

# PRESS RELEASE

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## SEATTLE ART MUSEUM PRESENTS PRIZE-WINNER LAUREN HALSEY'S SOLO EXHIBITION

Sculptural works now on view by winner of the 2021 Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Prize



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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) presents [the solo exhibition for Lauren Halsey](#) (February 4-July 17, 2022), the winner of the 2021 Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Prize. Grounded in art, architecture, and community engagement, Los Angeles-based Halsey creates mixed-media works and installations that address gentrification and disenfranchisement, celebrate Black culture, and offer visions for a radical and collaborative future.

For her exhibition at SAM, Halsey presents large-scale carved gypsum relief panels, installed along the perimeter of the gallery. Reminiscent of temple walls, each panel is etched with an array of iconography, including the queens, pharaohs, and pyramids of ancient Egypt and the people and slogans of Black culture found in her neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles.

In the center of the gallery, visitors can circulate around a stacked sculpture of oversized boxes, covered in the colors, objects, and slogans of LA: neon-bright ombré stripes, iridescent CDs, and hand-lettered signage. This layered iconography comes from the artist's personal archive, developed through research within her community. Placing these hyperlocal portraits, signs, and imagery in the context of real and imagined histories, Halsey remixes ancient and contemporary cultures into a unifying vision.

In addition to this solo exhibition, staged in the museum's Gwendolyn Knight & Jacob Lawrence Gallery, Halsey received a \$10,000 award to further her artistic practice.

Awarded biannually since 2009 to an early career Black artist—defined loosely as an artist in the first decade of their career—the Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Prize recognizes artists who have already contributed significantly to contemporary artistic practice and whose prominence is on the rise. Previous recipients of the prize are now leaders in the field; they include Titus Kaphar (2009), Theaster Gates (2011), LaToya Ruby Frazier (2013), Brenna Youngblood (2015), Sondra Perry (2017), and Aaron Fowler (2019).



## ABOUT LAUREN HALSEY

Lauren Halsey (b. 1987, Los Angeles) has presented solo exhibitions at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles (2020); Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2019); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2018). She participated in Made in L.A. 2018, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018), where she was awarded the Mohn Award for artistic excellence. Her work is included in the collections of the Hammer Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Halsey was the recipient of the 2019 Painter and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, New York. In 2020, Lauren Halsey founded Summaeverythang Community Center and is currently in the process of developing a major public monument for construction in South Central Los Angeles, where she and her family have lived and worked for generations.

## EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

Lauren Halsey's solo exhibition at SAM is curated by Catharina Manchanda, Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art. Sandra Jackson-Dumont, Director and CEO of Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, led the anonymous selection process this year; she was the founding curator of the prize's exhibitions from 2009-2019.

Funding for the prize and exhibition is provided by the Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence and Jacob Lawrence Endowment and generous support from the Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation.

**Photo credits:** Installation view of *Lauren Halsey* at Seattle Art Museum, 2022, photo: Natali Wiseman.

## **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 Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following a three-year closure for an extensive renovation and expansion. 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. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

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.