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## Finalists Selected for 2009 Betty Bowen Award

*Winner of the Seattle Art Museum's 31st Annual Betty Bowen Award to be formally announced at an award ceremony Friday, October 23.*

**SEATTLE, AUGUST 26, 2009** – The Betty Bowen Committee, chaired by Gary Glant, announces the five artists selected as finalists for this year's Betty Bowen Award. The Betty Bowen Committee reviewed 494 applications from visual artists residing in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. One of this year's finalists will receive a cash prize in the amount of \$15,000 and will have their work displayed at SAM Downtown beginning on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. One finalist will also be awarded the Kayla Skinner Special Recognition award in the amount of \$2,500 and one artist will receive the PONCHO Special Recognition award in the amount of \$2,500.

The following artists have been named as finalists:

**Jovencio de la Paz** received a B.F.A with an emphasis in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2008. He lives in Gresham, Oregon. His works are assembled from materials found throughout abandoned suburban construction sites near his home and neighboring Clackamas County. Using canvas drop cloths, found wood, house paint, deck sealant and other construction materials, he creates works that are intended as commentary on the failed promise of Modernism, both in painting and suburban life. In 2008, De la Paz's work was shown in exhibitions including *Full Bleed* at Loft3a Gallery and *True North* at Gallery 2 in Chicago.



**Josh Faught** received his M.F.A. with an emphasis in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2006. He also received a degree in Textile/Surface Design from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, NY, in 2004. Combining the formal concerns of textiles, collage, drawing and sculpture, Faught's current work explores personal sites of domestic dysfunction through craft, craft making and ornamentation. In 2009, his work was included in *Call + Response*, at the Portland Museum of Contemporary Craft and in *While the Light Lasts* at the Lisa Cooley Gallery in New York, where he is represented. He currently resides in Eugene, Oregon, where he has been the Assistant Professor and Program Director of Fibers at the University of Oregon since 2007.



**Jenny Heishman** received an M.F.A. from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio in 1998. She served as an Artist in Residence at the Vermont Studio Center in 2006 and at the Pilchuck School of Glass in 2005. She currently lives in Seattle. Her most recent exhibitions have been at Howard House in Seattle and at The Helm in Tacoma. She was a finalist for the Betty Bowen Award in 2006. Heishman's aesthetic is strongly influenced by growing up in Florida where she was surrounded by theme parks, beach culture and a lack of seasonal shifts. She thus learned to "construct" the seasons, an approach that influenced her to create objects that are hybridized and disguised in faux surfaces, providing a humorous challenge to perceptions of real and fake.



**Sean M. Johnson** received his M.F.A. from the University of Washington in 2005. He lives in Seattle, where he has most recently shown at Howard House Gallery, in *Love Seat* a solo show in 2008. He is currently working on an upcoming exhibition with the Off Shore Project in Seattle. Johnson's sculptures are composed of balanced furniture and everyday objects, which serve as metaphors for relationships and his own life experiences. Often staging objects in arrangements that attempt to defy gravity, Johnson sets up narratives and dichotomies that both humor and disarm the viewer. Johnson has taught Fine Arts at the University of Washington and was a finalist for the Betty Bowen Award in 2005.



**Matthew Offenbacher** received a B.A. in American Studies from Tufts University in 1994 and currently lives in Seattle. Interested in collaboration, Matt's work focuses on blurring the boundaries between group and individual and between art objects and the contexts in which they appear. These interests have led to special projects such as the 2008 "Light Show for Unesco" at Howard House Gallery in Seattle and *La Especial Norte*, a 'zine he created for artists' writings, based in Seattle. Offenbacher's individual works include digital photographs, videos and paintings. His creations interrogate how modern art sublimated the religious impulse and redirected it towards materialistic ends, although he is currently moving towards a less academic and more explorative approach of how he conceives his own role as an artist.



The winner of the 31st Annual Betty Bowen Award will be announced at an award ceremony on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6-7 pm in the Plestcheeff Auditorium at SAM's downtown location. A reception will follow from 7-8 pm in the Arnold Board Room. The ceremony and reception are free and open to the public.

In 2008, the Committee granted a grand prize of \$15,000 to Isaac Layman, the Kayla Skinner Special Recognition Award of \$2,500 to Eric Elliott and the PONCHO Special Recognition Award of \$2,500 to Wynne Greenwood.

Betty Bowen (1918–1977) was a Washington native and enthusiastic supporter of Northwest artists whose friends established the annual Betty Bowen Award as a celebration of her life and to honor and continue her efforts to provide financial support to the artists of the region. Since 1977, SAM has hosted the yearly grant application process by which the selection committee chooses one artist from the Northwest to receive an unrestricted cash award, eligible to visual artists living and working in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

**The 2009 Betty Bowen Committee Members are:**

Michael Alhadeff

Jeffrey Bishop

Michael Darling (SAM's Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art)

Gary Glant (Chair)

Peggy Golberg

Anne Gould Hauberg

Mike Hess

Isaac Layman (Rotating Artist, first year of a 2 year term)

Mark Levine

Llewelyn Pritchard

Greg Robinson

Norie Sato

Bill True

Maggie Walker

Tom Wilson

Dan Webb (Rotating Artist, second year of a 2 year term)

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**IMAGE CAPTIONS:**

**Jovencio de la Paz**, *One Possible Interior*, 2009

Reversed canvas, wood, Behr interior house paint, 16 x 16 inches

**Josh Faught**, *Untitled*, 2009

Mixed media, 36 x 36 x 12 inches

**Jenny Heishman**, *Bouldering*, 2008

Ceramic penny-round tiles, mirror, inkjet print, wood, and wire, 48 x 72 x 36 inches

**Sean M. Johnson**, *Thank You*, 2008

Lawn chair, Mylar balloons, string, and helium, 7.5 x 4 x 4 feet

**Matthew Offenbacher**, *Untitled*, 2009

Oil and acrylic on Stainguard cotton, 52 x 45 inches