

2023 RECIPIENTS OF JOAN MITCHELL FELLOWSHIPS WILL RECEIVE \$60,000 IN UNRESTRICTED GRANT FUNDS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

New York, NY—August 22, 2023—The Joan Mitchell Foundation announced today the 15 recipients of its 2023 Joan Mitchell Fellowships, which award \$60,000 in unrestricted funds to artists from across the United States. This year’s artists reflect a diverse array of practices: from installations that demonstrate the impact of solar energy, to works made from tulle that use color and movement as a feminine rejoinder to the evolution of abstractionism; from land-based art practices that engage with questions of resilience, survival, and memory among Indigenous communities, to sculptural installations that explore the micro-ecologies of non-living systems; and painters and sculptors working in a spectrum of materials, including cement, lace, beads, and the artists’ hair.

Central to the Joan Mitchell Fellowships is longitudinal support that recognizes that the greatest benefits of fellowship opportunities are often nurtured over time, through sustained engagement and relationship-building. The Foundation’s monetary award for recipients extends over a five year period; Fellows receive an initial \$20,000 payment this year followed by four years of \$10,000 installments. The Foundation also provides opportunities for artists to engage in programs that focus on personal finance, legacy planning, and self-advocacy, among other opportunities. Layered into the support structure are annual in-person convenings that build connections among the Fellows and virtual engagement sessions that further foster a peer learning community.

“In 2021, we reconceived and relaunched our primary granting program to more actively explore the ways in which multi-year financial support can help artists transform their practices and secure their legacies,” said Christa Blatchford, Executive Director at the Joan Mitchell Foundation. “The 2023 cohort of Joan Mitchell Fellows again underscore the value of this approach, bringing together a group of artists with diverse practices, interests, and backgrounds, all of whom articulated, in their Fellowship applications, the impact that financial and professional support over time will have on their work and their lives. This commitment to extended engagement is also in line with the legacy of Joan Mitchell herself, who so often offered personal assistance to other artists, and whose directive for her foundation was to continue that approach of direct support for working artists.”

The 15 Fellows for 2023 are:

- **Ash Arder’s (Detroit, MI; b. 1988)** works include installations, sculptures, sounds, drawings, electronics, video, and performance—often mixed together, as in *Whoop House* (2022), a stage-like construction used to present jam sessions, poetry slams, and storytelling while demonstrating the value of solar energy. Arder plans to use the fellowship funds to secure expanded, long-term studio space and production equipment.
- **Raheleh Filsoofi (Nashville, TN; b. 1975)** creates immersive acoustic and melodic environments that explore the nature of clay and its ability to create unique sounds and

textures. Filsoofi is planning to expand her experimentation with clays from different locations in the United States, establishing a collective social geography. The artist noted that the fellowship would facilitate connections and dialogue with peers asking hard questions about representation and responsibility.

- **Nicholas Galanin's (Sitka, AK; b. 1979)** practice draws on connections to the land and Indigenous and non-Indigenous technologies and materials to confront contemporary culture. The fellowship will support Galanin's acquisition of high-quality materials and new technologies, as well as new studio space.
- **Jacqueline Kiyomi Gork (Los Angeles, CA; b. 1982)** creates sonic installations in which sound is manipulated with sculpture, multichannel sound systems, and digital processing to control where and how the sound is experienced. Gork plans to use the fellowship to explore better approaches to documentation, a critical component for the sustainability of a sound art practice that is difficult to capture.
- **Ana María Hernando (Niwot, CO; b. 1959)** is a multidisciplinary artist who paints, draws, uses words and sounds, and makes large-scale installations that often incorporate a variety of handmade fabric objects, focusing on the feminine and using empathy to question our preconceptions of the "other," their worth, and their value. The fellowship will support Hernando in expanding national and international outreach, securing long-term studio space, upgrading methods of documentation, and establishing a studio production team.
- **Mala Iqbal (Brooklyn, NY; b. 1973)** has created a series of paintings and drawings that are a visual representation of the recollections of family stories. Iqbal plans to use the fellowship to delve deeper into these stories—with research travel to relatives across the U.S., as well as in Lahore, Karachi, and Osnabruck—while also being able to expand the time invested in other projects such as printmaking and painting collaborations.
- **William Lamson's (Brooklyn, NY; b. 1977)** complex installation works explore the ecologies of living and non-living systems, on both a small and larger scale. Following the loss of Lamson's father in 2022, the artist indicated that the fellowship would support a period of reframing his artistic practice through more personal lenses of service and care, while awarding Lamson the financial security to take a sabbatical from adjunct teaching.
- **Kathy Liao (Kansas City, MO; b. 1984)** creates paintings and installations that document the fluidity with which absence informs presence, and seeks to capture how our memories of the past are entangled with the here and now. Currently also in training to be a mental healthcare provider, Liao's fellowship will provide crucial time and space to reflect and weave throughlines towards future artistic practice, alongside the aspiration to create more opportunities, support, and access to mental health resources for BIPOC creatives.
- **Anina Major (New York, NY; b. 1981)** draws on the ancient weaving practice of plaiting to create ceramic sculptures, having begun by employing the traditional styles from The Bahamas, her birthplace, and expanding the research to illuminate kinship connections across the Black diaspora that manifest through the act of making. Further

emphasizing the historical importance of weaving as a means of communication that can address issues of cultural erasure and preservation through archival engagement, Major's fellowship will support additional anthropological research, along with legacy planning and professional development opportunities.

- **Demond Melancon (New Orleans, LA; b. 1978)** works in the tradition of the Black Masking Culture of New Orleans. Using needle and thread to sew glass beads onto canvas, Melancon creates massive Suits and intricately detailed portraits that honor Black subjects historically excluded from the artistic canon while confronting stereotypical representations of Black identity. The fellowship will help Melancon amplify the impact of these Suits by expanding the array of presentation and networking opportunities across the U.S.
- **Javier Orfon (San Lorenzo, PR; b. 1989)** develops multi-media works—including drawings on found objects, experimental printmaking, sculptures with Antillean pre-Columbian pottery techniques, readymades, and performance-based installations—that are often centered on the changing landscape of the Caribbean. Orfon's fellowship will support the purchase of a telescope and other equipment upgrades to assist the artist in exploring the nocturnal aspects of Puerto Rican geography, including the threatened guabairo bird, and creating new sculptural ceramic installations.
- **Mikayla Patton (Pine Ridge, SD; b. 1991)** draws on recycled paper-making and earth elements to create sculptural objects that utilize the Lakota knowledge of being, adornment, and artistic methodologies, addressing themes of healing, growth, and renewal. Recognizing the underrepresentation of Indigenous voices in the art world, Patton plans to use the fellowship to take new risks in developing a robust body of work and seeking opportunities to bring that work to new audiences.
- **Naomi Safran-Hon (Brooklyn, NY; b. 1984)** began her artistic career in photography, before switching to painting—and now makes works that incorporate photography, painting, and alternative materials like cement, mixing the reality of the photo with the fiction of painting. The fellowship will support the acquisition of an oversized printer and a larger studio to accommodate a dedicated space for printing. Safran-Hon additionally anticipates that the five-year fellowship structure will allow her to cultivate new peer relationships for creative dialogue.
- **Sable Smith (New Jersey; b. 1986)** makes work that elucidates—and complicates—the viewer's understanding of prison and how society names, identifies, and locates violence. The fellowship will support Smith's plans to bring this work to audiences that are completely outside of the traditional art world, using the art to raise awareness of this facet of American society.
- **Jayoung Yoon (Beacon, NY; b. 1979)** draws upon the mind-matter phenomenon, exploring the relationship between memory, perception, and bodily sensations through work made from human hair—creating shimmering sculptures that evoke a sense of fragility, inviting viewers to contemplate on the ephemeral nature of our existence. Through the fellowship, Yoon plans to take frequent trips to Jeju Island to learn the designs for three types of traditional Korean horsehair hats, then utilize those techniques and patterns to create larger and more diverse forms.

The process for selecting the 2023 Joan Mitchell Fellowship recipients began in November 2022 with the selection of nominators from across the country—the group that makes recommendations to the Foundation about artists for Fellowship consideration. Of the final group of 82 nominators, finalized in February 2023, 60% identify as artists themselves and more than half were first-time participants in the Foundation’s processes. They come from 43 states and Puerto Rico, and reflect diversity across age and race/ethnicity, with a majority (72%) identifying as female. This broad group of nominators—part of the Foundation’s concerted efforts to ensure a dynamic and representative group from all corners of the country and all backgrounds and communities—produced a final group of applications from 148 artists, themselves a diverse group from 37 states and Puerto Rico.

Beginning in June 2023, a separate team of five jurors (supported by Foundation staff) began to review artist applications. The criteria for jurors in reviewing applications included: the artistic vision of each applicant; the commitment of the artist to an active practice; and potential impact of the award on the artist’s career and life. Of the 15 final Fellowship grantees, a strong majority identify as female and fall between the ages of 30 and 49. The cohort of artists is exceptionally diverse and inclusive of a broad representation of races and ethnicities, with artists identifying as Black or of African descent, Native American or Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and multi-racial, among other specific identities named.

“On behalf of the Foundation, I am excited to welcome this 2023 cohort,” said Solana Chehtman, the Foundation’s Director of Artist Programs. “Since we relaunched this grant program in 2021 as a five year process of support and engagement, we have had the opportunity—through in person convenings and virtual exchange sessions—to learn hand-in-hand with the artists we work with, about their needs, their opportunities, and how we can best support them. With the incorporation of these 15 artists, we look forward to continuing to build a strong and generous community, where artists with varying perspectives, at different points in their careers, can benefit from each others’ wide range of experiences and support each other.”

About the Joan Mitchell Foundation

The Joan Mitchell Foundation cultivates the study and appreciation of artist Joan Mitchell’s life and work, while fulfilling her wish to provide resources and opportunities for visual artists. As the chief steward of Joan Mitchell’s legacy, the Foundation manages a collection of Mitchell’s artwork and archives containing her personal papers, photographs, sketchbooks, and other historical materials. Fulfilling Mitchell’s mandate to “aid and assist” living artists, over the past 30 years the Foundation has evolved a range of initiatives that have directly supported more than 1,300 visual artists at varying stages of their careers. The Joan Mitchell Fellowship gives annual unrestricted awards of \$60,000 directly to artists, with funds distributed over a five-year period alongside flexible professional development and convenings that facilitate community building and peer learning. The New Orleans-based Joan Mitchell Center hosts residencies for national and local artists, as well as artist talks, open studio events, and other public programs

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that encourage dialogue and exchange with the local community. The Creating a Living Legacy (CALL) initiative provides free and essential resources to help artists of all ages organize, document, and manage their artworks and careers. Together, these programs actively engage with working artists as they develop and expand their practices. For more information, visit joanmitchellfoundation.org.

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