

Media Contacts:

Anne Mannix, amannix@artbma.org

Tarun Bhatnagar, tbatnagar@artbma.org

Sarah Pedroni, spedroni@artbma.org

443-573-1870

THE BMA PRESENTS BAKER ARTIST AWARDS 2009 INAUGURAL EXHIBITION OF WINNERS

BALTIMORE, MD (April 22, 2009)—The Baltimore Museum of Art celebrates the 10 inaugural winners of the Baker Artist Awards with an exhibition of sculpture, photography, drawings, and multimedia presentations displayed in three galleries of the Museum’s West Wing of Contemporary Art. On view April 29 through June 28, 2009, **Baker Artist Awards 2009** features 28 works of art from six visual artists and video footage of four music or dance performance artists. The artists were selected from among 656 nominees on the BakerArtistAwards.org web site in the first competition of its kind to incorporate public voting through an online forum. More than 35,000 visitors from 50 states and 118 countries viewed the work and had an opportunity to vote for their favorite artists.

“The Baker Artist Awards were an overwhelming success—from the number of artists who entered, to the public response, to the formal exhibition of award winners,” said Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance Executive Director Nancy Haragan. “It illustrates the importance of art to the people of Baltimore, and the success that artists can achieve by being part of this rich community.”

Artists John Ruppert and Hadieh Shafie and jazz musician Carl Grubbs each received a \$25,000 Mary Sawyers Baker Prize determined by a multidiscipline jury. Highlights of their work on view at the BMA include a dramatic display of five sculptures by Ruppert, six paintings and 12 works on paper by Shafie, and a DVD of Grubbs in performance. These works are presented along with visual art and performance examples by Baltimore’s Choice award winners Becky Alprin, Milana Braslavsky, Sarah House, Adam Hopkins, Rob Levit, Jim Lucio, and Vincent E. Thomas, each of whom was selected by popular vote to receive \$1,000.

“It was thrilling to see artists in this community achieve worldwide recognition through this innovative online competition,” said BMA Director Doreen Bolger. “The BMA is delighted to offer everyone the opportunity to experience firsthand the work of these talented artists.”

2009 MARY SAWYERS BAKER PRIZE WINNERS

Carl Grubbs

A world-touring jazz musician, composer, educator, and recording artist, saxophonist Grubbs cut his chops with jazz legend John Coltrane and was close to many of the history-making jazz musicians of the 50s and 60s. He is also featured at the BMA Jazz in the Sculpture Garden concert on July 25.

John Ruppert

Ruppert creates wondrous sculptures inspired by his early memories of living in Amman, Jordan and participating in archeological digs. He also presides over the Art Department at the University of Maryland College Park.

Hadieh Shafie

An Iranian-born artist who immigrated to the United States in 1983, Shafie’s mesmerizing images explore the temporary nature of memory, history, and the intersection of personal experiences related to the Iranian diaspora.

2009 BALTIMORE'S CHOICE PRIZE WINNERS

Becky Alprin - visual artist

Milana Braslavsky - photographer

Sarah House - visual artist

Adam Hopkins - musician and composer

Rob Levit - musician and painter

Jim Lucio - photographer

Vincent Thomas - dancer and choreographer

BAKER ARTIST AWARDS

The Baker Artist Awards was established by the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund to recognize individual artists of all disciplines who live and work in Baltimore City and the five surrounding counties. Mary Sawyers Baker established the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund in 1964 to honor her husband, a founding partner in Baker Watts, a Baltimore investment banking firm. In 2007, the Fund narrowed its philanthropic mission to focus on arts and culture. In 2008, the fund's Board of Governors honored its founder, Ms. Baker, by establishing the Baker Artist Awards. The annual awards provide unconditional financial support for emerging and well established artists, signifying to regional, national, and international communities that Baltimore values its artists and rewards their work.

The submissions of the prize winners and all of the nominees may be viewed at BakerArtistAwards.org.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914, the BMA's outstanding collection encompasses 90,000 works of art, including the largest and most significant holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world, as well as masterpieces by Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne, and Vincent van Gogh. An expanding collection of contemporary art features iconic post-1960 works by Andy Warhol and Sol LeWitt, as well as exciting acquisitions by artists such as Kara Walker and Olafur Eliasson. The BMA is also recognized for an internationally acclaimed collection of prints, drawings, and photographs from the 15th-century to the present; grand European painting and sculpture from Old Masters to the 19th-century; distinguished American painting, sculpture, and decorative arts and Maryland period rooms; one of the most important African collections in the country, and notable examples of Asian, ancient American, and Pacific Islands art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free; special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. (except major holidays). The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31st Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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