



CAULEEN SMITH NAMED THE RECIPIENT OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL JOYCE ALEXANDER WEIN ARTIST PRIZE



NEW YORK, NY, OCTOBER 26, 2020 — In conjunction with The Studio Museum in Harlem's annual Gala campaign, Director and Chief Curator Thelma Golden announced that Los Angeles-based artist Cauleen Smith has been selected as the winner of the fifteenth annual **Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize**. Established in 2006 by jazz impresario, musician, and philanthropist George Wein to honor his late wife, Joyce Alexander (1928–2005), a long-time Trustee of the Studio Museum, the Prize honors the achievements of an African-American artist who demonstrates great innovation, promise, and creativity and bears a cash prize of \$50,000.

A multidisciplinary artist rooted in mid-twentieth-century experimental film, Cauleen Smith describes her work as reflecting on "the everyday possibilities of the imagination." Her first solo New York City exhibition, *Mutualities*, is currently on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art, which presented her work in the 2017 Biennial. Her most comprehensive and immersive exhibition to date, *We Already Have What We Need*, was recently presented at MASS MoCA (May 2019–March 2020), with the central portion scheduled to travel to Contemporary Art Museum Houston in 2021. The Studio Museum in Harlem presented her work in the Afrofuturist-themed group exhibition *The Shadows Took Shape* (2013–14).

Thelma Golden said, "Cauleen Smith's endlessly generative imagination embraces and transforms multitudes, from the ceremony of church banners to the visions of science fiction, from structuralist theory to the music of Alice Coltrane and Sun Ra, from the words and visions of Rebecca Cox Jackson to the revolutionary tradition of Third World cinema. Although she has described her subjects as 'the fragile, the forgotten, the flawed, and the fugitive,' the effect of her work is overwhelmingly one of plenitude, rich in its exploration of human complexities. In recognition of her achievements to date and in the expectation of much more to come, it is a great pleasure for The Studio Museum in Harlem to present Cauleen Smith with the fifteenth annual Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize."

Past winners of the Joyce Alexander Wein Prize include: Torkwase Dyson, 2019; Diedrick Brackens, 2018; Simone Leigh, 2017; and Derrick Adams, 2016.

About Cauleen Smith

Born in Riverside, California, and educated at San Francisco State University (BA) and the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television (MFA), Cauleen Smith lives and works in Los Angeles and serves on the faculty of the California Institute of the Arts. In addition to her solo exhibitions at MASS MoCA and the Whitney, she has received single-artist shows at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and ICA Philadelphia. Her short films, a feature film, an installation, and a performance work were showcased in 2019 at the Rotterdam International Film Festival. Her 2018 work *Sojourner* is currently featured in the exhibition *Future Histories: Theater Gates and Cauleen Smith* at SFMOMA. In 2016, Cauleen Smith was the inaugural recipient of the Ellsworth Kelly Award from the Foundation for Contemporary Art. Other honors include the 2016 Herb Alpert Award for Film/Video, a Rockefeller Media Arts Award, a Creative Capital Award, an Artadia Award, a United States Artists Fellowship, a Chicago 3Arts Grant, and residencies at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and Artpace.

About The Studio Museum in Harlem

Founded in 1968 by a diverse group of artists, community activists, and philanthropists, The Studio Museum in Harlem is internationally known for its catalytic role in promoting the work of artists of African descent. The Studio Museum is preparing to construct a new home at its longtime location on Manhattan's West 125th Street. Designed by Adjaye Associates in collaboration with Cooper Robertson, the 82,000-square foot facility will be the first created expressly for the Museum's program. The new building will enable the Studio Museum to better serve a growing and diverse audience, provide additional educational opportunities for people of all ages, expand its program of world-renowned exhibitions, effectively display its singular collection, and strengthen its trailblazing *Artist-in-Residence* program.

For more information on the Studio Museum, its collection, and a wide range of online resources for audiences of all ages, visit studiomuseum.org or follow us @studiomuseum on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

Hours and Admission

The Studio Museum in Harlem's top priority is guaranteeing the safety of each member of our community, our audiences, our committed team, and their families. As a proud citizen of Harlem and a public institution, we also are mindful of our responsibilities as a leader in the promotion of best public health practices. For these reasons, as we continue to monitor the challenges posed by the spread of COVID-19, we have closed our programming space, Studio Museum 127. We do so out of an abundance of caution and in the best interest of our staff and our community.

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Images: Cauleen Smith. Photo: Dustin Akland

The Studio Museum's building at 144 W.125th Street is closed for the construction of our [new museum](#). Our [inHarlem](#) initiative also presents exhibitions and events at a variety of partners and satellite locations in Harlem. Check out our calendar for full details on specific programming.

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