

Samples based on previous years' guidelines and materials, which are subject to change.



2022 Reference Guide Twining Humber & SOLA Awards

Artists can use this reference guide to see how previous Twining Humber & SOLA recipients submitted successful written application materials.

Sample Application Materials

Artist Biography (150 words or less or up to 3 minutes of video/audio) tells your story as an artist. It provides details about you and your work, such as where you were born or grew up, your training, career development, accomplishments, or other information that may not be found elsewhere in the application.

Artist Statement (350 words or less or up to 5 minutes of video/audio) is an introduction to your work or a specific body of work. It gives an overview of its concepts, ideas, and themes. It may include information about how your work developed, why you have created it, your vision, influences, and inspirations, your philosophy of art-making, and other details that introduce your work. A strong artist statement is clear and specific, captures your speaking voice, and avoids clichés and jargon.

Mary Van Cline (2021 SOLA recipient, Mason County)

Artist Biography

Van Cline's process combine photographic and cast glass. In grad school 1978 in Boston, she experimented with Kodak glass photo emulsions. Developing an inaugural program in 1983 allowing artists into Wheaton Glass Industries, New Jersey, she built glass casting furnaces while inventing new techniques. Receiving the NEA/Japan US Friendship Commission Award 1987, she captured her B&W images while traveling Asia, awarded the Fujita Prize 1988 at the inaugural opening of the Glasmuseum, Denmark, and one of the few women to win Grand Prize, Kanazawa Museum in Japan, 1998. Commissioned by USIA Arts America, she created a room size glass photographic installation travelling 14 venues in S.E. Asia, 1993. She was included in Aperto Vetro exhibit at Museo Correr, Venice 1996, co-curated by the British/Italian Government. In 2001, she was invited to Dupont Industries, helping to refine her photographic imagery encased in safety glass for a private residence in Tel Aviv.

Artist Statement

Time is the riddle of human existence. It pushes one forward and leaves one behind. It exists beyond clocks, but humanity is constantly trying to measure it. Its boundaries can drive one to despair, its passage heal.

Photography has a memory-evoking power, and the very process stops time altogether. My imagery hopes to invites the viewer to stop, rest, contemplate; to let go of perception and be for awhile in a space where time does not just stand still, it does not exist at all.

"The Listening Point/Winter Ice Branches 1998-2008" was exhibited at the Renwick Gallery/Smithsonian American Art Museum in "Staged Stories", showcasing 35 years of my artwork as a pioneer of invented photographic techniques utilizing glass. The cultural influences within the room size installation reference my travels photographing the archipelago of Japan, made possible by an award from the NEA and Japan/US Friendship Commission. The vertical transparent glass photograph, 5 by 6 feet, framed by the bronze Shinto Gate, reflects its imagery into a spacious black glass reflecting pool, marking a portal of timeless drama, following you as you walk through the room. Eight feet cast glass branches, are nested and stacked onto the reflecting glass, creating an overall sense of serenity.

Using industry is an important part of my creative technique, whether it is an aerospace industry to etch photographs on seven feet bronze slabs, or using an intelligent computer lighting system to project my moving images upon 50 feet high architectural building elements. At Schott North American Glass Industry, I used their optical glass furnaces to cast my photosensitive glass prisms for 350 lb. architectural scale photo vessels. In 2007, wanting to expand my realistic glass castings, I moved from Seattle to a bronze foundry in southern Washington to learn bronze mold making techniques, which I adapted to fabricate life sized figures into ivory sugar glass, a process I created using time and heat compression in a kiln.

A detailed interview of my art journey was recently recorded for the Oral History Program at the National Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Ross Palmer Beecher (2020 Twining Humber recipient, King County)

Artist Biography

I grew up in Riverside, CT. My Puerto Rican grandfather, a Yale educated attorney, married my Ziegfeld dancer grandmother. My parents worked in advertising and communications but loved cocktail parties and sailing.

I made art and objects at an early age and later studied art at RISD, before dropping out, after which I was on my own financially. I came to Seattle in 1978 and began to make political cartoons as hand-colored Xerox prints at Pike Place Market before I made found object art.

In 1980, Community Psychiatric Clinic offered me a part-time job running their art program. I began making woodcuts and quilts on my own, connecting to my New England roots.

When AIDS broke out, Bailey-Boushay House hired me to run its art therapy program. I'm now 63, single, and still enjoying patient care there. Working with patients to make art informs my own art making.

Artist Statement

In 1970 my sister brought home slides from a quilt show at the Whitney Museum and I got inspired to make a quilt from fabric bits. I had a newspaper route and collected fabric scraps from customers subscribing to the newspaper. The first quilt I made was a patchwork of squares that stretched out of shape badly because it was made of polyester fabric. After that first frustrating attempt, I got serious and made a quilt the proper way using small octagonal panels inset with small squares of black fabric to fill the empty spaces left by the octagons. At that time, I was learning from taking apart old quilts. I made 13 fabric quilts before my first metal quilt. Some were based on flags, others on portraits and others were classic patterns but I made them highly individual.

Once I switched to metal quilts, I saw the graphics on the tin cans repeat themselves like a Warhol silkscreen. Or letters and numbers stenciled over US maps and flags by Jasper Johns. Envisioning Rauschenberg's "Bed," a quilt with paint dripping down, my palette of tin loosens me up to let the colors fall where they will. Then they are informed by non-traditional sheet metal techniques such as weaving, punching, stapling and stitching with wire.

I took the old historical patterns of quilts and flags and combined them with contemporary mediums. In the last 30 years I have been making art out of worldly abundance. It became an attempt for me to do my small bit to help save our planet. In the end, as I use them from hoarding stash, these newly re-utilized throw always become precious in an art form reflecting contemporary American culture.

If the means of assembling this work appeals to the working-class then my job is done. I work for the blue-collar people who may be intimidated by art. Through my art, I offer an olive branch out to them to become comfortable to enter a gallery or art museum.

Barbara Sternberger (2020 SOLA recipient, Whatcom County)

Artist Biography

I was born in Vancouver, Canada. My young parents were immigrants from Germany who struggled to find work. We moved often before coming to in the United States. English was not my first language and I struggled in school. After being diagnosed with dyslexia I was determined to get educated from sources other than books and naturally gravitated to the visual arts. After receiving my M.F.A. from UCI in 1983, I began my art career in Los Angeles. My small studio was in Venice Beach. My husband (artist, Ed Bereal) and I left the big city moved to "little" Bellingham, Washington in 1993. Since then, we live and work on our small farm outside of town. I practice painting daily from my studio in our large red barn.

Artist Statement

INSPIRATION The unseen world of the mind has inspired my painting for nearly forty years. My paintings bring recognition to internal experiences, which normally aren't seen, and yet are somehow familiar. Painter, Robert Motherwell, a modern artist hero of mine, mirrored my philosophy on painting when he said— "Painting is a medium in which the mind can actualize itself; it is a medium of thought. Thus painting, like music, tends to become its own content".

INFLUENCE My work is deeply influenced by tenets of Ch'an Buddhism and its relation to painting; essence, truth, spirit resonance, breath and the present moment. By contrast, I am surrounded by the high-speed, virtual world of the Internet. As a painter, living in this paradox, I feel it is vitally important to share/transmit experiences of mindfulness, through the practice of painting.

PROCESS For my paintings to become fully realized—a continuous, uninterrupted flow between my mind and materials is essential. However, the traditional methods of oil painting, necessitate the constant loading and re-loading of the paintbrush, causing a disruptive flow to my process. For decades, I experimented, trying to find a more direct paint application. Finally, the solution evolved seven years ago with the creation of my own

homemade “hand-held oil paint bars”. These bars are hard enough to hold, yet soft enough to “melt” onto the canvas with the slightest pressure of touch. I use the bars in conjunction with tube paint.

PRACTICE Alone . . . silent . . . I engage my intuitive mind and begin to apply paint. Breathe in. Breathe out. I hold the paint, apply another layer of sensuous paint then scrape it off. Breathe in. Breathe out. The process continues . . . breathe out. . . images emerge. When I’m painting, the past and future dissolve, and like magic, I am transported and deeply held in the present moment. There, upon the canvas, invisible experiences of truth become form, color and space; my thoughts, my mind becomes visible.

MalPina Chan (2019 SOLA recipient, Thurston County)

Artist Biography

MalPina Chan was born in California and received a BFA from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. She continued her studies in photography, printmaking, and book arts in the NW. MalPina was raised in a bilingual household and finds that ethnic identity among second generation Asian Americans is inevitably tied to the process of assimilation. She received 2012 GAP grant to support studies at Pilchuck Glass School. She was awarded an artist-in-residency at James & Janie Washington Foundation. MalPina’s work was featured in the inaugural “INK THIS!” exhibition at Tacoma Art Museum. Her artist books are included in 500 Handmade Books Vol. 2 and 1000 Artist Books. MalPina’s work can be found in public and private collections: the Cynthia Sears Collection - Bainbridge Island Museum of Art; the cities of Seattle, Tacoma, Portland; Harborview Hospital; UW Medical Center; the libraries of University of Washington, University of Puget Sound, Evergreen State College.

Artist Statement

The context of my work is woven together from my identity as an Asian American, a woman, and a mother. Recent events compel me to focus on the impact of external pressure on our minds and bodies. I am interested in cultural inheritance, cultural shifts, and societal pressures on personal culture. It is my exploration of social justice, history and current discourse that inspires my work. I want to question, investigate and generate a dialogue as I explore immigration, race, identity, diversity, inclusion, gender and equality in the context of history, our memories and today.

To tell the story of my family’s immigrant experience in the early 1900s, I incorporate imagery drawn from a rich resource of old family photos, immigration documents, letters, and cultural icons. Critical immigration issues summon childhood memories of relatives who lived in fear of the government and deportation due to their “paper son” status. It is an agonizing existence that takes a toll on the families who are affected for generations.

Most of my life I have been asked the “WHAT are you?” and “WHERE are you from?” I would answer “I am an American” and “I am from California.” The response would be “NO! Really....WHAT are you? WHERE are you from?” Depending on the situation, I would find creative ways to answer these questions. I recall these exchanges with mixed emotions. I use this energy to make work telling the story of the immigrant experience, a story many immigrant families share regardless of their country of origin.

Critical to my practice is extensive research to inform the context and content of my work. In my current artist book series, I take a conceptual approach to challenge the preconceived idea of the “book.” Recontextualized materials, objects, and text encourage “reading the book” from a new perspective.

In both my 2D and 3D work, I layer my visual vocabulary of images and text to bring light to how our lives and experiences overlap creating a narrative that connects us all at a human level telling our collective stories.

Sherry Markovitz (2019 Twining Humber recipient, King County)

Artist Biography

Sherry Markovitz was born in 1947, Chicago, Illinois. In 1969, she received her BA from the University of Wisconsin and moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington, where she earned her MFA in 1975.

Markovitz's earliest works were paintings on large expanses of unstretched canvas, and smaller works on board, occasionally embellished with beads, string, ribbon or sequins. In the early 1980s, that decorative impulse led to a series of fully beaded animal heads. In the 1990s, Markovitz developed a series of wholly abstract works constructed from gourds or papier maché forms cast from yams, still beaded, but much more restrained otherwise. In 1999, Markovitz began a series of works on paper, created with various water-based paints on paper, very straightforwardly, with almost no embellishment. In the last few years, Markovitz has created a number of ephemeral gouache paintings on unstretched cotton cloth.

Artist Statement

The most important aspect of my work is that it's circular, not linear. I weave in and out of themes and materials, sometimes developing an idea with new materials and ideas. I move back and forth between two and three dimensions. The same symbols change their meaning over time; a symbol of loss in one body of work becoming one of well-being in another.

My earliest paintings are of domestic and confined animals such as sheep or donkeys speak of comfort and security, which correspond to the death of my father. Later I explored the wilderness arena with images of bears or deer animals that are often prey. The paintings moved into sculpture, as they couldn't be contained in two dimensions.

In 1981, I began a series of ornamented animal trophy heads of deer, elk and moose and wild cats. They are a feminization of the traditional male role as hunter, which has for centuries carried an unspoken taboo for women.

When my mother died in 1985, I returned home and began a series of doll paintings. With leftover pieces of metal, they spoke about loss and fragmentation.

The birth of my son in 1988 was a quiet, happy period. I began to do simplified shapes using beaded surfaces as monochromatic skins for gourds, accentuating their sensuous curves and contours. I see these gourd works having a spirit of gathering rather than hunting.

The previously two-dimensional dolls became sculptural in 1998, but I still needed multiple languages of materials and ideas. It was a way of expressing obsessive compulsion against quiet simplicity. When I look at what I have created I am able to understand what emotional and artistic obstacles I am working through. Recently I have been working on pieces that have interchangeable parts-parts that are constantly in flux. I think I am in a place in my life where I am able to accept a certain uncertainty and maintain as much freedom as possible in the future.