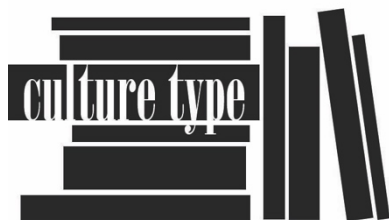


Valentine, Victoria L. "College Art Association 2021 Awards Honor Samella Lewis, Deborah Willis, Nicole R. Fleetwood, Simone Leigh, Charles L. Davis II, and Maren Hassinger," *Culture Type*, 24 February 2021.



AN INTERGENERATIONAL SLATE of artists and scholars was recognized by the College Art Association (CAA) with 2021 Awards for Distinction. In previous years, one or a few of the honorees have been Black. This year, there were several. Recipients of the juried awards included **Samella Lewis, Deborah Willis, Nicole R. Fleetwood, Simone Leigh, Charles L. Davis II, and Maren Hassinger**. The winners were honored at CAA's annual conference, during the convocation. The virtual event was held Feb. 10.

Lewis, 96, was honored with the 2021 Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement. A legendary figure in the field of African American art, Lewis is an artist, educator, and author. A longtime professor, she literally created space for African American art establishing a museum, founding galleries, starting an arts journal, and writing books. The lifetime achievement award "celebrates an artist who has demonstrated particular commitment to their work throughout a long career with national and international impact." CAA said Los Angeles-based Lewis embodies the criteria.

A Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award for Writing on Art went to Willis. CAA said her life's work as an artist, author, and curator has "opened the field of African American photography" and she has in effect "acted as its archaeologist, sifting through the layers from the time of Louis Daguerre to the surface of our present, retrieving the images and researching their histories."

Fleetwood was recognized in two categories for "Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration," published by Harvard University Press in 2020. She received both the Frank Jewett Mather Award and Charles Rufus Morey Book Award for the exhibition catalog, which accompanied the show she guest curated at MoMA PS1.

"Marking Time" explores the prominence of incarceration in contemporary art and culture and presents works by artists in U.S. prisons alongside contributions by non-incarcerated artists "concerned with state repression, erasure, and imprisonment." The moving and insightful volume reflects 10 years of scholarly research, long-overdue insights about the effects of incarceration on countless individuals and communities, as well as the personal impact of incarceration on Fleetwood's own family.

The jury for the Morey Book Award wrote, "Fleetwood's timely book provides insights into the lives of those impacted by growing economic and racial injustices in current social conditions, especially in the context of the U.S. judicial system, through a study of carceral aesthetics and artistic praxis."

Adding further critical praise, judges for the Mather Award said: "Proposing a model of carceral aesthetics, Fleetwood explores the forms, materialities, temporalities, logics, and economies of art produced under conditions of structural racism and unfreedom. Marking Time overturns aesthetic theories that situate the production and discernment of art as the domain of a mobile, sensory, and 'free' body and mind."

CAA's 2021 Awards for Distinction include:

### **Maren Hassinger | Artist Award for a Distinguished Body of Work**

New York-based Hassinger began her career more than 40 years ago in Los Angeles, where her collaborators included Senga Nengudi and David Hammons. She works across sculpture, installation, video, and performance, using a variety of materials (paint, fabric, rope, balloons, newspaper) and methods (welding, stacking, weaving, movement) to explore the human condition. Hassinger has said, "My career has been an attempt to speak honestly about our world, our shared histories. More and more, I have been drawn to the way we treat each other and the world we have created together. While my work is being made in this very real season of change it persists in finding value. It speaks of equality and hurricanes and tyrants yet I believe in the power of the previously disenfranchised and the possibility for accumulative joy of recovery." Her exhibition, "Maren Hassinger: Nature, Sweet Nature," is on view at the Aspen Art Museum through March 14.