

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ERICK ANTONIO BENITEZ WINS \$25,000 SONDHEIM ARTSCAPE PRIZE

BALTIMORE, MD (July 14, 2018)—The Baltimore Museum of Art and the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA) are proud to announce that Erick Antonio Benitez is the winner of the 2018 Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize. The coveted \$25,000 prize was presented at this evening’s awards ceremony at The Baltimore Museum of Art. The five other finalists—Nakeya Brown, Sutton Demlong, Nate Larson, Eunice Park, and Stephen Towns—will receive a \$2,500 honorarium established by M&T Bank in partnership with BOPA. Works of art by the winner and finalists are on view at the BMA through Sunday, August 5.

Esta Tierra Es Tu Tierra (This Land Is Your Land) is an immersive installation focusing on the U.S.-Mexico border and its effects on human lives. In winter 2015 and summer 2016, Erick Antonio Benitez (American, b. 1988) traveled the entirety of the border that stretches from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, visiting numerous sites including migrant shelters (in both the U.S. and Mexico), a Tent City jail recently closed for its horrific human rights violations, and various border landscapes. His poetic and sonic video documentary captures onsite interviews with border agents, migrants, and members of the volunteer Minuteman Project, as well as interactions at Friendship Park, where residents of the U.S. and Mexico are permitted to meet face-to-face across a 100-foot, semitransparent span of fencing. Benitez also made audio recordings and photographs and collected sand, dirt, rocks, seashells, yucca flowers, and discarded personal belongings. He preserves and enshrines these objects within the installation as ritual offerings to those who have lost their lives on their journey to the United States.



The [Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize](#) exhibition is held in conjunction with Artscape and is produced by the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts. It is one of the summer’s most highly anticipated exhibitions, designed to assist visual artists in the Greater Baltimore region in furthering their careers by allowing them to pursue tracks in their work that may not otherwise be possible. The artists were selected by an independent panel of jurors, who reviewed the exhibition and interviewed each artist to decide the winner. This year’s jurors are: Lauren Cornell, Director of the Graduate Program and Chief Curator at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and Hessel Museum of Art; Margot Norton, Curator at the New Museum, New York; and Kameelah Janan Rasheed, a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist, writer, and former public high school teacher.

The *Sondheim Artscape Prize Finalists 2018* exhibition is organized by BMA Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann along with BOPA Public Art Specialist Kim Domanski. This exhibition is generously sponsored by Patricia and Mark Joseph/The Shelter Foundation.

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The Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize exhibition is held in conjunction with Artscape, America's largest free arts festival, and is produced by the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts. Artscape features more than 150 fine artists, fashion designers, and craftspeople; visual art exhibitions, outdoor sculpture, and photography; live concerts on three outdoor stages; a full schedule of performing arts including dance, opera, theater, and experimental music; family events such as hands-on projects, children's entertainers, and street theater; and an extensive variety of local food and beverage vendors. An exhibition of the semifinalists' work will be shown in Maryland College Institute of Art's Decker and Meyerhoff Galleries at 1303 West Mount Royal Avenue Friday, July 20, through Sunday, August 5. Artscape's total economic impact on Baltimore City is \$25.97 million, according to a 2012 study by the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts.

The 2018 Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize is made possible through the generous support of the Abell Foundation, Baltimore Community Foundation, Brightside Foundation, Brown Advisory Charitable Foundation, Caplan Family Foundation, Charlesmead Foundation, Ellen Sondheim Dankert, France-Merrick Foundation, Greater Baltimore Committee, Hecht-Levi Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph/The Shelter Foundation, M&T Bank, Legg Mason, Amy & Chuck Newhall, Rollins-Luetkemeyer Foundation, Henry & Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation, Rosemore, Inc., Rouse Company Foundation, M. Sigmund & Barbara Shapiro Philanthropic Fund, John Sondheim and William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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