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*On behalf of Tacoma Art Museum*

## **Tacoma's Kristina Batiste named 2023 Awardee of The Current, An Artist Award**

**TACOMA, WA (November 8, 2023)** – Kristina Batiste has been announced as the 2023 awardee of The Current, An Artist Award, at Tacoma Art Museum.

The Current, An Artist Award establishes an annual, unrestricted award providing financial and institutional support to a Black artist living and working in the Tacoma area.

Batiste's work focuses on functional pottery and sculpture.

As the awardee, Batiste will receive a \$15,000 unrestricted gift.

Additionally, she has the option of receiving available institutional resources from TAM. This dual investment champions the awardee directly, providing resources and strengthening networks that make creating art easier for Black artists.

The Current, An Artist Award is designed and carried out by Victoria Miles, Artist Award Manager at TAM. The museum plans to open an exhibition celebrating The Current, An Artist Award in June 2024.

The award selection was made by Final Juror Jas Keimig, an arts writer and critic based in Seattle.

“All artists engage with the ideas of form and design — but a potter must also think about functionality, the way their objects fit in with our daily lives,” Keimig said. “Tacoma potter Kristina Batiste forges new paths in that respect, crafting her exquisite, minimalist work in such a way that makes the viewer think about how we imbue our own histories into the objects we use to eat, drink, and entertain.

“Clay holds memory, as Kristina likes to say,” Keimig noted. Drawing from the rich tradition of African and Black American potters, Batiste furthers the lineage through her work that conscientiously references the lived experiences of African diasporic peoples. In the form of water jars, abstracted oyster shell-shaped sharing bowls, and cups as



Kristina Batiste

protest ware, Batiste meditates on the meanings of Juneteenth, Black Lives Matter, and the importance of ceremony.

The artist references the ideas of diaspora not only through design but in the act of creating batches of pottery. While every piece is shaped by her own hand and fired alongside one another in the same kiln, they live in different homes and businesses, generating their own uses, meanings, and rituals.

“Batiste’s work underlines our interconnectedness and how the objects we surround ourselves with speak to us through their shape, material, interactions with light, and shadow. All we must do is simply pay attention,” Keimig said.

Batiste was one of three nominees for The Current, An Artist Award. She, Kellie Richardson, and Le’Ecia Farmer were selected by three regional nominators: Anida Youe Ali, Trenton Quioco, and Berette Macaulay. All three nominators are artists and art administrators with expertise in the visual arts from across Washington state. Each nominator was asked to propose the name of a Black Tacoma artist whose work demonstrates excellence in execution.

“Thank you to this year’s nominators for their thoughtful selection of nominees,” said Artist Award Manager Victoria Miles. “Batiste, Richardson, and Farmer are amazing artists, with extraordinary talent and vision. Each artist uniquely represents the qualities and values of The Current, An Artist Award through their spirit and artistic practice.”

### **Meet The Current, An Artist Award 2023 Awardee**

Kristina Batiste is a minimalist potter and ceramic artist.

Prior to ceramics she worked as a writer and editor, in graphic design, and higher education, and is currently a part-time librarian. The through line of her career has been a focus on distilling information into simple, memorable forms and ruthless editing. Age, gender, and experience inform her practice, and inspirations include modernist art and architecture, literature, and nature. She loves a line, and will someday pick a favorite between porcelain, red, brown, buff, and black clay.

Batiste has been featured in “Black American Ceramic Artists” published by Schiffer, an article in Ceramics Monthly, and was the subject of a segment in Hulu’s “Your Attention Please” documentary series. She is also the co-founder of the Tacoma Pottery Salon, a mostly monthly gathering of potters.

Learn more about Batiste and her work at [www.juniper-clay.com](http://www.juniper-clay.com)

### **Meet the final juror**

Jas Keimig is a writer and critic based in Seattle. They previously worked on staff at The Stranger, covering visual art, film, music, and stickers. Their work has also appeared in

Crosscut, South Seattle Emerald, Variable West, The Seattle Times, i-D, Netflix, and The Ticket. They co-write Unstreamable for Scarecrow Video, a column and screening series highlighting films you can't find on streaming services.

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### **Visit Tacoma Art Museum**

Wednesday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m.–8 p.m., free admission 5 p.m.–8 p.m.

Friday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Closed Monday and Tuesday

**Contact:** 253-272-4258 / [www.tacomaartmuseum.org](http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org)

### **About Tacoma Art Museum**

Celebrating over 85 years, Tacoma Art Museum is the leading resource for art of the Pacific Northwest and greater western region. TAM's mission is to transform our communities by sharing art that inspires broader perspectives and cultivates a compassionate future. TAM's collection contains more than 5,300 works, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and broader western region. The collection includes the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly on permanent view; the most significant collection of studio art jewelry by Northwest artists; key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art; and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. TAM is in the heart of Tacoma's vibrant Museum District, which consists of six museums, including the Museum of Glass, a leader and frequent partner.