



museum of arts and design

**MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN ANNOUNCES
CHARISSE PEARLINA WESTON AS WINNER OF 2021 BURKE PRIZE**

The Brooklyn-based conceptual artist engages with various materials and methodologies, including glass, photography, installation, sound, and poetry, to convey the precarity of Black life in contemporary America

Story Makers: Burke Prize 2021 Online Exhibition Features Works of Weston and Fifteen Finalists



I AM MOORED ALONG THE SOFT SHORED UNITY OF IMPATIENT RUIN, 2021. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

NEW YORK, NY (October 21, 2021) – The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) is proud to announce Charisse Pearlina Weston as the winner of the 2021 Burke Prize. Established in 2018, the Museum’s biennial prize honoring excellence in contemporary craft is named for craft collectors Marian and Russell Burke. It awards an unrestricted \$50,000 to an artist aged 45 or under working in the United States, whose highly accomplished work is conceptually rigorous, relevant, and pushes the boundaries of materials and creative process. The work of Weston and her fellow finalists are the focus of a new interactive exhibition, *Story Makers: Burke Prize 2021*, created for an online world and now open for exploration at madmuseum.org/burkeprize.

“The MAD Burke Prize is a platform for artists using the expressiveness of craft to confront some of the most relevant topics of the day, from the social to the political to the biographical,” said Elissa Auther, MAD’s Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs and William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator. “Charisse Pearlina Weston exploits the aesthetic allure of glass that has long attracted

artists and transforms it into commentary. The way she manipulates the material and explores its contradictions sets a new standard for artists working in the medium today."

MAD Trustee Marian Burke, who endowed the prize with her husband, Russell, said: "Rusty and I congratulate Charisse on this outstanding achievement. We also congratulate her fellow finalists. These exemplary artists push boundaries and show us how contemporary art continues to benefit from the early achievements of the studio craft movement."

Born in Houston, Texas, and based in Brooklyn, Weston is a conceptual artist and writer whose practice is grounded in profound material and symbolic investigations of the intimacies and interiors of Black life. Formal explorations of glass, poetic texts, abstraction, sound, video, and photography articulate the artist's concerns with the complexities and consequences of the intimacy of violence. Her glass installations and sculpture not only confront the everyday risk of anti-Black violence, but also gesture toward resistance and survival.

"I am elated to receive the Burke Prize this year, and it comes at a critical point in my career when an affirmation of this magnitude is necessary for the ambitious future I envision for my work," said Weston. "I deeply admire the work of the two prior winners of this prestigious award [Cannupa Hanska Luger (2018) and Indira Allegra (2019)], so to now be amongst them in receiving this honor enriches my resolve to do the work I do. This award will provide invaluable support for my practice as I push the boundaries of its material investigations, its intimate engagement with the politics that enclose Black space, and its conceptual rigor. I am grateful beyond words."

Weston's piece, "Untitled (lean/wire fuses)," 2021, is on view through February 13, 2022, in MAD's lobby. In this ongoing body of work, Weston explores the symbolic and material uses of glass in contemporary architecture and surveillance technology; considering how this seemingly neutral material can signify intimacy, freedom, or power.

A jury of professionals in the field of art, craft, and design selected Weston as the winner from hundreds of submissions. The 2021 jurors are Indira Allegra, artist and 2019 Burke Prize winner; Andrew Gardner, Curatorial Assistant in Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art; and Gabriel de Guzman, Director of Arts and Chief Curator at Wave Hill.

"Charisse Pearlina Weston is a worthy recipient of MAD's 2021 Burke Prize," said Gardner. "Her work challenges the status quo and offers a new way of looking at and thinking about craft. An artist who deftly navigates the complexity of the present moment and hints at future possibilities, Weston will undoubtedly help to steer the conversation about what craft is and what it can be now and into the future."

MAD is currently featuring works by Weston and her fellow finalists in the online exhibition *Story Makers: Burke Prize 2021*. Through interviews, photography, video, and augmented reality (AR), each Burke Prize artist's own story is shared, further expanding our understanding of craft and the extraordinary artists propelling the field into bold, experimental territory.

The sixteen finalists, including Weston, were selected for their impressive bodies of work, innovative use of materials, and their unique perspective on the role of craft today. The other 15 Burke Prize finalists are:

Melissa Cody, Long Beach, CA

Rachelle Dang, Brooklyn, NY

Daniel Fishkin, Brooklyn, NY

Coulter Fussell, Water Valley, MS

Nicki Green, San Francisco, CA

Sabrina Gschwandtner, Los Angeles, CA

Ilana Harris-Babou, Brooklyn, NY

Hugh Hayden, Brooklyn, NY

Diane Meyer, Los Angeles, CA

Jovencio de la Paz, Eugene, OR

Macon Reed, Kingston, NY

Erin M. Riley, Brooklyn, NY

LJ Roberts, Brooklyn, NY

Clarissa Tossin, Los Angeles, CA

Maryam Yousif, San Francisco, CA

To experience *Story Makers: Burke Prize 2021* through March 20, 2022, visit: madmuseum.org/burkeprize.

Story Makers: Burke Prize 2021 is curated by MAD Assistant Curator Angelik Vizcarrondo-Laboy with support from Curatorial Assistant Alida Jekabson.

The Museum of Arts and Design is grateful for the generosity of Marian and Russell Burke for making possible the 2021 Burke Prize.

Charisse Pearlina Weston

United States, born 1988; lives in Brooklyn, New York

Charisse Pearlina Weston's creative work emerges from deep material investigations of poetics and the autobiographical. She utilizes glass to conceptually embody both the everyday risk of anti-Black violence and the precocity and malleability of Blackness in the face of this violence. Melding glass sculptures and photography with poetic fragments of Black experience, her work examines the interstices of Black interiors and intimacies. She reuses and re-articulates materials from past installations to formulate the next to represent both repetition as a symbol of Black cultural production and its reliance on an order of temporal engagement in which the second time encodes an emergent originality. Weston received her MFA from the University of California-Irvine, an MSc from the University of Edinburgh, a BA from the University of North Texas, and completed the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Program. Recent exhibitions include solo exhibitions at Abrons Art Center and Recess (forthcoming), as well as group shows at the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, and ArtPace, San Antonio (forthcoming).

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) champions contemporary makers across creative fields and presents the work of artists, designers, and artisans who apply the highest level of ingenuity and skill. Since the Museum's founding in 1956 by philanthropist and visionary Aileen Osborn Webb, MAD has celebrated all facets of making and the creative processes by which materials are transformed, from traditional techniques to cutting-edge technologies. Today, the Museum's curatorial program builds upon a rich history of exhibitions that emphasize a cross-disciplinary approach to art and design, and reveals the workmanship behind the objects and environments

that shape our everyday lives. MAD provides an international platform for practitioners who are influencing the direction of cultural production and driving twenty-first-century innovation, and fosters a participatory setting for visitors to have direct encounters with skilled making and compelling works of art and design. For more information, visit madmuseum.org.

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