

May 22, 2008

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SFMOMA ANNOUNCES 2008 SECA ART AWARD WINNERS

Tauba Auerbach, Desirée Holman, Jordan Kantor, Trevor Paglen

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2008 SECA Art Award. Administered by SECA (Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art), an SFMOMA auxiliary, the biennial award honors local artists of exceptional promise with an exhibition at the museum, an accompanying catalogue, and a modest cash prize. The 2008 SECA Art Award exhibition, featuring the work of Tauba Auerbach, Desirée Holman, Jordan Kantor, and Trevor Paglen, will be on view at SFMOMA from February through May, 2009 (dates tentative).

The SECA Art Award distinguishes artists working independently at a high level of artistic maturity whose work has not yet received substantial recognition. This year, SFMOMA considered more than 200 artists working in a broad range of media who were nominated by Bay Area art professionals, including museum and alternative-space curators, art school instructors, gallery owners, critics, SECA members, and former recipients of the SECA award. After visiting the studios of 31 finalists, the winners were selected by Apsara DiQuinzio and Alison Gass, SFMOMA assistant curators of painting and sculpture.

Of the award process the curators state, "It was an exceptional year. Our experience reconfirmed that the Bay Area is a thriving artistic community, which made the final decisions especially challenging. Work being made here clearly holds an important place in the context of the larger art world in its nuanced engagement of our contemporary moment. It is an honor to acknowledge four among the many deserving artists considered for the award this year."

Finalists for the 2008 SECA award include: James Buckhouse, Monica Canilao, Dina Danish, Veronica De Jesus, Lucas DeGiulio, Ala Ebtakar, Dustin Fosnot, Aaron Gach, David Huffman, Prajakti Jayavant, Packard Jennings, Ruth Laskey, Christian Maychack, Keegan McHargue, Julio Cesar Morales, Jay Nelson, Kate Pocrass, Emily Prince, Lordy Rodriguez, Zachary Royer Scholz, Paul Schiek, Andrew Schoultz, Jennie Smith, Chris Sollars, Travis Somerville, Paul Wackers, and Mary Elizabeth Yarbrough.

Since 1967 SECA has honored more than 50 Bay Area artists with its award program. Recent award recipients include Sarah Cain, Kota Ezawa, Amy Franceschini, Mitzi Pederson, and Leslie Shows (2006); Rosana Castrillo Díaz, Simon Evans, Shaun O'Dell, and Josephine Taylor (2004); John Bankston, Andrea Higgins, Chris Johanson,

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and Will Rogan (2002); Rachael Neubauer and Kathryn Van Dyke (2000); Chris Finley, Gay Outlaw, Laurie Reid, and Rigo 98 (1998); and D-L Alvarez, Anne Appleby, and Barry McGee (1996).

Tauba Auerbach

Whether she is making images of TV static, digital binary code, punctuation marks, the Latin or Ugaritic alphabets, Morse code, or four-color printing models, Auerbach probes the dynamic relationships of symbolic representation. Of her exploration of these various vocabularies, the artist has stated, “I attempt to chip at, rearrange, fold in half, taste, poke fun at, and generally test polarities and absolutes.” In one series of black-and-white abstract drawings, Auerbach examined the language of binary programming (0s and 1s), utilizing different sizes and patterns of black and white geometric shapes to render various formal interpretations of the color grey, while retaining its digital definition: 50 percent white and 50 percent black. At the core of Auerbach’s visual art practice is a desire to demonstrate the pliability of logic through formal reconfigurations of diverse representational systems.

A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, Auerbach received a bachelor of arts degree in visual art from Stanford University in 2003.

Desirée Holman

Originally trained as a sculptor, Desirée Holman now works across a spectrum of media, though her end product is single- or multi-channel video. Each of her projects is the result of long-term research, as she mines reality to create unique, fantastical scenarios. These are ultimately manifested as loosely spun narratives featuring actors wearing outlandish masks and costumes handcrafted by the artist. In her most recent work, these masks are based on characters from the 1980s sitcoms *Roseanne* and *The Cosby Show*. Slipping between the performed real and the overtly surreal, Holman’s work ultimately both reveals and questions the nature of family dynamics, the construction of social types and the mediation of life via television. The intentionally simple look of the videos and seemingly mundane subject matter underlie an artistic intelligence tinged with both humor and playfulness.

In 1999 Holman received a bachelor of fine arts degree from California College of the Arts, and in 2002 she received a master of fine arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

Jordan Kantor

Armed with a thorough understanding of the history of painting, Kantor begins his compositions with images culled from various media sources. With subjects ranging from important public events such as the explosion of the Space Shuttle *Challenger* to art-historical topics such as Edouard Manet’s famed 19th-century paintings, the artist deftly explores many of the critical concerns of 20th and 21st-century art-making: flatness, cultural mediation of images, figuration versus abstraction, the painting as object, photographic reproduction, and appropriation. Of his work Kantor says, “Representation itself is an underlying theme, and part of my art’s politics, granting the viewer agency rather than imparting a fully coded message.” Within his simplified, painterly vocabulary that shifts between abstraction and figuration, one experiences the open-ended dialogue established between photographic and painterly representation.

Kantor received a bachelor of arts degree in history and studio art from Stanford University in 1995, and a doctorate in the history of art and architecture from Harvard University in 2003.

Trevor Paglen

In his photographs and mixed-media installations, Paglen renders visible a secret side of the United States government that remains largely hidden from public view. In his various projects, Paglen has captured pictures of American spy satellites orbiting the Earth, clandestine flight missions to remote places in the Nevada desert, and unknown U.S. military operations in foreign countries such as Afghanistan. Both a visual artist and experimental geographer, Paglen adeptly identifies and visualizes a system constructed of intricate communication networks, disguised information routes, and remote locales that collectively shape a shadowy, unknown side of American culture.

In 2002 Paglen received a bachelor of arts degree in religious studies from the University of California, Berkeley. He received a master of fine arts degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2002, before returning to UC Berkeley, where he recently completed a doctorate in geography.

The SECA Art Award is funded by SECA, an auxiliary of SFMOMA. The cash prize is made possible by the Robert Huston Memorial Fund.

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Museum hours: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): Open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. The museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Koret Visitor Education Center: Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: Open at 10 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$12.50; seniors \$8; students \$7. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. Thursday evenings after 6 p.m. admission is half-price. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

Visit our website at www.sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is supported by a broad array of contributors who are committed to helping advance its mission as a dynamic center for modern and contemporary art. Major annual support is provided by the Koret Foundation Funds, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, and Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. Thursday evening half-price admission is sponsored by Banana Republic.

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