

Alison Saar Receives the 2025 David C. Driskell Prize in African American Art

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The High Museum of Art in Atlanta has announced Alison Saar as the 2025 recipient of the David C. Driskell Prize in African American Art and Art History. Saar is the 20th recipient of the annual award, and is recognized for her significant contributions to visual arts that honor and center African American experiences. Saar will receive \$50,000 in unrestricted funds to use toward the furthering of her artistic practice, and will be celebrated at the Driskell Prize Gala at the High on Saturday, September 20, 2025.

“I am honored to have been chosen as the 2025 recipient of the David C. Driskell Prize,” said Saar. “At a time when many of the civil rights milestones achieved by previous generations—by our mothers and grandmothers—are being threatened or dismantled, the Driskell Prize empowers Black artists and art historians to push back. When our art is removed from museum exhibitions or our shows are canceled, this prize offers not only validation, but also the support to continue making work that is courageous and truthful work that is often stifled by the limitations of mainstream institutions.”

Established by the High Museum of Art in 2005, the David C. Driskell Prize recognizes field-defining contributions to African American art by some of the leading scholars and artists from around the country. The prize is named in honor of the late artist and scholar David C. Driskell, and is the first in the country to recognize the importance of African American art. Over its 20-year history, the Driskell Prize has recognized artists including Ebony G. Patterson (2023), Amy Sherald (2018), Mark Bradford (2016), and Rashid Johnson (2012).

Saar was chosen from a national pool of Driskell Prize nominations by review committee members assembled by the High: artist and 2006 Driskell Prize recipient Willie Cole; Dr. Kellie Jones (2005 Driskell Prize recipient and professor in art history and archaeology and the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University); and two High Museum of Art curators, Kevin W. Tucker (chief curator) and Maria L. Kelly (assistant curator of photography).



Alison Saar at Arion Press. Photo by Nicholas Lea Bruno, 2024.



Alison Saar with *Salon*. Photo by Henri Garat, City of Paris, 2024.

About Alison Saar

Los Angeles-based artist Alison Saar was born and raised in Laurel Canyon, California in an artistic family. After receiving her B.A. (1978) in studio art and art history from Scripps College, Saar went on to earn her MFA (1981) from Otis-Parsons Institute (now Otis College of Art and Design). Saar's rich body of work—primarily multimedia sculpture, installation, and works on paper—utilizes layered references to history, literature, and mythology to recount stories about Black life past and present.

At the beginning of her career, Saar was selected as a fellow of the studio program at The Studio Museum in Harlem (1982-3). She has received three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1984, 1985 and 1988), and was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1989, the Flintridge Foundation Award for Visual Artists in 2000, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in 1998 and the Joan Mitchell Artist in Residence in 2013. In 2012, the United States Artists Program named Saar one of 50 USA fellows.

Last year, Saar was selected by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the City of Paris to produce *Salon*, a sculpture permanently placed in the French capital to honor the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024. Other recent commissions include the monumental *Soul Service Station* at Desert X (Coachella Valley, CA), *Tree Souls* for the Equal Justice Initiative's Freedom Monument Sculpture Park (Montgomery, AL), *Little Big Sister* at the Joslyn Museum of Art (Omaha, NE), and *Bearing Witness* at Destination Crenshaw (Los Angeles, CA). Her work has been featured in hundreds of solo and group exhibitions, and can be found in the prestigious private and public collections worldwide including that of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) (Los Angeles, CA), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY), National Gallery of Australia (Canberra, Australia), Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington D.C.), Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY), the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation (Portland, OR), among many others.

Alison Saar is represented by L.A. Louver.