Ford Foundation President Darren Walker (center) presented a Skowhegan award honoring the Studio Museum in Black British Painters Hurvin Anderson and Lubaina Himid Make Turner Prize Shortlist

In Response to Exponential Increase in Market Demand, Sotheby’s Announces Its First-Ever Contemporary African Art Sale

AIA Recognizes Legacy of African American Architect Paul R. Williams with Gold Medal Awarded Nearly 40 Years After His Death

ONE SOUGHT AFTER RESIDENCY PROGRAM recognized another this week. Skowhegan paid tribute to the Studio Museum in Harlem’s Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program, presenting the museum with its Governors’ Award for Outstanding Service to Artists. Thelma Golden, director and chief curator of the museum, and artist William T. Williams, who envisioned the program, accepted the award together.

For 47 years, the Studio Museum has identified and supported promising emerging artists of African and Latino descent. The 11-month AIR program has annually provided three artists with studio space, a stipend, and an exhibition. Alumni of the program are among the most critically acclaimed artists working today, including Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Chakaia Booker, David Hammons, Simone Leigh, Kerry James Marshall, Julie Mehretu, Wangechi Mutu, Mickalene Thomas, and Kehinde Wiley.

A painting by Akunyili Crosby Marshall recently sold at auction for more than $3 million, an artist’s record. Marshall’s 35-year survey, “Mastry,” is on view at MOCA Los Angeles through July 3. Traveling to seven venues, Kehinde Wiley’s “A New Republic” exhibition is currently at the Toledo Museum of Art.

SKOWHEGAN IS A NINE-WEEK SUMMER RESIDENCY that welcomes visual artists to an intensive program offering instruction and critique on a 350-acre farm in Maine. The Studio Museum’s AIR program was celebrated at Skowhegan’s annual awards dinner at The Plaza in New York.

Two additional awards were presented. Artist Jack Whitten received the Skowhegan Medal for Painting (in response to exponential increase in market demand, Sotheby’s announces its first-ever contemporary African art sale. From London to New York, Whitney Biennial artist Henry Taylor is having a major art world moment. Where my girls at? 20 black female artists with solo exhibitions on view this fall. Njideka Akunyili Crosby painting sells for record $3.1 million at Christie’s. Nearly three times her previous high mark.

APRIL EXHIBITIONS: MARK BRADFORD PAYS HOMAGE TO CLYFFORD STILL, PLUS ‘BLACK RADICAL WOMEN,’ RADCLIFFE BAILEY, DEANA LAWSON, NARI WARD, TERRY ADKINS, AND MORE.

BLACK RADICAL WOMEN: THIS SPRING, SEVERAL GROUP SHOWS BRING TOGETHER WORKS BY AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE ARTISTS.

absentia). Earlier this month, Whitten presented a new series of abstractionist paintings at Hauser & Wirth in New York. The Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Award for Outstanding Patronage of the Arts was given to The Pollock-Krasner Foundation and its Chairman and CEO Charles C. Bergman.

More than 500 people attended the fundraiser, which brought in more than $900,000—a record according to Skowhegan. The funds raised help offset the cost of attendance for artists participating in the residency program.

Skowhegan recognized artist William T. Williams for envisioning the Studio Museum in Harlem’s prestigious artist-in-residence program. | Photo by Christian Grattan/Skowhegan via Skowhegan

WILLIAMS IS CONNECTED to both the Studio Museum and Skowhegan. He attended the Maine residency as a student in 1965 and returned for several years as a faculty member (1971, 1974, 1978, and 1979). The artist, who splits his time between New York and Connecticut, joined Michael Rosenfeld Gallery last year. It had been four decades since he was represented by a gallery. “William T. Williams: Things Unknown Paintings, 1968-2017,” his first exhibition with the gallery, is currently on view through June 3. An accompanying catalog is soon-to-be-published.

The forthcoming volume includes an interview with the artist conducted by Courtney J. Martin. “To me, painting is a way of marking time; it gives meaning to my life. It is a way of trying to communicate. I live. I existed. I created. I think painting has to be self-validating. The process of being an artist has to be self-validating. And it took time for me to get to that. Withdrawing from the art world for a long time was, in a sense, the best thing that I could have done as an artist,” Williams said.

After nearly half a century, one of the Studio Museum in Harlem’s founding initiatives—the residency program Williams conceived—continues to thrive. Recent alum Jordan Casteel (2015-16) joined Casey Kaplan Gallery and is presenting “Jordan Casteel: Harlem Notes,” a solo exhibition at the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American

Arts + Culture in Charlotte, N.C. The program’s current cohort features artists Autumn Knight, Julia Phillips, and Andy Robert. CT

BOOKSHELF
A forthcoming catalog is being published to complement William T. Williams’s exhibition at Michael Rosenfeld Gallery. Meanwhile, several publications document the Studio Museum in Harlem’s collection and support of artists. In addition to its residency program, the museum mounts periodic group shows, including “Freestyle,” “Frequency,” “Flow,” and “Fore,” promoting the work of emerging artists. Also consider, “The Studio Museum in Harlem: 25 years of African-American Art” and Re: Collection – Selected Works from The Studio Museum in Harlem.

NJIDEKA AKUNYILI CROSBY PAINTING SELLS FOR RECORD $3.1 MILLION AT CHRISTIE’S, NEARLY THREE TIMES HER PREVIOUS HIGH MARK

BLACK WOMEN IN THE ART WORLD, TAKING STOCK ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

BACKSTORY: HALF A CENTURY AGO, A CALIFORNIA COLLEGE STUDENT VISITED ALMA THOMAS IN WASHINGTON AND BOUGHT A MAJOR PAINTING

From left, Artist Whitfield Lovell, Barbara Lapcek, Petah Coyne, and artist Fred Wilson. | Photo by Benjamin Lozovsky/BFA.com via Skowhegan
From left, Artists Shaun Leonardo and Leonardo Drew greet one another. | Photo by Benjamin Lozovsky/BFA.com via Skowhegan

‘I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO’ LACES JAMES BALDWIN'S PRESCIENT WORDS WITH POTENT IMAGES INCLUDING SEGREGATION-ERA PHOTOGRAPHS BY GORDON PARKS

BACKSTORY: NINA CHANEL ABNEY REVISITS HER FIRST MAJOR PAINTING, ‘CLASS OF 2007’

CULTURE TYPE: THE YEAR IN BLACK ART 2016

CULTURE TYPE PICKS: THE 12 BEST BLACK ART BOOKS OF 2016