

A Archives
W A of Women Artists
R Research
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**JUNE EDMONDS AT LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES GALLERY
WINS *THE AWARE PRIZE* AT THE ARMORY SHOW**

***The AWARE Prize* Presented By
AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions and the Armory Show
Recognizes a Solo-Exhibition of Work by a Woman Artist**



NEW YORK | March 5, 2020 – **AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions**, a Paris-based nonprofit with a mission to reposition women artists in the canon of 20th century art history, in partnership with The Armory Show, announce that artist **June Edmonds** has been awarded the debut AWARE Prize at The Armory Show. The \$10,000 juried prize highlights the excellence of the artist’s work and the gallery’s courage to present a solo-female artist’s work in a market that has systematically undervalued art made by women.

“We’re so proud to present *The AWARE Prize* to June Edmonds, on an international stage like The Armory Show,” states co-founder Camille Morineau. “Edmonds was unanimously selected by the jurors, who coalesced around the discovery of her new *Flag Paintings*—a breakthrough body of never-before seen work by the artist presented by Luis de Jesus Los Angeles at this year’s Armory Show.”

A jury selected Edmonds from a short list of five finalists which included Rina Banerjee, Yuko Nasaka, Aase Texmon Rygh and Alexis Smith. The jurors are **Camille Morineau**, AWARE co-founder; **Bloum Cardenas**, Trustee, Niki Charitable Art Foundation and President of the Giardino dei Tarocchi; **Simon Castets**, Director, Swiss Institute; **Susan Fisher Sterling**, The Alice West Director, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; and **Maura Reilly**, arts writer and curatorial activist.

“Recognizing the contributions of female artists is not only central to AWARE’s mission, but also

something that The Armory Show feels is imperative for a broader and more comprehensive understanding of art history,” states Nicole Berry, the Executive Director of The Armory Show. “We applaud the efforts of AWARE in all of their year-round endeavors and are thrilled to provide a platform to introduce their mission to a larger audience.”

ABOUT JUNE EDMONDS

June Edmonds uses abstract painting to explore how color, repetition, movement, and balance can serve as conduits to spiritual contemplation and interpersonal connection. Of critical importance is her interest in redefining traditional Western color theory. Color associations can be connected to culturally symbolic imagery and emotion, and are thus able to communicate about power and systematic disenfranchisement. Exploring the psychological construct of skin color or tone through pattern and abstract painting has proven to be a revealing gesture. By researching lesser-known Black Americans and incorporating their stories into her work, she has found a way to navigate the complexity of these ideas in painting and create space for these discussions.

Edmonds began her Flag series in February 2017, following her Artist Residency in Paducah, KY. The conjunction of the context of the recent 2016 presidential election, and her discovery of this area’s History with the Civil War, inspired her to produce those works. With these paintings, she explores the representation of the alignment of multiple identities including race, nationality, gender, and/or political leanings.

Edmond’s *Flag Paintings* explore the American flag as a malleable symbol of ideals, promises, and identity and create space for the inclusion of multivalent identities that consider race, nationality, gender, and political leanings. Each flag is associated with the narrative of an African American, past or present, a current event, or an anecdote from American history. Color, which plays an especially important role in the intersection of Edmonds’s personal, political, and artistic journeys, can be tied to culturally symbolic imagery, trauma, and emotion, giving color the unique discursive ability to communicate about power and systemic disenfranchisement. The *Flag Paintings* explore the psychological construct of skin color utilizing the primary colors of brown skin tones to build Edmonds’s radical propositions: symbols of American identity that not only more accurately reflect the broader changes in the racial and ethnic makeup of the country’s population but the ideals and promises enshrined in the Constitution. With thick, shifting brushstrokes in rich earth colors organized into columns of varying widths, the flags are oriented vertically, shifting the flag from a strategically designed symbolic object into a portrait of black and brown embodiment—challenging the misrepresentation, capitalization, subjugation, fetishization, policing, disenfranchising, or invisibility of black and brown bodies.

June Edmonds was born 1959 in Los Angeles, where she lives and works. Edmonds received her MFA from Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, and a bachelor’s degree from San Diego State University. She also attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and is the recipient of a 2018 City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Grant (COLA) and Exhibition at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery; a California Arts Council Individual Artist Grant; Paducah Artist Residency in Kentucky; Helene Wurlitzer Foundation artist residency in Taos, NM; and Dorland Mountain Community artist residency in Temecula, CA. Edmonds has exhibited at the California African American Museum, the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery; Luckman Fine Art Gallery at CalState Los Angeles; Watts Tower Art Center in Los Angeles, CA; Angels Gate Art Center in San Pedro, CA; and the Manhattan Beach Art Center in Manhattan Beach, CA. Edmonds has completed several works of public art with the city of Los Angeles and the Department of Cultural Affairs, including an installation at the MTA Pacific Station in Long

Beach, CA.. Her paintings are held in collections throughout the United States including the Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA; California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA; The Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, OH; as well as Rodney M. Miller Collection, New York, NY; and Kelly Williams Collection, New York, NY, among others.

ABOUT THE AWARE PRIZE

The AWARE Prize at The Armory Show awards \$10,000 to a superlative woman artist's solo exhibition, given to either a living female artist or her estate, underscoring the importance of the artist's work, as well as the courage and commitment of the gallery to undertake a solo presentation of work by a woman artist. Artwork made by women has been historically and financially under-valued in the art market. *The AWARE Prize* at The Armory Show aims to correct this course and demonstrate both the academic and canonical importance of work by women artists as well as the financial advantage to the presentation of their work.

IMAGE CAPTIONS (L to R):

June Edmonds, photography by Chris Warmald, courtesy of Luis de Jesus, Los Angeles
June Edmonds, *Shadd Cary Flag*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 74 x 50 inches, courtesy of Luis de Jesus, Los Angeles

MEDIA CONTACTS

Sarah Brown McLeod | sarah@sarahbrownmcleod.com
Leily Soleimani | leily@ls-projects.com

ABOUT AWARE

AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions is a French non-profit organization, co-founded in 2014 by Camille Morineau, art historian and specialist in the history of women artists. Its goal is the creation, indexation and distribution of information on women artists of the 20th century, especially through their website, which welcomes more than 25,000 visitors a month. While AWARE collaborates with major museums and research centers around the world, its action also relies on donations from private sponsors, foundations, and companies that care for the promotion of professional parity and defend women's visibility in the workplace and art world. AWARE's founding patron is the CHANEL Fund for Women in the Arts and Culture; its main institutional sponsor is the French Ministry of Culture. AWARE's initiatives in the United States receive general support from The Armory Show, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States, Maison Veuve Clicquot, Maison founded in 1772, and a generous donor. awarewomenartists.com/en/

ABOUT THE ARMORY SHOW

The Armory Show is New York City's essential art fair, and a leading cultural destination for discovering and collecting the world's most important 20th- and 21st-century art. Staged on Manhattan's Piers 90 and 94, The Armory Show features presentations by leading international galleries, innovative artist commissions, and dynamic public programs. Since its founding in 1994, The Armory Show has served as a nexus for the international art world, inspiring dialogue, discovery, and patronage in the visual arts.