



Nasher Sculpture Center Announces Otobong Nkanga as Winner of the 2025 Nasher Prize

Nigerian/Belgian artist receives \$100,000 in recognition of outstanding contributions to sculpture under the museum's new expanded prize program.

Dallas, TX (October 5, 2023) – The Nasher Sculpture Center announces Otobong Nkanga as the recipient of the 2025 Nasher Prize. The Nasher Prize is an international award for sculpture, established to honor a living artist who elevates the understanding of sculpture and its possibilities. She will be the first Nasher Prize Laureate recognized with a new biennial format—a change made to give the museum and the laureate more time to show works at the Nasher, produce a printed monograph, and better communicate their importance in the field of sculpture. Under the reimagined prize cycle, Nkanga will be presented the Renzo Piano-designed award in Dallas on April 5, 2025, alongside an exhibition and a published monograph.

Over the past 20 years Otobong Nkanga (b. 1974) has produced evocative works that speak to the complex, often fragile relationships between humans, the land, and its resources, touching on issues of consumption, global circulation, connectivity, and care. Through a broad range of materials, and an equally broad range of practices, Nkanga is best known for powerful installations and performances that ignite the senses, eliciting emotions and new perspectives.

“The work of Otobong Nkanga makes manifest the myriad connections—historical, sociological, economic, cultural, and spiritual— that we have to the materials that comprise our lives,” says director Jeremy Strick. “Delving deeply into the variegated meanings these materials take on, Nkanga’s work makes clear the essential place of sculpture in contemporary life.”

Much of Nkanga’s work focuses upon the land and the substances and people associated with it. Her projects often begin with research into a place and its raw materials, unearthing the complex history within resources such as minerals, spices, nuts, metals, oils, plants, and stones. By incorporating such matter into sculptural or performative materials, she creates artistic encounters that encourage viewers to engage, respond, and consider their relationships to the planet, to art, and to one another.

“Otobong Nkanga maps urgent global problems but does so in subtle, enigmatic, and probing ways,” says Nasher Prize juror and Professor at University College London Briony Fer. “She works with materials that draw on many different aspects of the world’s resources, and the complex histories of those materials are embedded in her works. The intense and productive way in which she presents formal and material questions is what marks out her huge contribution to sculpture right now.”

Nkanga's chosen materials often attempt to connect with the viewer on a visceral level as a means to access individual or collective memory. In a 2019 interview Nkanga explained, "I am interested in this idea of what your perception is and what the reality of material is and what it can become...You realize how materials can relate to what our memory has registered. What happens if we play with that memory — try to break that perception and rediscover the material?...If you touch it or smell it, it breaks our preconceived ideas of what it is."

Additional reoccurring themes in Nkanga's work include concepts of movement, migration, and belonging. Otobong Nkanga spent her childhood in Lagos, Nigeria, and much of her adolescence in Paris before moving back to Nigeria. She studied art at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria and continued at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Moving to Amsterdam to get a master's degree in Performing Arts at Dasarts, Nkanga finally settled in Antwerp, Belgium, where she lives and works today. This international experience is evident in such projects as *Baggage* (2007-08) and *Carved to Flow* (2017), both of which relate to local materials and global circulation.

The movement of raw materials across continents, extracted from the land for trade and consumption, is a prominent concern of Nkanga's investigations. She often references the experience of seeing an abandoned copper mine in Namibia, where formerly green hills were stripped bare in the 20th century, leaving a bleak scar on the land. Nkanga reveals the complexity of these extracted resources in installations like *In Pursuit of Bling* (2014), *Solid Maneuvers* (2015), and *Tsumeb Fragments* (2016).

By revealing the shifting meanings of materials across time and place and by unifying people and land together through research, art and performance, Nkanga offers a concept of interconnection and rootedness, positing that the lands we inhabit are inherently linked to our bodies, which are in turn linked to each other through the very substances of the Earth.

Nkanga is the eighth artist to receive the Nasher Prize and the first to be celebrated on the biennial cycle; previous winners are Senga Nengudi (2023), Nairy Baghramian (2022), Michael Rakowitz (2020-21), Isa Genzken (2019), Theaster Gates (2018), Pierre Huyghe (2017) and Doris Salcedo (2016). The 2025 Nasher Prize jury that selected Nengudi is comprised of Nairy Baghramian, artist; Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Director of Castello di Rivoli, Italy; Lynne Cooke, Senior Curator, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Briony Fer, Professor, History of Art, University College London; Hou Hanru, Artistic Director, MAXXI, Rome; Yuko Hasegawa, Director of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Japan; Rashid Johnson, artist; Pablo León de la Barra, Curator at Large, Latin America, Guggenheim Museum; and Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair, Arts Council England.

In conjunction with the Nasher Prize, the Nasher Sculpture Center presents a series of public programs exploring the climate of contemporary sculpture. Called Nasher Prize Dialogues, the talks gather interdisciplinary luminaries to discuss the most compelling topics regarding contemporary sculpture. By galvanizing international discourse, Nasher Prize Dialogues are an apt extension of the Nasher Prize's mission to advocate for and advance a vital contemporary art form. Recent talks have taken place in Copenhagen, Denmark in partnership with CHART; Reykjavik, Iceland in partnership with the Reykjavik Art Museum; and in Glasgow, UK in partnership with The Common Guild and Glasgow International 2018; and in Mexico City in partnership with Museo Jumex. On November 9 the Nasher will partner with Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico in San Juan for Nasher Prize Dialogues: Sculpture and Place in the Caribbean. Click here for more information. [Follow this link to download a portrait and images.](#)

The chairs of the 2025 Nasher Prize are Matrice Ellis-Kirk and Lucilo Peña.

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About Otobong Nkanga

Nkanga (born 1974, Kano, Nigeria) lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium. She studied at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ife-Ife, Nigeria; the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and did her masters in the Performing Arts at DasArts, Advanced Research in Theatre and Dance studies in Amsterdam. Nkanga has been an artist-in-residence at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam in 2002-04, DAAD Berlin programme in 2013-14 and at the Martin Gropius – Bau in 2019.

Her most recent solo exhibitions include: IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia, Spain (2023); Sint-Janshospitaal, Bruges, Belgium (2022); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2021); Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Turin, Italy (2021-2022); Villa Arson, Nice, France (2021); Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, Norway (2020-2021); Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany (2020); MIMA, Middlesbrough, UK (2020); Tate St Ives, UK (2019); Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town, South Africa (2019); Ar/ge kunst Galleria Museo, Bolzano, Italy (2018); MCA Chicago, US (2018); Kunsthal Aarhus, Denmark (2017); Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2016); Beirut Art Center, Lebanon (2016); Tate Modern, London, UK (2015); Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2015); Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, The Netherlands (2015); Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, Belgium (2015); Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, France (2015)

Her participation in international group shows includes: 'THE MIND'S EYE. Images of Nature from Claude Monet to Otobong Nkanga', Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, Switzerland (2023); 'Dear Earth - Art and Hope in a Time of Crisis', Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2023); 'Busan Biennial 2022 - We, on the Rising Wave', Museum of Contemporary Art, Busan, South Korea (2022); 'KUB In Venice', Scuola di San Pasquale, Venice, Italy (2022); 'Black Melancholia', Hessel Museum of Art, New York, USA (2022); 'Currency: Photography Beyond Capture, 8th Triennial of Photography Hamburg', Hamburg, Germany (2022); 'We Are History', Somerset House, London, UK (2021); 'Witch Hunt', Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2021); 'Global(e) Resistance', Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2020); 'Our World is Burning', Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2020); 'Seismic Movements', Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh (2020); '58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia', Venice, Italy (2019); 'Sharjah Biennial 14: Leaving the Echo Chamber', Sharjah, UAE (2019); 'Artes Mundi 2018', National Museum Cardiff, UK (2018); 'Cosmogonies, according to the elements', MAMAC, Nice, France (2018); 'General Rehearsal', Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Russia (2018); 'Documenta 14', Athens, Greece (2017); 'I am a native foreigner', Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2017); 'Take Me (I'm Yours)', Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, Italy (2017); 'Dialogues, Manifesta – The European Biennial of Contemporary Art, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2017); 'Life Itself, Moderna Museet', Stockholm, Sweden (2016); 'Museum on/off', Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2016); '13th Biennale de Lyon, La vie moderne', Lyon, France (2015); 'Africa Remix', Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa, Mori Art Museum,

Tokyo, Japan, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, Hayward Gallery, London, UK, and Museum Kunstplast, Düsseldorf, Germany (2004-2007).

Nkanga was given the Special Mention Award at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, Italy, 2019 and won the 2017 Belgium Art Prize. Other notable awards include the Peter-Weiss-Preis, Sharjah Biennial Prize, the Lise Wilhelmsen Art Award, the Flemish Cultural Award for Visual Arts - Ultima and the Yanghyun Prize.

About the Nasher Sculpture Center

Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 400 masterpieces by Brancusi, Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Basquiat, Hepworth, LeWitt, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions.

For more information, visit www.NasherSculptureCenter.org.