

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

October 1, 2015

Colombian Artist Doris Salcedo Receives Inaugural Nasher Prize for Sculpture

<http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2015/10/01/colombian-artist-doris-salcedo-recvies-inaugural-nasher-prize-for-sculpture/>

By Mark Armao



Doris Salcedo, winner of the first Nasher Prize
Photo: David Heald

The world of sculpture has carved out a new figurehead.

On Wednesday, the Nasher Sculpture Center named Colombian artist **Doris Salcedo** the winner of the inaugural Nasher Prize, an award that will henceforth be presented annually to a living artist who has made an indelible impact on the field of sculpture. An international jury of distinguished curators, museum directors, artists and art historians selected Salcedo from a group of more than 50 nominees.

Though the accolade comes with a \$100,000 prize and an award piece designed by renowned architect **Renzo Piano**, Salcedo said she is more satisfied by the symbolic victory of the achievement.

“It means that what I’m doing from [Colombia] is connecting to other places and to other people,” Salcedo said. “It means that in the midst of a chaotic political situation, this society has room for thinking and for producing art that is meaningful.”

The Nasher Sculpture Center, located in Dallas, Texas, is home to more than 300 works by notable sculptors including **Auguste Rodin** and **Pablo Picasso**. In April, the museum announced the formation of the Nasher Prize, which is the only international award dedicated to contemporary sculpture, according to director **Jeremy Strick**. Art experts from around the world were invited to nominate a sculptor, and the seven-person jury—which included artist **Phyllida Barlow** and chief curator of Tokyo’s Museum of Contemporary Art, **Yuko Hasegawa**—met in July to select a laureate.

In their search for the first winner of the prize, the jury sought a sculptor who is “making work that seems timely and is of interest not just to a general audience but to other artists, particularly younger artists,” said juror **Lynne Cooke**, a senior curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Salcedo’s work is celebrated in museums and galleries as well as public spaces around the world. Dealing with themes of brutality and civil injustice, Salcedo often uses everyday objects—chairs, clothing,

flowers—to evoke a palpable sense of loss or isolation in the viewer. The artist literally broke ground for an installation entitled “Shibboleth,” in which she tore a jagged 548-foot-long crack into the concrete floor of the massive Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in London.

“Here’s this vast space she could have filled with things, but this very simple gesture of a line—this crack, this rift—on the floor was just amazing and powerful,” said juror **Okwui Enwezor**, director of the Haus der Kunst in Munich. “It’s really the economy of Salcedo’s sculptural language that I always find very attractive.”

The longstanding armed conflict in Colombia is the backdrop against which many of Salcedo’s works are assembled. Firsthand testimonies from the victims of violent crimes inspire many of her works. But, while Salcedo’s art addresses problems rooted in Colombia, the themes of violent oppression and civil injustice are applicable in regions from the Middle East to the United States, she said.



A Doris Salcedo sculpture La Casa Viuda VI
Photo: Patrizia Tocci

“My work is derived from turmoil and extreme violence,” she said. “And that, sadly, is happening everywhere—no country is excluded.”

A work in progress, “Palimpsest” will focus on the victims of gang violence in Chicago. As she explains, the names of the victims will emanate like water from the ground. She compares gang violence in cities like Chicago and Los Angeles to the civil war in her own country.

“There are these voids where we don’t want to look into, that we pretend to ignore, where all this violence is happening,” she said. “That’s exactly where I want to look.”

The Nasher Prize will be presented to Salcedo at an event in Dallas on April 2, 2016. In conjunction with the prize, the Nasher is hosting a series of discussions on the subject of sculpture. The first of the “Nasher Prize Dialogues” will take place later this month in London.