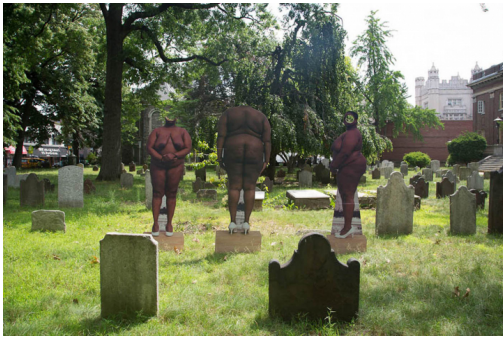


IN BRIEF

Ten Women, Ages 45 to 84, Receive \$25,000 “Anonymous Was a Woman” Grants

This year, Elia Alba, Nona Faustine, and Diane Simpson are among the recipients of the \$25,000 award.

Sarah Rose Sharp November 20, 2019



Nona Faustine, “From My Body I Will Make Monuments In Your Honor” (2014).
All images courtesy the artist and Anonymous Was A Woman.

It’s been observed that women struggle with (and celebrate!) feelings of invisibility past the age of 40. In a society dominated by a male gaze that favors younger and supposedly “less challenging” female subjects, female artists have their own set of obstacles when it comes to even being acknowledged for involvement in art movements and scenes that have generously lauded their male contemporaries.

Enter Anonymous Was A Woman, an organization dedicated to combatting this particular set of challenges and highlighting the achievements of women artists, over 40 years of age and at a significant juncture in their lives or careers, and supporting their careers through \$25,000 unrestricted grants.



Elia Alba, "La Joya (Yelanie Rodriguez)" (2019). C-print.

Though anonymous for years, artist [Susan Unterberg](#) recently revealed herself as founder and sole funder of [Anonymous Was a Woman](#), which has awarded over \$6 million to [240 women artists](#) over the last two decades. The grantees are nominated by a group of distinguished women curators, writers, critics, and artists. The award goes to 10 recipients a year and is given in recognition of an artist's accomplishments, artistic growth, originality, and potential.

Just announced, the [2019 cohort](#) is a diverse and exciting group, ranging in age from 45 to 84 years of age, and working across a terrific array of media: [Elia Alba](#) (57); [Marsha Cottrell](#) (55); [Torkwase Dyson](#) (46); [Heide Fasnacht](#) (68); [Nona Faustine](#); [Rhodessa Jones](#) (70); [Jennifer Wen Ma](#) (46); [Amie Siegel](#) (45); [Diane Simpson](#) (84); and [Karina Aguilera Skvirsky](#) (52).



80 minutes installation opera in one act. A woman in search of an unattainable ideal in a world activated by her voice. August 29, 31, 2019 MGM Cotai theatre, Macau, China. Performed by Qian Yi, John Holiday, Joshua Dennis, Joo Won Kang, Ao Li.

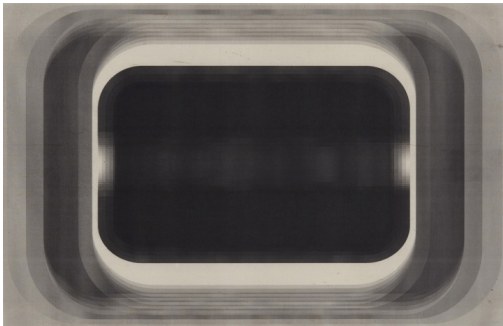


Rhodessa Jones, *The Medea Project* in BIRTHRIGHT? a performance, in collaboration with Planned Parenthood of Northern California. Photograph by David Wilson, courtesy the artist.

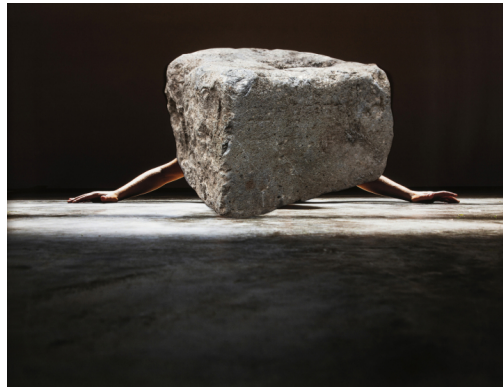


Heide Fasnacht, *Turbulence (red)*, 2019. Acrylic paint on manipulated photo, mounted on wood panel. Courtesy the artist.

“I am delighted to congratulate this year’s award recipients — a group of extraordinary artists working in diverse mediums and exploring some of the most pressing issues of contemporary life,” said Unterberg, in a press release accompanying the award announcement. “I founded Anonymous Was a Woman to fill a void that I witnessed personally: support for women artists in the middle stages of their careers. More than 20 years later, we continue to see data that reveals the delta between how both museums and the market regard male and female artists — which only galvanizes our mission and our commitment to celebrating the voices of women.”



Marsha Cottrell, *Aperture Series (40)*, 2016. Laser toner on paper. Courtesy the artist.



Karina Aguilera Skvirsky, “Ingapirca: Rock #9” (2019). Courtesy of the Artist and Ponce & Robles Gallery, Madrid SP.

While some people rightly chafe at the



Diane Simpson. Installation view, Diane Simpson, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 2015–2016. Photo credit: Charles Mayer.

symbolic annihilation of women in mass media, and others find liberation in the release from social pressure to work for male validation, it can be assumed that most artists appreciate recognition for their efforts, not to mention financial support for their continued artistic development. Congratulations to this year’s recipients, Susan Unterberg, everyone who goes out of their way to fight the cultural tendency to relegate women over 40 to the margins!

Editor’s note 11/21/19 3:21pm: We have removed the age of one of the awardees at their request.



Torkwase Dyson, Installation view of James Samuel Madison, 2018, Rhona Hoffman Gallery. Courtesy the artist.



Amie Siegel, The Noon Complex, 2016. Courtesy the artist.

MORE FROM HYPERALLERGIC