertheless She Persisted. It seems serendipitous that both themes are in play in the same space and at the same moment. The intersection of the two-voice and persistence-aptly describe all Past WCA Honorees, as well as the women we honor at the 38th WCA Lifetime Achievement Awards—Lee Bontecou, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Gloria Orenstein, and Renée Stout.

Lee Bontecou is an enigmatic and innovative artist whose pioneering work encompasses sculpture,

drawing, and printmaking. Her work constantly challenges the constructs of the media creating her own vernacular, and evoking a wide range of responses in the viewer.

Lynn Hershman Leeson is an artist who has made pioneering contributions in performance art and the digital arts—film, video, and photography. Her work combines art with social commentary, particularly on the relationship between people and technology, and technology's ability to empower and influence our culture.

Gloria Orenstein, historian, feminist art critic and author, is the premier voice on women Surrealists and Ecofeminism. Her seminal ecofeminist text *Reweaving the World* played a crucial role in the development of Ecofeminism as a political position in the US.

Renée Stout is an artist whose oeuvre encompasses vibrant painting, sculpture, and assemblages that incorporate found objects and photographs, which are imbued with symbols and metaphors. Her pieces engage the viewer not only in personal narrative but in an ancestral one that is entrenched in identity and spirituality.

Thank you to this year's honorees Lee Bontecou, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Gloria Orenstein, and Renée Stout for leading the way, for lending your voice and for persisting. Thank you to the many women in WCA who worked endless hours to make this year's awards possible. Thank you to the Honors Selection

Committee: Amalia Mesa-Bains, Catherine Morris, Ferris Olin, Howardena Pindell, Melissa Potter, and Ruth Weisberg. Thank you to the essayists and presenters who were chosen by the honorees to tell their stories: Joan Banach, Lucía Sanromán, Connie Butler, Ilene Fort, Susan Aberth, Cheri Gaulke, and Tosha Grantham. Thank you to the production team, Karin Luner who designed the catalog and spent countless hours working with me on collecting and editing the material, and to Danielle Eubanks for the cover design. And a special thank you to our donors who continue to support this annual event and make our work possible.

Janice Nesser-Chu, Honors Chair/Legacy Campaign Director, WCA, 2012–18, President, WCA, 2010–12, Academic Dean, Liberal Arts, STLCC-Florissant Valley, St. Louis MO

Our Collective Action in Light of #MeToo

Please join me in honoring Lee Bontecou, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Gloria Orenstein, and Renée Stout for their extraordinary and varied accomplishments in the visual arts. Please also celebrate this year's recipients of the President's Art & Activism Award—founder of Avenue 50 Studio, Kathy Gallegos, and feminist theorist and historian of art and performance, Amelia Jones.

We come together to honor them in Los Angeles, in the second year of Donald Trump's presidency, and not a lot further along in gaining equality, despite the great momentum of the #MeToo movement. Oprah Winfrey's impassioned speech accepting the Cecil B. DeMille award at the Golden Globes galvanized almost universal support for #MeToo ideals. "Roaring

as one," hundreds of thousands of women took to the streets on January 20th to protest Trump's policies and mobilize for the midterm elections. Yet Trump, arguably the most powerful man in our nation, fails to be held accountable for his sexual misconduct.

The New York Times led a recent Thursday Styles section with the article, "Look Believable—Sometimes all you can control is what's visible on the outside." When bringing your sexual harassment claims forward, a college-age accuser learned it is important to wear "approachable" double denim, "reliably honest" worn-in loafers, and serious "well-fitting" jackets to have your claims acknowledged. You must discard "distracting" star and flower designs, your "body-hugging" stretch mini-dresses, tough boots, and bare midriffs. What does this say about the public perception of young women's power? Why must a young woman wear a denim jacket to be taken seriously by the press and public, when a powerful man would only appear on vacation wearing the same?

Now every young woman understands the need to call out sexual harassment and inequality. We must ensure that their voices count equally with those of older professional men. Forty-six years after our founding, the mission of the Women's Caucus for Art to create community through art, education, and social activism remains incredibly important. We have so much more to do.

Let's come together for a different kind of #MeToo movement tonight—#MeToo, I want to carry forward the exceptional work of women like this year's honorees!

Susan M. King, PhD WCA National Board President 2016–18

Lee Bontecou



We honor you,

Lee Bontecou, for your

pioneering work in sculpture,

drawing, and printmaking that

challenges artistic conventions

in material and presentation.

Photo courtesy Bill Maynes.

Lee Bontecou's Exoterre

By Joan Banach

Over a lifetime of accomplishment, Lee Bontecou has effectively defied and eluded summary. By dint of a rebelliously independent turn of mind, she is an adept at worldbuilding, creating an exoterre of complex ambition and articulation. If one considers it as a totality, its scale doesn't correspond to this space in which we live. It is deep, contoured by an extinguishing light, with shifts and subtleties that could best be described as tides. All but shedding color, the tonal structure as a whole is a palimpsest—which functions as a kind of speech. It is notable that our conversations in the studio are frequently accompanied by music

from recordings Bontecou has collected over the years—sounds natural to the rain forest, some amplified by flutes and percussion that are like phonetic manuscripts, voices that speak another language; one that proposes questions about how we communicate.

And yet, from this exoteric panorama, Bontecou simultaneously gives us a wide, clear view of the earth and its pale frontiers in perpetual discourse with the sky and the sea, a menagerie (with a coevolved and coequal bestiary!) of technoscientific chimeras, and a vision of uncontrollable twilight.

Her work establishes a remarkable present, continually visited by the past in complex intercessions that are material, archeological, and historical; and has a quintessence—what medieval philosophy defined as a fifth substance in addition to the four elements—a substance thought to be latent in all things. Bontecou's work follows this substantial latency. It produces an imperative to focus. It results in her flawless vernacular. Writing in 1935, in the *Bulletin international du surréalisme*, André Breton described this quintessence as a sine

qua non of truth, carrying with it, "luminous

tremors of the future." [1]

Peer into one of her bas-reliefs, the sculptural architecture Bontecou innovated in the 1950s and 1960s, and the work that heralded her power and prowess, and you will experience how Bontecou coordinates the contemplation of mystery on a magnificently spatial scale. This worldbuilding is sourced in tumultuous freedom. The systematic world is carefully observed, then dismembered and reimagined—given a new reality that recognizes the strangeness of nature and language, and what it means to be human. With forms that veer from the sublime to the monstrous to the grotesque—objects that are newcomers—alien, disparate, resistant— Bontecou's exoterre is at once populated and uninhabited. Her genius lies in her ability to present us with an opportunity to rethink the concepts and dimensions of possibility.



Lee Bontecou. *Untitled*, 1959. Welded steel, muslin, leather, soot, wire, and velvet. 30.5 x 33 x 27.9 cm. Collection Gemeentemuseum den Haag. Photograph by Alice de Groot.

Bontecou's beginnings in the 1950s are presaged by an astonishing activism of will and purpose. Within the maze of purpose, she is an astute traveler, observer, and collector. To ask what constitutes a lifetime's attainment? For Bontecou, I believe her sense is, very simply, in finding a place where things might occur. She has often told me that, "tacking against the gale," is the course she prefers. In this course, she is steadfast, unregular, and rare. [2]

- [1] André Breton, Bulletin international du surréalisme, no. 2 (October 1935).
- [2] Joan Banach: conversations with Lee Bontecou, 2012-2017.

Joan Banach is an artist and writer. Recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for painting in 2000, herwork is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; among many others. Her work has been shown at The Robert Miller Gallery, NY; The Kitchen, NY; Small A Projects, NY; Mario Diacono Gallery, Boston; The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Galerie Lelong, Zurich, among others. She has been a visiting artist at Bennington College and at The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. A site specific collaboration with Lee Bontecou was



Lee Bontecou. *Untitled*, 1960. Canvas, welded steel, and wire. $61 \times 73.7 \times 17.8$ cm. Collection Gemeentemuseum den Haag. Photograph by Alice de Groot.

exhibited in 2017 at the Gemeentemuseum den Haag. An essay in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition documents this three year artistic collaboration.

All artwork © Lee Bontecou.

Biography

Over more than six decades, Lee Bontecou has created a singular culture in her work. Comprising of sculpture, drawing, and printmaking, each technical procedure Bontecou employs is an imperative in a dynamic totality. Born in Providence, RI in 1931, Bontecou attended Bradford Junior College in Haverhill, MA and shortly thereafter enrolled in the Art Students League in New York City. During her time at the League, she made sculpture her decisive focus, and in 1954, at a residence at The Skowhegan School in Maine, Bontecou taught herself to weld. In early recognition of her precocity as an artist, Bontecou was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1956, which brought her to Rome. During her two-year residency, she began her experimental use of the welding torch as an instrument for drawing and for finding "a real black that one could sink into or enter." In 1960, the Leo Castelli Gallery presented Bontecou's first solo exhibition in New York.

This acclaimed beginning led to numerous exhibitions in gallery and museum contexts including: William Seitz' historic 1961 exhibition, *The Art of Assemblage* at the Museum of Modern Art; the Sixth Sao Paulo Biennial; *Americans* 1963 at the Museum of Modern Art; Documenta 3 in Kassel, Germany in 1964; a travelling European exhibition in 1968; a mid-career retrospective at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in

1972; an exhibition devoted to Bontecou's prints and drawings at Wesleyan University in 1975; a travelling exhibition of sculpture and drawings of the 1960s at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 1993; a retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Hammer Museum, LA; the Museum of Modern Art, in 2003; the 54th Carnegie International in 2004; Tracing the Century: Drawing as a Catalyst for Change, at Tate Liverpool in 2012; Drawn Worlds, an exhibition of drawings at the Menil Collection, Houston in 2013; and Lee Bontecou, at the Gemeentemuseum den Haag, in 2017.



Sandbox (detail), 2014–2017. A collaboration between Lee Bontecou and Joan Banach. Multi-media installation in a wood proscenium with sand fill. 305 x 366 x 25 cm with a 40 cm elevation from the floor plane. Photograph by Joan Banach.

Lynn Hershman Leeson



We honor you,

Lynn Hershman Leeson,

for your innovative work in

performance, video and new

media that focuses on gender's

intersection with technology.

Photo by Katherine McMahon.

Lynn Hershman Leeson

By Lucía Sanromán

For half a century now, Lynn Hershman Leeson has made pioneering contributions to performance, conceptual art, new media, and film with works whose formal and technical experimentation is matched by her fearlessness in the deconstruction of gendered identity in a misogynist and technologically mediated world. Her work is of such scope that as I traverse the theater of memory I have constructed in my mind's eye to understand her expansive and inquisitive practice, the image that arises is less that of a classical building housing art pieces in a neat arrangement of cause and effect, and much more that of a cloud as its particles

of ice and water rub against each other, creating electric arcs discharging flashes of insight—a network of artworks connected in multiple directions whose materials are Lynn's own condensed time coming together with public life.

It is difficult to name another artist, man or woman, who has so presciently diagnosed the emergence of the cyborg self, illuminating in startling detail the effects that technology has today on our most intimate selves, our social relations, and our biological and political lives. This quality of cultural clairvoyance showed itself very early, when as a young artist managing a crippling heart condition Lynn made the *Breathing Machines* series (1963–72) of self-portraits that combined mechanical and electronic elements, including sensors and

tape recordings playing the sound of her own breathing and addressing viewers as they approached. It was the early 1960s and these artworks were virtually alone in their exploration of interactivity, technology, and the feminist self, following only a short distance after the very earliest use of the term "cybernetic organism" by Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, and anticipating by about 20 years Donna Haraway's A Cyborg Manifesto. Yet this quality of collapsing history, of creating temporal and imaginary loopholes, is a fundamental part of Lynn's work; I can easily connect those very early, very tactile mechanical self-portraits in wax and electronics to her groundbreaking works in internet-based, artificial intelligence, such as DiNA (2004) and Agent Ruby (1999-2002). And on to today, with her latest immersive installation Infinity Engine (2014-present)—a cross-disciplinary exploration that addresses the life-changing consequences of genetic engineering, bio printing, and DNA data storage on our collective future as a species.

Genetics, biomechanics, and artificial intelligence twine together with a feminist critique of media and a conceptual understanding of the blending of art and life. These themes and approaches throughout Lynn's practice weave a narrative that upends the comfortable and expected categories on gender. In this sense, the durational performance



Lynn Hershman Leeson. Ghosts Have No Reflections (Vertighost), 2017. Edition of 5 + 2AP. Archival Digital Print. $36\ 3/4 \times 24\ 7/8$ in. Courtesy of the artist.

Roberta Breitmore is an early towering achievement that allowed her to live part time as a fictional persona for five years, from 1973 to 1978, with exacting rigor. Roberta evolved from "construction charts" mapping the transformation of Lynn into Roberta—using makeup and clothes—into a person capable of renting her own apartment, opening a bank account, and obtaining a social security number as well as holding increasingly risky relationships with men, all evidenced in photographs, newspaper announcements, letters, psychological profiles, and a comic book illustrated by Spain Rodriguez. There is something uncanny and disturbing about the level of involvement Lynn had with this character; yet, Roberta was a means to an end and the only possible way she could understand in her own body the limits to agency and power experienced by a young, attractive, chronically underemployed and therefore vulnerable woman in California in the 1970s. Roberta Breitmore resonates today with the fury we too feel as the pervasiveness of sexual misconduct by men in positions of power is finally publically acknowledged.

A performance largely captured as photographs conceived for the camera, *Roberta Breitmore* links to whole bodies of photographic work, including the *Water Women* series (1976–ongoing) of photo collages and digital images begun more than thirty years ago that continues today. It remains a potent metaphor for Lynn's many explorations of alternate and parallel selves, of disappearance and appearance, of hybridity and



Lynn Hershman Leeson. Still from *Conceiving Ada*, 1995. 35 mm film. Courtesy Anglim Gilbert Gallery SF and Bridget Donahue NY.

multiplicity, and in the context of her present award also commemorates her present surfacing as one of the most influential and experimental American artists working today.

Lucía Sanromán is an independent curator and writer who lives between Mexico City and San Diego, CA.

Biography

Over the last four decades, artist and filmmaker Lynn Hershman Leeson has been internationally acclaimed for her art and films. One of the most influential media artists, Hershman Leeson is widely recognized for her innovative work investigating issues that are now recognized as key to the workings of society: the relationship between humans and technology, identity, surveillance, and the use of media as a tool of empowerment against censorship and political repression. Over the last forty years she has made pioneering contributions to the fields of photography, video, film, performance, installation and interactive as well as internet-based media art.

ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany, mounted the first comprehensive retrospective of her work titled *Civic Radar*. Hershman Leeson is a recipient of the d.velop digital art Lifetime Achievement

Award, Siggraph Lifetime Achievement Award, and Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica, considered the most prestigious award in the field of digital arts, as well as a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, and was given the 2018 Visionary Film Maker Award. In 2014, she was named one of 21 Leaders for the 21st Century by *Women's eNews*.

Artwork by Hershman Leeson is featured in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the William Lehmbruck Museum, the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Tate Modern, The National Gallery of Canada, and the Walker Art Center, in addition to many celebrated private collections. Recently honored with grants from Creative Capital, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Nathan Cummings Foundation, she is also the recipient of a Siemens International Media Arts Award, and the Flintridge Foundation Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts.



Lynn Hershman Leeson. *Water Women Twins*, 2004. Archival digital print. 30 x 40". Courtesy Anglim Gilbert Gallery SF and Bridget Donahue NY.

Gloria Orenstein



We honor you,
Gloria Orenstein, for your
work as researcher and author
focusing on Surrealism,
Feminist Literature,
Ecofeminism and Shamanism.

Courtesy Gloria Orenstein.

Gloria Orenstein | Two Essays

By Ilene Susan Fort

When I first discovered that Professor Gloria Orenstein was living and teaching in Los Angeles, the same city where I was located, I was surprised. When I realized she had moved here about the same time—the early 1980s—for professional advancement, I was further baffled by the coincidence, since I had also moved from NYC to LA for a similar purpose. We were fated to meet! Gloria would later inform me that it was Destiny, as she strongly believes in fate, synchrony and the stars. But how does one prepare to meet someone from the history books, an icon of the Feminist Movement that not only altered my maturation but also the futures of thousands of other women? You take a deep breath and invite her to lunch! In 2009, I asked Professor

Orenstein to be a contributor to the exhibition and book *In Wonderland* that I was then organizing. Neither project would have been realized without her numerous contributions to the field of women's studies, transformative publications beginning with her first book, based on her dissertation, *The Theater of the Marvelous: Surrealism and the Contemporary Stage* (1975); it is an extraordinary text that transformed the theatrical field and demonstrated her wide-ranging knowledge of Surrealism, the esoteric, and women creators. Her landmark feminist article "Women of Surrealism," was published the same year and led to essays on Leonora Carrington and Kay Sage, only a decade after the phenomenon entered the history books. She has continued to contribute countless other articles, catalogues, books, and memorials for almost five decades as she expanded her field of expertise to Ecofeminism and the goddess myth. During the course of a phenomenal life, she was mentored by the famed Anna Balakian, whom she adored, and befriended by Anais Nin, Leonora Carrington, Alexandro Jodorowsky, and other equally prominent cultural figures.

Since her childhood she has been fascinated by dreams, mental telepathy and other spiritual and metaphysical concepts beyond the realm of the normal. Fortunately, she was raised in New York City where early on she had access to the people and institutions that could encourage her ideas. Although detoured by the traditional path of a woman—marriage and children—nothing could prevent her development into one of the foremost early feminists and inspiring academics in the United States and beyond. How should Gloria be described? Eccentric, unorthodox, imaginative, brilliant? Yes, yes, yes, and yes. She is all of these and more, a kind and generous person, a caring and proud mother and grandmother, and a great friend. She was so devoted to her craft that she traveled to Norway, hiking to remote areas to meet the shamans of Lapland, even inviting one to visit Los Angeles! Her storytelling is mythic. She was a remarkable teacher, who so inspired her students and kept relating to them no matter their age nor hers, that they keep in touch and ask her advice years after their graduation. She continues to inspire through her lectures and writings, some ingenious and even so outrageous that they cannot be ignored; they require discussion and debate among her peers. What more can you demand from an intellectual such as she. A true Surrealist, Gloria is a wonderful inspiration who will keep on questioning as she continues writing.

By Susan L. Aberth

As a founding member of the women's movement in the 1970s Gloria Orenstein was a pioneer and visionary in many different fields including art history, literary criticism, and theatrical studies. She not only helped to launch the careers of numerous feminist poets, writers and artists, but also revived interest in long-neglected Surrealist women artists through her articles in MS. Magazine, The Feminist Art Journal and other historically important journals. Seemingly indefatigable, Gloria's enthusiasm for these women, many of whom were

her friends, ushered in a new age of scholarship that continues to this day. Young scholars from all over the world seek her out and are cordially welcomed into her home where, generous as ever, Gloria offers them her expertise, insights and delightful personal reminiscences. I was once one of those lucky young scholars and Gloria's knowledge of and insights into the artist Leonora Carrington's visual and written oeuvre were invaluable to me. Even today, after many years of friendship and collaboration, I am constantly amazed by the breadth and scope of Gloria's publications, professional relationships and accomplishments.

In fact, Gloria Orenstein has always been a great inspiration to her students at USC, her colleagues worldwide, and to all the artists and writers she has known and still helps to this day. In particular, her dedication to exploring the many aspects of Gender Studies, as well as her promotion of women and queer creators, has made her a legendary figure. In the 1970s in New York City she cofounded The Woman's Salon for Literature at Westbeth in order to provide a supportive, feminist and activist group of readers, writers and critics for emerging new feminist voices. This salon defended such writers against audiences that did not yet fully understand them by submitting Letters to the Editor and other explanatory materials so that these writers could develop their voices concerning themes that needed resistance, critique and protest within the patriarchal literary landscape. After moving to Los Angeles to accept a teaching position at USC, Gloria went on to create another such salon at The Woman's Building and to teach in their Gender Studies Program. As if that were not enough, Gloria then went on to create one of the earliest ecofeminist conferences, resulting in a book of essays by the presenters, Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism [1990, Sierra Club Books]. That same year her book The Reflowering of the Goddess [1990, Pergamon Press] explored important new feminist works of both visual artists and writers who were attempting to create a bridge to the prepatriarchal past by incorporating the symbolism of ancient mythologies in order to reclaim, retell, and revision The Great Mother Goddess cultures.

With her flaming hair of all hues and flamboyant and surrealist outfits, Gloria has also been a style icon, lending flair, elegance and a touch of magic to any event she attends. Her accomplishments are literally too many to list, and what is most impressive is her continued intellectual vigor and curiosity. For example, in 2018 she will travel to Mexico City to be part of the centennial celebrations dedicated to Leonora Carrington. Throughout many decades Gloria was devoted to promoting Mexican surrealist artists in addition to Carrington, such as Alan Glass and Bridget Tichenor, and she continues to be highly regarded by their cultural institutions. Gloria has combined scholarly rigor with a warm, inclusive, and unceasingly generous approach to helping others in her fields that has awarded her countless followers and inspired fans throughout the years.

Ilene Susan Fort, PhD, Curator Emeritus of American Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LA Susan L. Aberth, PhD, Associate Professor, Art History Program, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

Biography

Gloria F. Orenstein is Professor Emerita in Comparative Literature and Gender Studies at the University of Southern California. Her areas of research have ranged from Surrealism, contemporary feminist literature and the arts to Ecofeminism and Shamanism. Her first book *The Theater Of The Marvelous: Surrealism And The Contemporary Stage* paved the way for her pioneering work on *The Women of Surrealism*. Leonora Carrington had been a friend and remained a major source of her inspiration in research and scholarship since 1971. Her book *The Reflowering Of The Goddess* offers a feminist analysis of the movement in the contemporary arts that reclaimed the Goddess as the symbol of a paradigm shift toward a more gynocentric mythos and ethos as women artists forged a link to the prepatriarchal civilization of the ancient Goddess cultures, referencing them as their source of spiritual inspiration.

Orenstein is also coeditor of *Reweaving The World: The Emergence Of Ecofeminism*, a collection of essays that grew out of the conference she created at USC in 1987, *Ecofeminist Perspectives: Culture, Nature, Theory.* During the 8os, she was invited by the Shaman of Samiland to be a student with her in Alta, Norway, an experience that continued intermittently for almost five years. She also created The Woman's Salon in NYC that

lasted for ten years beginning in 1975. More recently, her work in Surrealism, in particular, led to her inclusion of an essay in the book *In Wonderland* that accompanied the important 2012 exhibition of the same name which focused on the Women artists of Surrealism in the Americas, both those who were native to the Americas and those who migrated there during or after WWII.

Orenstein was a pioneer in introducing the art of Frida Kahlo to North American feminists early in the 70s. Today, she continues her journey investigating the visionary worlds of revelation and the marvelous, and will continue this pursuit in her research well into the future.



Gathering of guests from Montreal and France at Salon for Night Cows with Hélène de Beauvoir, sister of Simone, and Jovette Marchessault, author of Les Vaches De Nuit and Pol Pelletier (profile center) from Le Theatre Experimental des Femmes. Courtesy Gloria Orenstein.

Renée Stout



We honor you,
Renée Stout, for your artwork
that focuses on personal
histories, metaphors, and
African diasporic culture while
confronting stereotypes and
exposing hidden truths.

Photo by Mary Noble Ours.

Renée Stout

By Tosha Grantham

Renée Stout's art, since the 1980s, has enjoined concept and technique with a vast interpretation of the spirit world and anthropological research and collecting. She draws the character of ritual practice into her prolific body of art by melding the magical principles of Central African *minkisi* with southern elegance and inner city determination. Her work is an enchanting blend of found, appropriated and fabricated elements. Stout grew up in Pittsburgh. As a child taking classes at the Carnegie Museum of Art, she embraced African spirituality after seeing Central African *minkisi*/power objects in the collection. These sculptures made by Congo healers were stabilizing for her and enhanced an early connection with a *connaissance*/sense of

knowing. Western painterly sources are indicated in Stout's early career photorealist paintings that feature trompe l'oeil qualities and her perfect script, as seen in, *A Pittsburgh Still Life*, 1986. Stout credits two artists among her aesthetic influences: Joseph Cornell for his intricately constructed shadow boxes; and Betye Saar for her material innovations, feminist and Black Nationalist iconography.

When Stout moved to Washington, DC in 1985 seeing the *minkisi* at the National Museum of African Art reignited her affinity for them and soon led to the groundbreaking exhibition, *Astonishment and Power: the Eyes of Understanding: Kongo Minkisi and the Art of Renée Stout* in 1993. Afterwards, Stout became known for making magical contemporary art with *minkisi* aesthetics. An important element in Stout's production that stems from these interactions is what she conceals and what she reveals. Interested in dualities and how plural positions manifest over time, Stout's paintings, prints, photographs, sculptures, installations and experimental films articulate this in different ways. She also uses alter egos to convey the sociopolitical concerns of the block and her two primary voices are Madame Ching—a familiar developed first as a vehicle for confronting her life from the outside—and later Fatima Mayfield, a fictional healer and frequent speaker in her production. As a conduit for ethereal, spiritual, blurred channels in her art, Stout makes expressive objects that evoke multidimensional potential through an elaborate artistic practice.

She does this by serving as the narrator of a metaphysical journey woven throughout her oeuvre. An avid researcher, Stout pulls information from beyond the artworld to explore vernacular traditions, conjure holiness churches and African Diasporic practices to suggest plural therapeutic magical forms. Exemplary of this are Renée Stout's sculptures from the late 1980s and early 1990s. Many are portable altars—sites of contemplation—that sometimes convey conflicting notions of (spiritual) power. Her minkisi aesthetics include assemblages with symbolic meanings that unify a matrix of beliefs and African Diasporic forms. Sculptures such as Fetish #2, 1989, a lifesized self-portrait made from her body cast evoke the formal power of Central



Renée Stout. A Pittsburgh Still Life, 1986. Acrylic on canvas. 24 x 36 inches. Collection of the John and Maxine Belger Foundation.

African *minkisi* and shares attributes with *minkisi minkondi*—the belly features a mirrored compartment for substances and medicinal bundles adorn the shoulders—while its title critiques anthropological assessments of West and Central African art.

Stout's art also blurs a line of "placeness" in theatrically staged and room-sized settings such as *Thinking Room*, 2004—present. This accumulative parlor that Stout has staged for over a decade is ambiguously situated "anywhere". New Orleans has long been a power center inspiring Stout's iconography and sensibilities since she first traveled there in 1989. She returns often and feels profoundly connected to the city's spirit. The photograph, *In the Green Suite*, 2009 was made there. It is a haunting image taken with her friend, the late artist Jeffrey Cook. Cook's reflection in the mirror is faint and Stout bears a concerned expression. Similar to the one in the photograph, *Listening to the Voice of a Spirit*, 2006—7, Stout in both images appears to be urgent as if listening out for something as yet to occur. Both infer and presage recent shifts toward dramatization, photography and film. As this ephemeral new work engages deep ritual/material, real/imagined

crossings, Stout's experiments with theatricality and place mark new trajectories in a flexible, highly disciplined and productive career.

Tosha Grantham, Independent Curator Miami Beach, FL



Renée Stout. Fetish #2, 1989. Mixed media. Collection of the Dallas Museum of Art, Metropolitan Life Foundation Purchase Grant. Courtesy Dallas Museum of Art, TX.



Renée Stout. *Listening to the Voice of a Spirit*, 2006–7. Archival pigment print. 40 x 30 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Biography

Renée Stout received her BFA from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1980 where she chose to focus on painting. In the mid-1980s, she began to explore the spiritual and cultural roots of her African American heritage through her increasingly sculptural works, which found their early inspiration in the aesthetics and philosophy of Kongo ritual objects. These works attracted the attention of museum curators across the United States and led to her becoming the first American artist to have a solo exhibition in the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art.

Stout has been the recipient of awards from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, the Bader Fund, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, the Gottlieb Foundation, and Anonymous Was A Woman. She was also the recipient of the David C. Driskell Prize, awarded by the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA and the Sondheim Award from the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts.

Her work can be found in numerous prestigious museum and private collections, nationally and internationally, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution,

Washington, DC; the National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN; and the Belger Center for the Arts, Kansas City, MO.

Renée Stout currently lives and works in Washington, DC.



Renée Stout. *The Thinking Room*, 2004–ongoing. Mixed media installation, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

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The President's Award for Art & Activism

Each year in association with the Women's Caucus for Art's Lifetime Achievement Awards, the National Board President selects one or two recipients for the President's Award for Art & Activism. The award identifies emerging or mid-career women in the arts whose life and work exemplifies WCA's mission statement, "creating community through art, education, and social activism." The 2018 President's Award for Art & Activism honors Kathy Gallegos and Amelia Jones for their advocacy for equity in the arts for all.

Recent recipients of the President's Award for Art & Activism include gallerist Kat Griefen of Accola Griefen, the late Hye-Seong Tak Lee, international curator and educator; Leanne Stella, Founder of FLUX Harlem; Karen Mary Davalos, Chair and Associate Professor of Chicana & Chicano Studies at Loyola Marymount University; Cathy Salser, Founder and Director of A Window Between Worlds; Maria Torres, Founder and Chief Operating Officer of The Point Community Organization; and Petra Kuppers, a disability culture activist, a community performance artist, and Professor of English, Women's Studies, Art and Design and Theatre at the University of Michigan.



Photo by Jessica Rocha.

Kathy Gallegos

Everything Kathy Gallegos does in the artworld reflects WCA's mission to create community through art, education, and social activism. Her curatorial focus at Avenue 50 Studio—a vibrant non-profit gallery that she founded in 2000 and now directs—fits flawlessly with our WCA aims to expand opportunities for leadership, networking, and professional development for women and artists of color; to increase quality exhibitions of ethnic and local art; and to advocate for equity in the arts for all.

By holding from 20 to 35 exhibitions each year at Avenue 50 Studio, Gallegos has opened up exciting opportunities for a wide range of artists, especially Latina

and Latino artists in the Los Angeles working class neighborhood of Highland Park. In the mid-nineties, she spent a year painting and learning B&W photographic darkroom techniques in Honduras. Returning to LA, she taught photography to teens at the Aztlan Cultural Arts Center in Lincoln Heights. Since 2003, she has served on numerous city, county, and national panels for, among others, the LA Department of Cultural Affairs and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. In 2012, she served on a Latina/Multicultural Artist Panel for the Southern California Women's Caucus for Art. Most recently, by special appointment by Governor Jerry Brown, she is a Councilmember on the Board of the California Arts Council.

Beyond Avenue 50 Studio, Gallegos curates exhibitions every six months for LAC+USC Medical Center's Violence Intervention Prevention Clinic. From Medford, Oregon to venues like the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles, she has designed exhibitions to honor Chicano ancestors who have passed, to bridge the worlds of emerging and established African American artists, to show the Asian influence on Latino art and vice versa, and to show how Chicano art is born out of rebellion and controversy, changing the way we look at art and the world.

As an artist, she has received commissions for the AIDS Memorial in Lincoln Park and an elevator design for the Junipero Serra State Building. In 1986, along with muralists Barbara Carrasco, Yreina Cervantez, and Francisco Letelier, she completed a mural at the Plaza de las Madres in Managua, Nicaragua, since featured in David Kunzel's book *The Revolutionary Murals of Nicaragua*. Over the years, she has exhibited her art at local university galleries, as well as at the Mexican Cultural Institute, the Museo de Arte in Mazatlan, Mexico, and the Instituto Cultural Interamericano in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. In 2014, KCET, LA's PBS station, honored her with a Los Angeles Local Hero Award. For her accomplishments as a gallerist and artist, I am very proud to honor Kathy Gallegos with the 2018 WCA President's Award for Art & Activism.



Photo by Photo-Paul C. Donald.

Amelia Jones

It is my great honor to present a WCA President's Award for Art & Activism to Amelia Jones, now Robert A. Day Professor of Art and Design at the Roski School of Art and Design at University of Southern California. While her fame is global, her local affiliations make it meaningful to honor her in Los Angeles. Despite teaching outside the US at McGill University in Canada and at University of Manchester in England for many years, Jones' early work as a feminist curator, theorist, and historian of art and performance was done here at the University of California, Riverside and at Art Center College of Design. If she were not pursuing a Fulbright Award in New Zealand at the University of Auckland to work on her newest book project, tentatively titled *In Between Subjects: A Critical Genealogy*

of Queer Performance, she would be here to accept the award. Since gaining her PhD from UCLA, Jones has been incredibly active teaching, curating major exhibitions, writing books, serving on academic panels, and giving public lectures, interviews, gallery talks, workshops, and seminars around the world. She has been invited to teach as a distinguished visiting scholar in Hong Kong, Canada, and four US states. She now serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Curatorial Studies, University of Manchester Press, and College Art Association's Art Journal, among others. In 2015, the College Art Association honored her with the Distinguished Feminist Award.

My admiration for her brilliant mind and incisive research grows stronger with time. Like most of the artists and scholars I know, I have followed her ideas and research on performance, identification and representation in the visual arts, queer visualities, intersectional feminisms, the sexual politics of Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, and photography. I have read each new book as it came out and continue to assign Jones' writing to my students in Women and Gender courses.

Her recent publications include the edited volume *Sexuality* (2014) and, coedited with Erin Silver, *Otherwise: Imagining Queer Feminist Art Histories* (2016). With substantial funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, her exhibition *Material Traces: Time and the Gesture in Contemporary Art* was realized in 2013 in Montreal. In the same city, she programmed the events *Trans-Montréal* (2015), followed by a related publication "On Trans/Performance," a special issue of *Performance Research* (2016). Her *Live Artists Live* performance and conference program took place at USC in 2016. Jones is currently working on a retrospective of the work of Ron Athey. In my estimation, she is our greatest thinker on the visual products of intersectional feminisms. In thanks for all she has done to map the field, I am thrilled to honor her with a President's Award for Art & Activism.

Essay by Susan M. King, National Board President, Women's Caucus for Art

Congratulations 2018 WCA Lifetime Achievement Award Winner

Lee Bontecou

Alumna and Life Member of The Art Students League of New York



Congratulations on your Lifetime Achievement Award Renée Stout!

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, Wellin Museum of Art, Hamilton College, and Spelman College Museum of Fine Art proudly co-published a catalogue of Renée Stout's work, *Tales of the Conjure Woman*.

Purchase a copy at halsey.cofc.edu/about/publications









School of Art and Design

University of Southern California Gayle Garner Roski School of Art and Design 850 West 17th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90089 www.roski.usc.edu

The Southern California Women's Caucus for Art

welcomes Art Speaks! Lend Your Voice, WCA's 2018 national conference & exhibition.

Congratulations to Lifetime Achievement Awardees

Lee Bontecou Lynn Hershman Leeson Gloria Orenstein Renée Stout

President's Art & Activism Awardees
Kathy Gallegos and
Amelia Jones.

for your hard work over the last two years.
Welcome to our next president
Margo Hobbs.



ACCOLA GRIEFEN

Congratulations Renée!

for receiving a

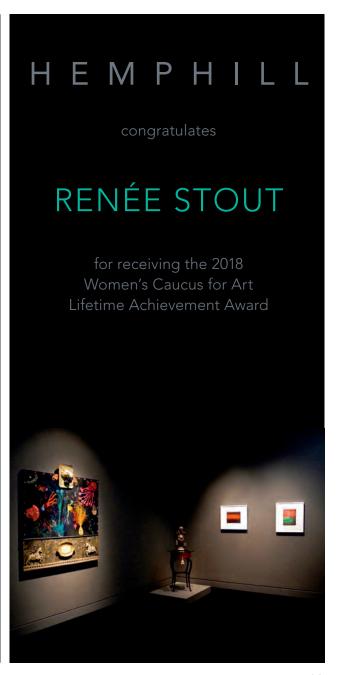
Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award

It is an honor and a pleasure

to work with you!

Kat and Kristen

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CONGRATULATIONS

2018 Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Honorees

Lynn Hershman Leeson Gloria Orenstein Renée Stout Lee Bontecou

You are pioneers, innovators and activists.
Thank you for lending your voice and for persisting.

-with gratitude from an anonymous donor-



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Congratulations from

The Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club

Celebrating and promoting the work of professional women artists since 1896

121st Annual Open Exhibition, Jan 9-26, 2018 at the National Arts Club, NYC

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CONGRATULATIONS

KATHY GALLEGOS

on your

WOMEN'S CAUCUS FOR ART PRESIDENT'S AWARD for ART & ACTIVISM

Your friends at,





Congratulations to the

2018 Lifetime Achievement Awardees

Lee Bontecou

Lynn Hershman Leeson

Gloria Orenstein

and especially our local star:

Renée Stout

* * *

www.wcadc.org



Northern California Women's Caucus for Art

congratulates

LYNN HERSHMAN LEESON

on receiving the

2018 WCA Lifetime Achievement Award

We salute and honor Lynn Hershman Leeson for blazing new paths in multiple art mediums, performance, photography, video, installation, digital arts, new media, intermedia, bioart, and film while promoting and documenting the women's art movement.

Thank you, Lynn, for your extraordinary feminist art. We celebrate your artistic vision and social activism.

The Avenue 50 Studio Board of Directors

congratulate our Founder and Director

Kathleen Gallegos

in receiving the 2018 Women's Caucus for Art President's Award for Art & Activism

Raoul De la Sota

Francisco Fernandez

Yolanda Nogueira

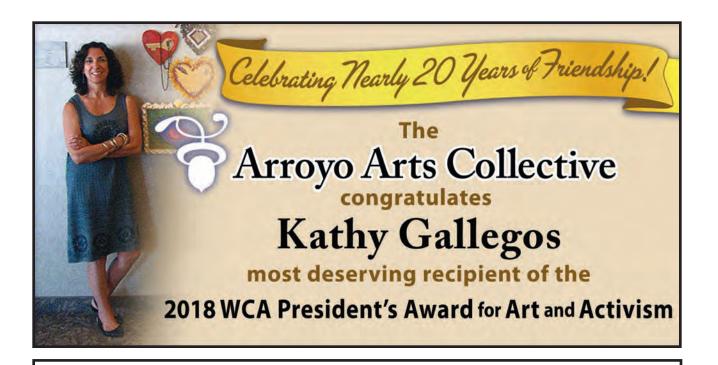
Geri Simmons



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Congratulations

Gloria Orenstein

on receiving the 2018 Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award.

Your work and dedication on behalf of women in the arts is a true inspiration!

With great affection from Cheryl Bookout, Anne Gauldin, Cheri Gaulke, Sue Maberry, Sandra Mueller, Claudia Orenstein, Nadine Orenstein and Christine Papalexis

the Woman's Building

Congratulations

Lee Bontecou Lynn Hershman Leeson Gloria Orenstein Renée Stout

for receiving a 2018 WCA Lifetime Achievement Award!

We are forever thankful for your contributions to the visual arts!

Members of the WCA New York Chapter

Linda Nochlin Memorial Panel

Thursday, Feb 22, 2018 LA Convention Center Location: 403A 10:30 am

Co-chair:

Margo Hobbs, Muhlenberg College, WCA President-Elect

Co-chair:

Maura Reilly, National Academy of Design, 2006 WCA President's Award for Art & Activism Recipient

Panelists:

Peter R. Kalb, Brandeis University. *Nochlin and Modernism.*Jongwoo Jeremy Kim, University of Louisville. *Nochlin and Queer Art History*Patricia Mainardi, Graduate Center, The City University of New York. *Nochlin and the State of Art History in the 1970s*

This panel explores and celebrates Linda Nochlin's influence at large. Her feminist intervention in the field of art history changed the discipline profoundly as it required new archives, theories, and methodologies. Panelists will frame their remarks in broad and ambitious terms and there will be opportunity for the audience to share their reflections. Linda Nochlin received the WCA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002.

"I curated Art Speaks! around the idea of developing a visual fluency of the art of speaking...The exhibit feels right and aesthetically unabridged, full of emotion, meaning and remarkable art."

Jill Moniz, PhD

Art Speaks! Lend Your Voice

Arena 1 Gallery Santa Monica Art Studios Santa Monica, CA

February 21 to March 10, 2018

Reception: Thursday, February, 22, 2018

Participating Artists: Jayne Adams, Kathy Aldous-Schleindl, Shula Arbel, Jenny E. Balisle, Sharon Barnes, Yvonne Beatty, Linda Brookshire, Janine Brown, Lorraine Bubar, Julie Carcione, Michele Colburn, Constance Culpepper, Liz Dodson, Laurie Toby Edison, Beth Fein, Clairan Ferrono, Kim Foley, Megan Frances, Ellen Freyer, Dwora Fried, Christine Giancola, Amy Gilvary, Betty Green, Shelley Heffler, Mary Kamerer, Veda B Kaya, Linda Kunik, Esther Kwan Simon, J. J. L'Heureux, Beth Lakamp, Lynda Levy, Charity Malin, Aline Mare, Robbin Milne, Lena Moross, Sandra Mueller, Mary Nash, Melissa Reischman, Lynda A. N. Reyes, Samuelle Richardson, Julia Rigby, Karrie Ross, Orly Ruaimi, Linda Jo Russell, Marilou Ryder, Seda Saar, Sondra Schwetman, Jacqueline Secor, Rebecca Setareh, Doni Silver Simons, Kerrie Smith, Stephanie Solomon, Leona Strassberg Steiner, Nathalie Tierce, Linda Vallejo, Elise Vazelakis, Arika Von Edler, Elizabeth White, Holly Wong, Joan Wulf, and Tina Ybarra.

A full color catalogue with juror's and organizers' statements accompanied the exhibition.

A National Exhibition Project of the Women's Caucus for Art

Past WCA Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients

New York 2017

Audrey Flack, Mary Schmidt Campbell Charlene Teters, Martha Rosler

Washington DC 2016

Tomie Arai, Helène Aylon, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Juana Guzma**n**

New York 2015

Sue Coe, Kiki Smith, Martha Wilson

Chicago 2014

Phyllis Bramson, Harmony Hammond Adrian Piper, Faith Wilding

New York 2013

Tina Dunkley, Artis Lane Susana Torruella Leval Ioan Semmel

Los Angeles 2012

Whitney Chadwick, Suzanne Lacy Ferris Olin, Bernice Steinbaum Trinh T. Minh-ha

New York 2011

Beverly Buchanan, Diane Burko Ofelia Garcia, Joan Marter Carolee Schneemann, Sylvia Sleigh

Chicago 2010

Tritobia Hayes Benjamin Mary Jane Jacob Senga Nengudi, Joyce J. Scott Spiderwoman Theater

Los Angeles 2009

Maren Hassinger Ester Hernandez, Joyce Kozloff Margo Machida, Ruth Weisberg

Dallas 2008

Ida Applebroog, Joanna Frueh Nancy Grossman, Leslie King-Hammond Yolanda Lopez, Lowery Stokes Sims

New York, 2007

Barbara Chase-Riboud Wanda Corn, Buffie Johnson Lucy Lippard, Elizabeth Murray

Boston, 2006

Eleanor Antin, Marisol Escobar Elinor Gadon, Yayoi Kusama

Atlanta, 2005

Betty Blayton-Taylor, Rosalynn Carter, Mary D. Garrard, Agnes Martin Yoko Ono. Ann Sutherland Harris

Seattle 2004

Emma Amos, Jo Baer Michi Itami, Helen Levitt Yvonne Rainer

New York 2003

Eleanor Dickinson, Suzi Gablik Grace Glueck, Ronne Hartfield Eleanor Munro, Nancy Spero

Philadelphia 2002

Camille Billops, Judith K. Brodsky Muriel Magenta, Linda Nochlin Marilyn J. Stokstad

Chicago 2001

Joyce Aiken, Dorothy Gillespie Marie Johnson Calloway Thalia Gouma-Peterson Wilhemina Holladay Ellen Llanyon, Ruth Waddy

Los Angeles 1999

Judy Baca, Judy Chicago Linda Frye Burnham Evangeline K. Montgomery Arlene Raven, Barbara T. Smith

Philadelphia 1997

Jo Hanson, Sadie Krauss Kriebel Jaune Quick-To-See Smith Moira Roth, Kay Sekimachi

Boston 1996

Bernice Bing, Alicia Craig Faxon Elsa Honig Fine, Howardena Pindell Marianna Pineda, Kay Walking Stick

San Antonio 1995

Irene Clark, Jacqueline Clipsham Alessandra Comini, Jean Lacy Amalia Mesa-Bains, Celia Muñoz

New York City 1994

Mary Adams Maria Enriquez de Allen Beverly Pepper, Faith Ringgold Rachel Rosenthal Charlotte Streifer Rubenstein

Seattle 1993

Ruth Asawa, Shifra M. Goldman Nancy Graves, Gwen Knight Agueda Salazar Martinez Emily Waheneka

Chicago 1992

Vera Berdich, Paula Gerard Lucy Lewis, Louise Noun Margaret Tafoya, Anna Tate

Washington DC 1991

Theresa Bernstein, Delilah Pierce Mildred Constantine Otellie Loloma, Mine Okubo

New York City 1990

Ilse Bing, Elizabeth Layton Helen Serger, May Stevens Pablita Velarde

San Francisco 1989

Bernarda Bryson Shahn Margret Craver, Clare Leighton Samella Sanders Lewis Betye Saar

Houston 1988

Margaret Burroughs Jane Teller, Dorothy Hood

Miriam Schapiro Edith Standen

Boston 1987

Grace Hartigan, Agnes Mongan Maud Morgan, Honoré Sharrer Elizabeth Talford Scott Beatrice Wood

New York City 1986

Nell Blaine, Leonora Carrington Sue Fuller, Lois Mailou Jones Dorothy Miller, Barbara Morgan

Los Angeles 1985/Toronto 1984

Minna Citron, Clyde Connell Eleanor Raymond Joyce Treiman, June Wayne Rachel Wischnitzer

Philadelphia 1983

Edna Andrade, Dorothy Dehner Lotte Jacobi, Ellen Johnson Stella Kramrisch, Pecolia Warner Lenore Tawney

New York City 1982

Bernice Abbott, Elsie Driggs Elizabeth Gilmore Holt Katharine Kuh, Claire Zeisler Charmion von Wiegand

San Francisco 1981

Ruth Bernhard, Adelyn Breeskin Elizabeth Catlett, Sari Dienes Claire Falkenstein, Helen Lundeberg

Washington DC 1980 Alternate Awards

Bella Abzug, Sonia Johnson Sister Theresa Kane, Rosa Parks Gloria Steinem, Grace Paley

New Orleans 1980

Anni Albers, Louise Bourgeois Carolyn Durieux, Ida Kohlmeyer Lee Krasner

Washington D. C. 1979 Isabel Bishop, Selma Burke Alice Neel, Louise Nevelson Georgia O'Keeffe

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