

PRESS RELEASE

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SEATTLE ART MUSEUM HONORS SONDRA PERRY WITH THE 2017 GWENDOLYN KNIGHT AND JACOB LAWRENCE PRIZE

Perry will receive a \$10,000 award, along with a solo exhibition at SAM



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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) announced today the selection of video installation and performance artist Sondra Perry as the winner of the 2017 Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Prize. Major funding for the prize is provided by the Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation. Perry will receive a \$10,000 award to further her artistic practice, and her work will be featured in a solo exhibition in SAM's Gwendolyn Knight & Jacob Lawrence Gallery in fall 2017.

Awarded bi-annually to an early career black artist who has been producing work for less than 10 years, the Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Prize has previously been awarded to Titus Kaphar (2009), Theaster Gates (2011), LaToya Ruby Frazier (2013), and Brenna Youngblood (2015). The past winners' work ranges across many genres; Perry is the first video artist to be awarded the prize.

Perry's work explores abstraction and representation through video and computer-based media installations and performance. She often uses video production tools like blue screens and chroma keys, 3D avatars and computer graphics software, workplace wellness tools, and media publicly shared on the internet to question constructions of representation and propose different ways of seeing.

A New Jersey-based artist, Perry has already made a mark in Seattle. Her video *Double Quadruple Etcetera Etcetera* opened SAM's exhibition *Disguise: Masks and Global African Art* (June 18-September 7, 2015). The exhibition then traveled to the Fowler Museum at UCLA (October 18, 2015-March 13, 2016) and the Brooklyn Museum (April 29-September 18, 2016). In addition, Perry's first solo show, *Some Type Of Way*, was held at independent gallery INCA in Seattle (October 30-November 19, 2015); her first institutional solo show, *Resident Evil*, recently appeared at The Kitchen in New York, NY (November 2-December 10, 2016).

Perry's fall 2017 solo exhibition at SAM will be curated by Sandra Jackson-Dumont, Frederick P. and Sandra P. Rose Chairman of Education at the



Metropolitan Museum of Art and SAM's former Deputy Director for Education and Public Programs/Adjunct Curator in Modern and Contemporary Art. "Sondra's work is at once subversively witty, concretely inventive, and above all, timely," says Jackson-Dumont. "I am mesmerized by her uncanny use of performance and digital platforms to create meaning and comment on black experiences in particular and societal issues overall. I could not be more thrilled to work with this exceptional artist."

SONDRA PERRY

Sondra Perry has exhibited in group shows at MoMA PS1, Seattle Art Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and The Studio Museum in Harlem, and has participated in residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and the Experimental Television Center. Perry holds an MFA from Columbia University, a BFA from Alfred University, and is currently based in Houston, Texas as part of the artist-in-residence program Core at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. For more information, visit sondraperry.com.

GWENDOLYN KNIGHT AND JACOB LAWRENCE PRIZE AND GALLERY

SAM's Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Prize is awarded bi-annually to an early career black artist who has been producing work for less than 10 years. The prize was created to provide inspiration for young black artists. Nominations are requested from an anonymous roster of distinguished and celebrated artists, curators, and cultural producers who have their fingers on the pulse of contemporary black artistic practice. Funding for the prize is provided by the Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Endowment and the Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation.

PAST WINNERS

2015 Brenna Youngblood
 2013 LaToya Ruby Frazier
 2011 Theaster Gates
 2009 Titus Kaphar

SAM's Gwendolyn Knight & Jacob Lawrence Gallery honors the legacy of these two renowned artists, their contributions to the artistic landscape, and their support of SAM. The gallery features installations highlighting the work of the Lawrences, contemporary artists of color, and artists sharing their interests, aesthetic values, and creative practices.

Photo credits: Installation view of *Resident Evil* at The Kitchen, 2016, Sondra Perry. Photo: Jason Mandella

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 Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994. 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.

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.