FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**2024 Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Awards have been announced.**

The Achievement Awards are awarded biennially to honor individuals and organizations that are enriching the visual arts of the state.

(West Bend, WI) Museum of Wisconsin Art (MOWA) announces the recipients of the 2024 Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Award (WVAAA). Recognizing significant contributions to the visual arts of the state, the Achievement Awards are presented biennially to individuals and organizations. The awards ceremony will be held on Sunday, April 14, 1:00–3:00 at the Museum of Wisconsin Art in West Bend.

The three founding organizations—the Museum of Wisconsin Art, the Wisconsin Visual Artists, and the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters—collaborate biennially to recognize exceptional educators, writers, visual artists, exhibitions, and advocates in our creative communities. A ten-person nominations committee convenes to review open nominations and select the recipients in seven categories.

**2024 Award Categories and the Honorees:**

**Legacy Awards**

Carol Emmons and Tory Folliard

**Educator Award (K–12)**

Daniel Klewer

**Educator Awards (College/University)**

Kristy Deetz

**Arts Writing Award**

Tom Lidtke and Annemarie Sawkins, for *A Creative Place: The History of Wisconsin Art*

**Exhibition Awards**

Portrait Society Gallery for *Art Against the Odds: Wisconsin Prison Art* (2023), co-curated by PSG Director Debra Brehmer and Gallery Manager, Paul Salsieder in collaboration with Wisconsin’s incarcerated artists

Museum of Wisconsin Art for *Legends of Drag: Portraits by Harry James Hanson and Devin Antheus* (2022), curated by Assistant Curator Ally Wilber in collaboration with artists Harry James Hanson, Devin Antheus, and America’s legendary drag queens

**Community Arts Advocate Award**

David Wells

**Emerging Artist Award**

Phoenix Brown

The 2024 nominations committee included Pat Frederick, Elizabeth Meissner-Gigstead, Amy Moorefield, Rafael Salas, Fred Stonehouse, Christine Styles, and Della Wells, as well as Jody Clowes, Ally Wilber, and Laurie Winters.

Recipient bios follow. Previous winners include Jack Damer, Freida High Wasikhongo Tesfagiorgis, Frank Juárez, Karin Wolf, Rae Minoka Skenandore (Yehsani>saks), Debra Brehmer, Leslie Vansen, and the John Michael Kohler Art Preserve.

**ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS CEREMONY**

Sunday, April 14, 2024 | 1:00—3:00

Awards at 2:00

*Open to the public, free to attend*

**SUPPORT**

The WVAAA is made possible through the generous support of the Museum of Wisconsin Art, all three chapters of the Wisconsin Visual Artists, and Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Art & Letters.

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**ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF WISCONSIN ART**

A vital cultural center, educational institution, an expanding network of ideas, the Museum of Wisconsin Art (MOWA) collects and interprets American art through the lens of a single state. Informed by dynamic initiatives and collaborations, MOWA is an innovative forum for contemporary artists, socially relevant exhibitions, lectures by artists and industry experts, and engaging classes and activities for all ages.

MOWA has two permanent venues—the West Bend “Mothership” and MOWA | DTN in downtown Milwaukee’s Saint Kate—The Arts Hotel—as well as two partnering community organizations that create access across the state. MOWA annually welcomes 200,000 visitors, making it a cultural destination for the art and artists of our time.

[wisconsinart.org](http://www.wisconsinart.org/)

[facebook.com/museumofwiart](http://www.facebook.com/museumofwiart)

[instragram.com/museumofwiart](http://www.instragram.com/museumofwiart)

[twitter.com/museumofwisconsinart](http://www.twitter.com/museumofwisconsinart)

[youtube.com/user/MuseumofWisconsinArt](http://www.youtube.com/user/MuseumofWisconsinArt)

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**2024 AWARDEE BIOS:**

**Devin Antheus | Exhibition Awards**

Devin Antheus is a floral stylist, spirit worker, and writer living in San Francisco. They are a devotee of the Goddess Flora, a founder of the Temple of Dionysos, and the Thiasos of the Flowering Branch. They teach classes on floral design, Mediterranean mystery traditions, and queer spiritualities. Their writing has appeared in *Vogue*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, the *New Inquiry*, and Co-Star Astrology Society. They are an editor-at-large for Contagion Press.

**Debra Brehmer | Exhibition Awards**

Debra Brehmer is the Gallery Director for the Portrait Society Gallery in Milwaukee. Brehmer is an art historian who has curated numerous exhibitions and written about art for various publications for 20 years. She regularly writes for the national art publication *Hyperallergic*. She was also the founder, publisher, and editor of *Art Muscle Magazine*.

**Phoenix Brown | Emerging Artist**

Phoenix S. Brown is an interdisciplinary artist and musician who lives and works in Milwaukee. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, she uses painting and drawing techniques to understand her personal narrative and inner power while subverting European ideals of nature, darkness, and figuration. Brown earned her B.F.A. from the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design with an Art History minor. She received a 2021 gener8tor Art grant and was an artist-in-residence at the Contemporary Arts Center (Cincinnati) in 2021 and at Yale Norfolk School of Art (Norfolk, CT) in 2018. Her work has been exhibited throughout the Midwest and beyond, including solo exhibitions at the Wright Museum of Art (Beloit, WI) and Trout Museum of Art (Appleton, WI). Her paintings have been presented at NADA Miami Art Fair (FL), Other Art Fair (Chicago), and Untitled Art Fair (Miami Beach, FL). Brown’s work can also be found in *New American Paintings*.

**Kristy Deetz | Educator Awards (College/University)**

Kristy Deetz is an Emerita Professor at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay whose extensive exhibition record includes national and international venues. The exhibition *FABRICation*, which Deetz co-curated with Reni Gower, traveled to museums, university galleries, and art centers between 2013 and 2017. She has received UW–Green Bay’s 2011 Founders Award for Excellence in Scholarship, the Southeastern College Art Conference’s 2016 Award for Excellence in Teaching, and a 2015 Silver Award from Graphis Design Annual in NY. Deetz’s paintings have been featured in *Encaustic Art in the Twenty-First Century*, *Encaustic Art: The Complete Guide to Creating Fine Art with Wax*, and *Full-Range Color Painting for the Beginner*. She frequently serves as a visiting artist and workshop leader, most recently as Erasmus Visiting Lecturer at the University of Kassel, Germany, Visiting Artist at the University of Florida-Gainesville, and Artist-in-Residence at The Burren College of Art in Ireland.

**Carol Emmons | Legacy Awards**

A Wisconsin native, Carol Emmons specializes in site-specific installations. She has exhibited at Chicago Cultural Center, Museum of Contemporary Art (Houston), Orange County Center for

Contemporary Art (California), SPACES (Cleveland), Raum 1 (Düsseldorf), Newhouse Center for

Contemporary Art (New York), Philadelphia Arts Alliance, Elba Gastatelier (Netherlands), Carnegie Arts

Center (Cincinnati), Milwaukee Art Museum, and Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Emmons has

had solo exhibitions in Wisconsin at the Madison Art Center, Walker's Point Center for the Arts, Museum of Wisconsin Art, James Watrous Gallery, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, and the Wisconsin Academy. Her awards include two Wisconsin Arts Board Fellowships, the Percent for Art commission (with architect Paul Emmons) for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's School of Architecture and Urban Planning, and residencies at Ragdale Foundation (Lake Forest, IL), the Center for 20th Century Studies at UW-Milwaukee, and Kohler Co.’s Arts/Industry program (Sheboygan, WI). She received her M.F.A. from UW-Milwaukee and is Professor Emerita at UW-Green Bay.

**Tory Folliard | Legacy Awards**

Tory Folliard is the founder and managing director of the Tory Folliard Gallery located in the Historic Third Ward of downtown Milwaukee. Established in 1988, the gallery specializes in contemporary art by the region's top artists. The gallery features paintings, drawings, sculpture, and photography with exhibitions changing each month. The legacy award recognizes Folliard for the continuous operation of the Tory Folliard Gallery, which celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2023, the longest running gallery in Wisconsin. The gallery has represented such important artists as Craig Blietz, Jeremy Popelka, Fred Stonehouse, Stephanie Trenchard, and Tom Uttech.

**Harry James Hanson | Exhibition Awards**

Harry James Hanson is an artist, creative director, and lifelong drag performer based in Brooklyn. Their work spans the fine art, commercial, and editorial worlds, driven by a desire to tell beautiful stories and collaborate with other artists. Hanson’s photography has been published in the *New York Times*, *Vogue*, *Harper’s* *Bazaar*, *Dazed*, *PAPER*, *New York* magazine, and *Rolling Stone*.

**Daniel Klewer | Educator Award (K-12)**

Daniel Klewer was born and raised in Milwaukee and majored in art at UW–Green Bay. He also earned a Master of Arts in Visual Studies from Cardinal Stritch University. Currently based in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Klewer is inspired by the compositions and colors in the nature around him. Best known for his unique painting style, Klewer implements a non-traditional paint application process where the spontaneity of the material is allowed to influence the direction of the work. Klewer teaches drawing and painting at Bay Port High School in Green Bay. The educator award recognizes Klewer for his exceptional contributions as a youth educator.

**Tom Lidtke | Arts Writing Award**

Tom Lidtke began his career teaching K-12 studio art classes in Wisconsin and South Australia. Lidtke attended the University of Wisconsin–Madison, receiving his undergraduate in Art History. In 1982, he was hired as an Assistant Director at the West Bend Gallery of Fine Arts (later known as the Museum of Wisconsin Art). Shortly thereafter he became the museum’s director and held that position for three decades, retiring upon the completion of MOWA’s new building in 2013. A practicing artist, Lidtke’s bronze sculptures and earthworks are in several private, corporate, and museum collections, including the Milwaukee Art Museum. After retirement, Lidtke was commissioned by the Cedarburg Art Museum to undertake an ambitious five-year project to produce a comprehensive book of Wisconsin’s art history. Co-authored by Annemarie Sawkins,*A Creative Place: The History of Wisconsin Art* was

published in 2021 and is considered the most important single publication on the history of Wisconsin Art.

**Annemarie Sawkins | Arts Writing Award**

Annemarie Sawkins is a Milwaukee-based curator, art historian, and recent co-author of *A Creative Place: The History of Wisconsin Art* (2021) and *In the Park with Olmsted: A Vision for Milwaukee* (2022). As an independent curator, she has organized several exhibitions, including *Afghan War Rugs: The Modern Art of Central Asia*, *On the Nature of Wisconsin*, *Art Japan: 2021-1921*, *More on Less: The History of Burlesque in America*, and *Modern Rookwood*, among others. From 1999 to 2012 she was a curator at the Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University in Milwaukee. Sawkins received her M.A. and Ph.D. from McGill University in Montreal.

**Paul Salsieder | Exhibition Awards**

Paul Salsieder is a seasoned gallerist and artist, holding a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art and Art History from Carthage College. Salsieder co-curated *Art Against the Odds: Wisconsin Prison* *Art* (2023) with Portrait Society Gallery Director Deb Brehmer. Salsieder maintains an active independent art practice, specializing in murals, large paintings, and public artworks.

**David Wells | Community Arts Advocate Award**

David Wells is the Gallery Director at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin. Wells has overseen the art gallery exhibition program and college collections since August 2013. He previously served as Executive Director of Edenfred, the creative residency program of the Terry Family Foundation. While in the role, Wells developed the arts residency program and a statewide forum for art curators, Curators Conversations. Wells also serves as Director of Ernest Hüpeden's Painted Forest and Study Center, Edgewood College’s restored folk art site in Valton, Wisconsin. Wells has pursued interdisciplinary interests as an exhibiting artist, independent curator, and arts administrator for over 30 years. Wells currently serves as an advisor to the James Watrous Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences Arts & Letters. He previously served on the Madison Cultural Plan Steering Committee, and is a past Board President of the Wormfarm Institute in Reedsburg, Wisconsin.

**Ally Wilber | Exhibition Awards**

Ally Wilber is a Wisconsin artist, writer, and curator who specializes in the surrealist technique of *fumage*, or fire painting. Wilber currently works as Executive Director of the Wisconsin Visual Artists (WVA), a nonprofit that supports and encourages artists working statewide. In her previous role as Assistant Curator for the Museum of Wisconsin Art, Wilber was responsible for large-scale, public art events and contemporary art exhibitions. Wilber’s first curatorial project for MOWA was *Legends of Drag*, and the related drag show event "Legends Live," which was named Milwaukee's best event in 2022. The exhibition and drag show helped foster a platform for the LGBTQ+ community in the visual arts. Wilber is passionate about providing support and opportunities for artists throughout the state.