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Vilcek Foundation Awards \$250,000 in Prizes to Immigrant Curators

The Vilcek Prizes in Curatorial Work recognize foreign-born museum professionals and curators in the United States

New York, NY, February 3, 2025 — Since 2006, the Vilcek Foundation has awarded prizes to immigrant professionals annually in two categories: Biomedical Science and a single rotating category in the Arts and Humanities.

In 2024, the foundation announced that it would expand the prizes for 2025, with the plan to award prizes in two categories in the Arts and Humanities—Visual Arts and Curatorial Work—doubling the number and value of prizes it awards to immigrant arts and cultural professionals as part of the foundation’s annual prize program.

The foundation is proud to announce the recipients of [the 2025 Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Curatorial Work](#). These awards, comprising the Vilcek Prize and the Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise, recognize immigrant curators and art historians who are living and working in the United States and have developed important exhibitions for museums, galleries, art fairs, or nonprofit organizations.

Art historian and philanthropist Marica Vilcek, cofounder of the Vilcek Foundation, reflects on the importance of awarding prizes to curators: “Curators and museum professionals are required to hold advanced degrees in art history and museum studies, disciplines that are critically underfunded. Individuals whose talents and passion drive them to be art historians and curators attend to their work without any expectation of fame, wealth, or acclaim,” she says.

“The recipients of the 2025 Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Curatorial Work are dedicated to the study and development of a history and understanding of art in the contexts in which it is created, and to share these insights through exhibitions and public programs. The nature of their work is both scholarly and humanistic: contextualizing art to build connections and understanding. Their achievements have enormous cultural value, and merit esteemed recognition.”

Adds Vilcek Foundation President Rick Kinsel, “All of the curators we honor with the Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Curatorial Work have demonstrated a commitment to elevate global artistic movements and communities that are historically underrepresented in Western Art History. Their exhibitions, publications, and public talks and programs are having a profound impact on the canon, reshaping the record of art history to reflect the diversity of artists and movements of the world.”

The Vilcek Prize: Oluremi C. Onabanjo

Oluremi C. Onabanjo receives the 2025 Vilcek Prize in Curatorial Work. Onabanjo is The Peter Schub Curator in The Robert B. Menschel Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. Onabanjo receives the Vilcek Prize in Curatorial Work for her work to examine the power, position, and production of Blackness in relation to the ongoing global history of the photographic medium. Born in the United Kingdom to Nigerian parents, she is an alumna of Oxford University and

Columbia University. The Vilcek Prize in Curatorial Work includes a \$100,000 cash award and a commemorative trophy.

Onabanjo's approach to her work considers not only the artist and the work itself but the way its reception and interpretation are shaped by the viewers' experience and understanding. In June, she spoke on a panel organized by Princeton University and the Park Avenue Armory, *The Radical Practice of Black Curation*. In a recent profile for *The New York Times*, she said, "Living in New York has given me a political education, taught me how to look alongside and think with artists, and made me sensitive to how the forces of history structure the contemporary conditions of social life."

The Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Curatorial Work

The Vilcek Foundation awards three Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Curatorial Work in 2025. The Creative Promise Prizes recognize young curators whose work is redefining the role of art historians and institutions to support equity in the global history and presentation of art. Each recipient of a Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise receives a \$50,000 cash award and a commemorative trophy.

The 2025 Vilcek Prizes for Creative Promise in Curatorial Work are awarded to Donna Honarpisheh, Aimé Iglesias Lukin, and Bernardo Mosqueira.

Honarpisheh is the Knight Foundation Associate Curator of Art and Research at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Miami. She earned her PhD in Comparative Literature and Critical Theory from the University of California, Berkeley in 2022. Born in Canada to Iranian immigrants, she receives the Creative Promise prize for her multidisciplinary approach to address the historic and ongoing omissions of global artists and movements in Western art history and institutions.

Born in Argentina, Iglesias Lukin is director and chief curator of art at the Americas Society. She receives the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Curatorial Work for her leadership promoting the art of the Americas, and her focused initiatives to achieve recognition for historically underrepresented migrant and women artists. She holds an MA in Art History and Archaeology from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and a PhD from Rutgers University.

Mosqueira is chief curator of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) in New York and artistic director of Solar dos Abacaxis in Rio de Janeiro. Born in Brazil, he receives the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Curatorial Work for his commitment to building institutions, frameworks, and platforms for emerging and radical artists, especially those from the Global South, Latin America, and diasporic communities.

The 2025 Vilcek Foundation Prizes

In 2025, the Vilcek Foundation awards a total of \$950,000 in prizes in support of its mission: To raise awareness of immigrant contributions in the United States and foster appreciation for the arts and sciences more broadly. The Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Curatorial Work are awarded alongside the Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Visual Arts, the Vilcek Foundation Prizes in Biomedical Science, the Vilcek Prize for Excellence in Literary Scholarship, and the Marica Vilcek Prize in Art History.

The Vilcek Foundation

The Vilcek Foundation raises awareness of immigrant contributions in the United States and fosters appreciation for the arts and sciences. The foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The foundation's mission was inspired by the couple's respective careers in biomedical science and art history. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded over \$15 million in prizes and grants. The Vilcek Foundation is a private operating foundation, a federally tax-exempt nonprofit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3). To learn more, please visit vilcek.org.