



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Bainbridge Island Museum of Art Announces BRAVA Awards is now an Annual Program, Doubling Support for Artists**

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, Wash.** – The Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA) is proud to announce that its flagship awards program, the **BRAVA Awards (BIMA Recognizes Achievement in the Visual Arts)**, is now an annual program beginning in 2026. This expansion from a biennial to an annual cycle means that twice as many artists will receive one of the four unrestricted \$15,000 cash prizes each year, rather than every two years. At \$60,000 of unrestricted support per year, BRAVA is now one of the largest artist awards of its kind in the Northwest.

Since its launch, the BRAVA Awards have been a cornerstone of BIMA's commitment to directly supporting contemporary artists, craftspeople, and makers. By moving to an annual cycle, the museum significantly increases the reach and immediacy of its impact, responding to the growing need for meaningful, sustained support for artists.

“BRAVA was created to make a tangible difference in artists’ lives with an unrestricted gift,” said Sheila Hughes, Executive Director of Bainbridge Island Museum of Art. “Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of a special donor who stepped forward to expand this program, we are now able to recognize four deserving artists every year and give meaningful, material support to assist them in the creation of their exceptional and compelling work. Our hope is that the award serves to inspire these artists, letting them know how valued and appreciated they are, and how much our world needs their voices to resonate.”

Inspired by the values and vision of museum founder Cynthia Sears, the BRAVA Awards honor artists whose work demonstrates artistic excellence, technical mastery, and significant contribution to the arts. Awardees are selected by independent jury committees composed of artists, educators, and leaders in the arts sector, ensuring a rigorous and equitable selection process.

Each year, one artist will be selected in each of the following four categories:

- Native American & First Nations Artist Award (Salish Sea Region)
- Artist's Books Artist Award (National)
- Emerging Artist Award (Puget Sound Region)
- Special Choice Award: Ceramics Artist (category varies by year)

Each BRAVA awardee receives an unrestricted \$15,000 cash prize, along with professional recognition through museum promotions, a short video profile, and an award ceremony. The program is supported by a dedicated reserve established through a restricted gift to the museum and maintained by BIMA, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Applications for the next cycle of BRAVA Awards will open on **April 1, 2026**. Full details, including eligibility and application guidelines, are available at <https://www.biartmuseum.org/the-brava-awards/>.

Learn more about past BRAVA Award recipients:

[2023 - Kamari Bright, Julie Chen, Julie Paschkis, Betty Pasco](#)

[2025 - Sarah Bryant, Dan Friday, Yolanda Galery, Nikki McClure](#)

IMAGES:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Vx0pE9kRKZkK7CD9Q34ER22aqfK4lbfF?usp=sharing>

#### **About Bainbridge Island Museum of Art:**

Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA) BIMA creates a welcoming space and inspiring platform for lively public engagement and appreciation of the contemporary art and craft of the Puget Sound region and its international collection of Artists' Books. The art museum exhibits, interprets, preserves, collects, and promotes works of proven cultural value as well as new works by emerging artists and craftspeople.

The art museum is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM. Free admission. BIMA is located in beautiful downtown Bainbridge Island, at the corner of Hwy 305 and Winslow Way, just steps away from the ferry terminal, and with easy access via public transportation or by car from the Kitsap Peninsula. <https://www.biartmuseum.org/>

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