



**KAREN YANK | AGNES MARTIN**

*Meditations on Mentor and Student*





Agnes Martin and Karen Yank, Taos, NM, 2004. Photo: Rodney Hamon



## TURNER CARROLL

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Essay: Marisa Sage  
Design: Alex Dean, Jeffrey Kuiper

Front Cover:  
Karen Yank  
*View*, 2023  
blackened steel and stainless steel  
58 x 47 x 10"

## Karen Yank and Agnes Martin: Meditations on Mentor and Student

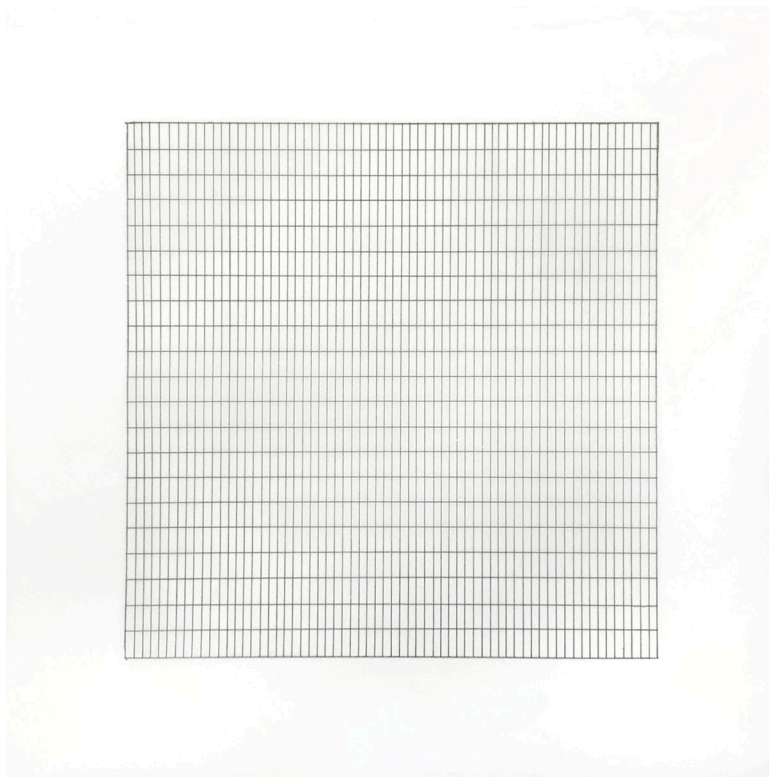
One might say that Karen Yank was primed to be guided by a mentor like Agnes Martin. Yank was raised by her father, a prominent sculptor in Wisconsin who ran the Ozaukee Art Center, and as a young child she was steeped in a plethora of different forms of art and artistic practices. Martin was a born teacher and painter, and before meeting Yank in 1987 where Martin served as an artist in residence at the prestigious Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, she taught students of all ages across the US. This included the University of New Mexico—one of Martin's alma maters—where it is said she made the decision once and for all to pursue her artistic career. Prior to meeting Martin, Yank studied sculpture as a graduate student at Rutgers University under the great American painter Leon Golub. Martin began her role as mentor, teacher, and friend among the New York based artists she lived and worked with. This group included Ellsworth Kelly, Barnett Newman, Jasper Johns, Robert Indiana, and Ad Reinhardt. One of Martin's greatest influences came in the form of Taoist and Zen Buddhist scholars, shaping her distinctive beliefs on beauty, communing with nature, and art making as a sacrifice in the pursuit of spiritual and minimalist perfection.

Upon meeting, Yank and Martin realized they had many shared passions, including swimming, a love of nature, art making, and maybe most importantly, their devotion to New Mexico. Both artists ultimately chose the high desert to live out their lives and artistic practices. For nearly 17 years, Yank and Martin met weekly as a friendship and mentorship flourished. Martin taught Yank how to focus her inspirations, create a strong artistic vision through meditation, and scale her mind's-eye sketches into large-scale artworks. Geometric shapes such as circles and squares were a constant conversation and shared obsession between the two artists.

Featured in this exhibition are Martin's lithographs on vellum, whose complex and meditative grids are indicative of the renowned artist's style which impacted upon Abstract expressionism, Minimalism, and Transcendentalism. Yank's steel wall-based sculptures which transition from the square to the circle, reference nature and convey abstract emotional content in minimalist/maximalist forms—all personal dogmas which evolved from Martin's teachings.

Towards the end of Martin's life, she asked Yank to share her philosophies with younger artists to keep her teachings alive past her death. Many elements of those teachings are revealed in this exhibition in which we seize on the opportunity—in a university art museum—to reflect upon the influence another artist can have on the artistic legacies of a future generation.

-Marisa Sage, Director and Head Curator, New Mexico State University Art Museum



Agnes Martin, Prints from Suite of Ten Lithographs, 1990, Published by the Stedelijk Museum, lithograph, ed. 2500, 12 x 12"



Karen Yank, *Yesterday and Tomorrow*, 2023, steel and stainless steel, 66 x 66 x 2"



Karen Yank, *Between a Hope and a Dream*, 2023, steel and stainless steel, 48 x 48 x 3"





Karen Yank, *Aspirations - XO*, 2022, blackened steel and stainless steel, 36 x 80 x 3" diptych



Karen Yank, *Tapestry*, 2023, steel, 48 x 28 x 1"



Karen Yank, *Close at Heart*, 2022, steel and stainless steel, 36 x 36 x 3"



Karen Yank, *Silhouette VII*, 2023, blackened steel and stainless steel, 61 x 36 x 12"



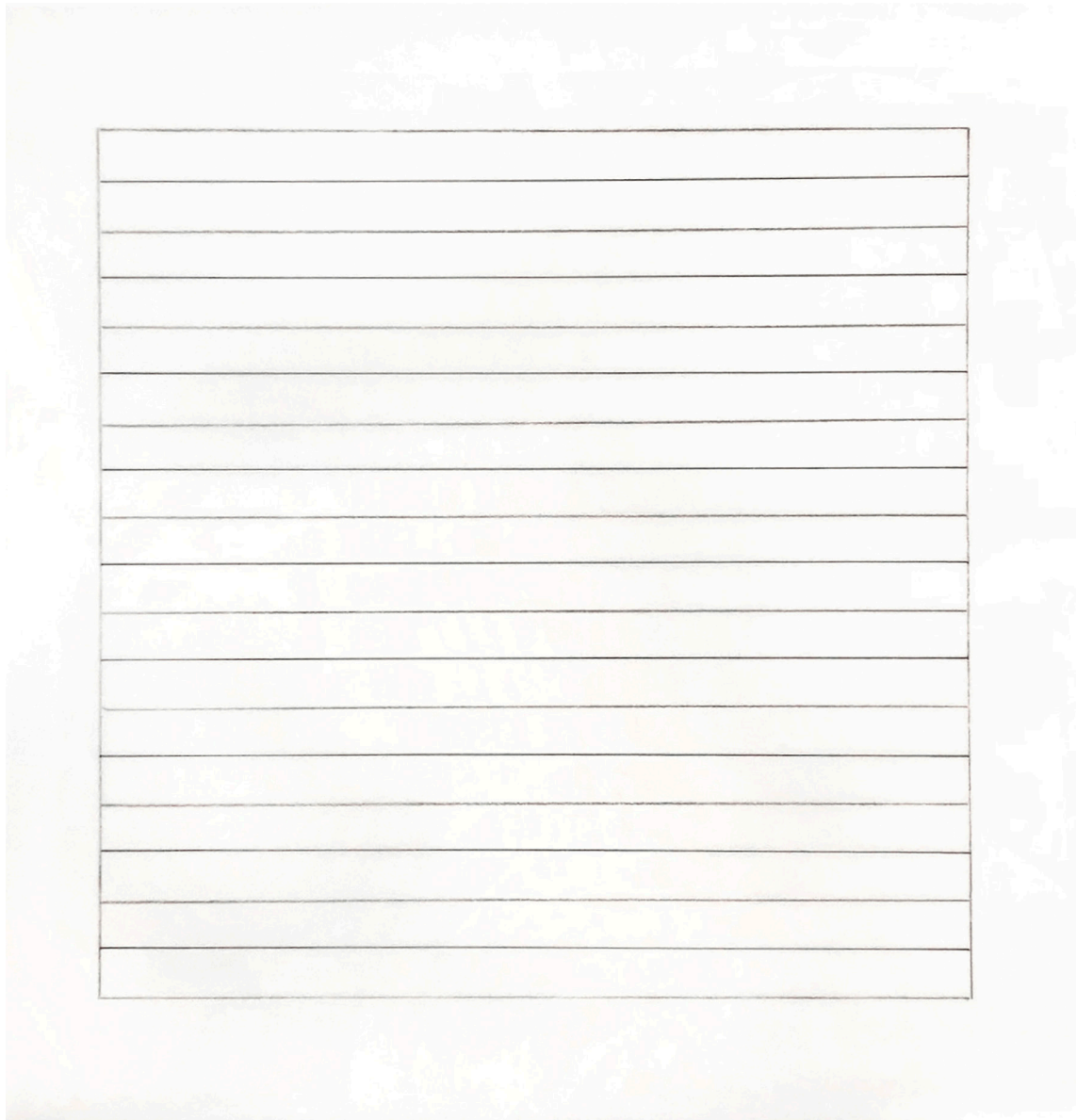
Karen Yank, *Circle and the Square*, 2023, blackened steel and stainless steel, 29 x 29 x 2"



Agnes Martin, Prints from Suite of Ten Lithographs, 1990, Published by the Stedelijk Museum, lithograph, ed. 2500, 12 x 12"



Karen Yank, *XO Sole*, 2021, blackened steel and stainless steel, 36 x 36 x 3"



Agnes Martin, Print from Suite of Ten Lithographs, 1990, Published by the Stedelijk Museum, lithograph, ed. 2500, 12 x 12"





Karen Yank, *Silhouette VIII*, 2023, blackened steel and stainless steel, 55 x 31 x 12"



Karen Yank, *Regard*, 2018, steel, wood, nails, and paint, 48 x 48 x 2"



Karen Yank, *View*, 2023, blackened steel and stainless steel, 58 x 47 x 10"



Agnes Martin, Print from Suite of Ten Lithographs, 1990, Published by the Stedelijk Museum, lithograph, ed. 2500, 12 x 12"



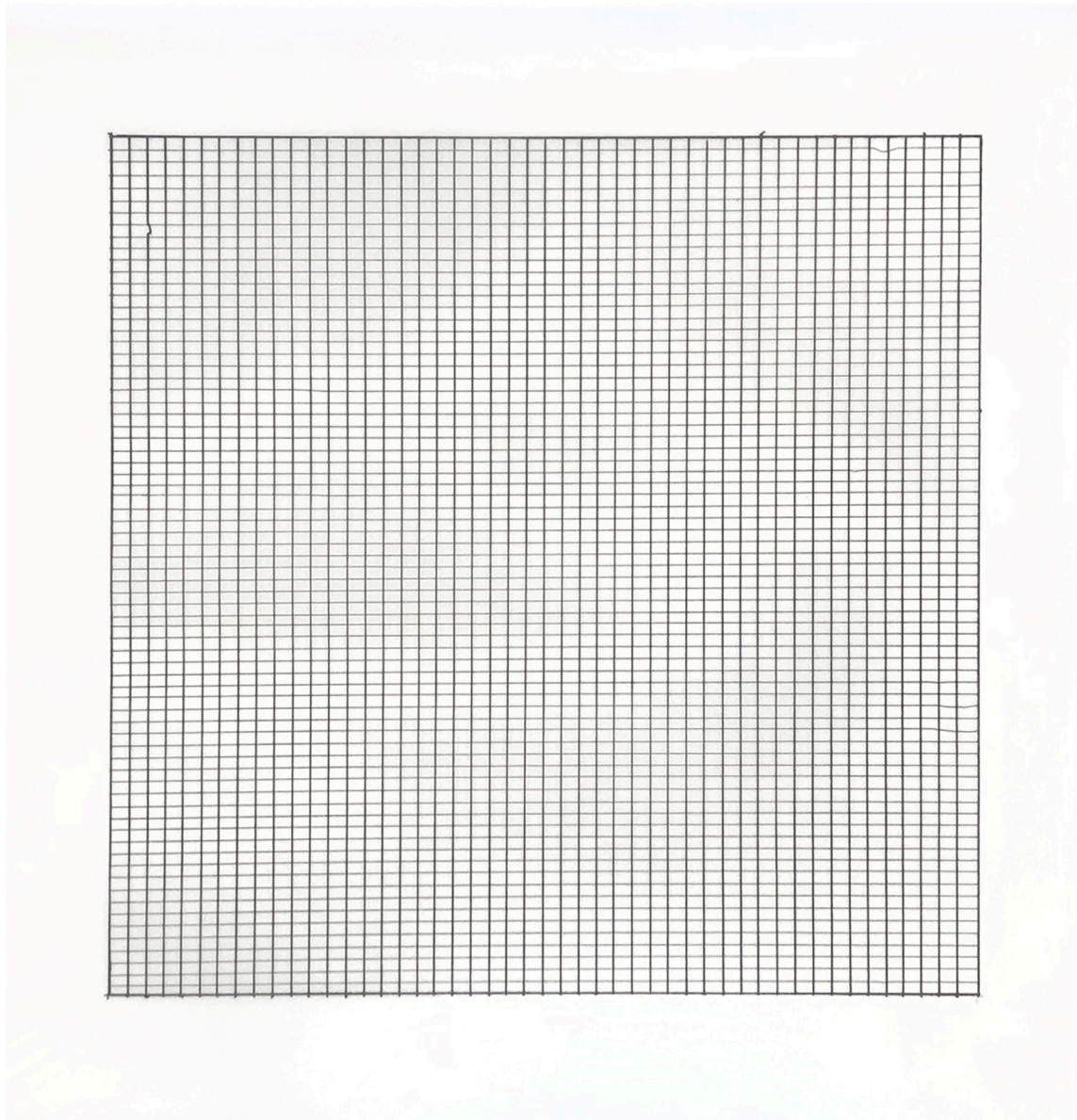
Karen Yank, *Intersecting*, 2023, blackened steel and stainless steel, 48 x 48 x 26"



Karen Yank, *Wish*, 2022, stainless steel, 24 x 24 x 3"



Karen Yank, *Expectation*, 2022, blackened steel and stainless steel, 56 x 48 x 2"



Agnes Martin, Print from Suite of Ten Lithographs, 1990, Published by the Stedelijk Museum, lithograph, ed. 2500, 12 x 12"





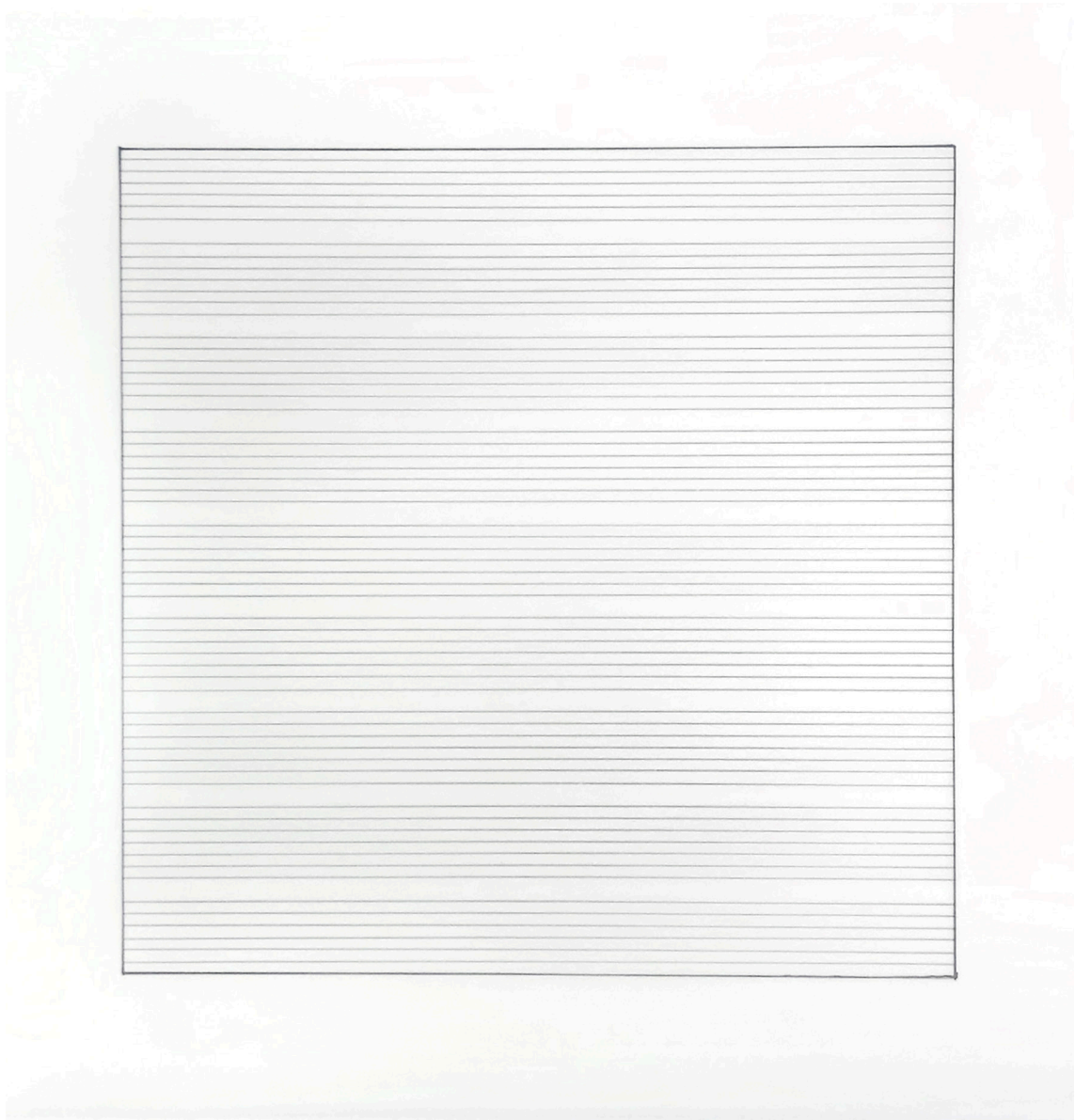
Karen Yank, *Clarity*, 2005, steel and stainless steel, 72 x 43 x 1.5", New Mexico State University Art Collection



Karen Yank, *Parallel*, 2021, blackened steel and stainless steel, 48 x 48 x 2"



Karen Yank, *Trust*, 2005, steel, 53 x 53 x 1.5"



Agnes Martin, Print from Suite of Ten Lithographs, 1990, Published by the Stedelijk Museum, lithograph, ed. 2500, 12 x 12"



Karen Yank, *Hope*, 2021, blackened steel and stainless steel, 66 x 66 x 2"



## AGNES MARTIN

Agnes Martin is one of the most enigmatic characters in the history of art. Just when her career was reaching what seemed to be its apex in New York in the 1960s, she made herself disappear. Martin read John Steinbeck's book *Travels with Charley* and took off in her truck, driving all over the United States until she ultimately chose New Mexico as her home. In New Mexico, Martin could live a life of solitude and immerse herself in the natural beauty of the land and the sky. She was well known for the simple life she chose, which corresponded to the two constant elements in her work: the horizontal and vertical lines. Martin possessed two cups and two table settings, just to keep things simple and structured. In her works, she would sometimes introduce a tiny hint of color. She echoed this in her social interactions, occasionally branching out in a small way.

Martin is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 1997 and the National Medal of Arts in 1998. She has been the subject of one-artist exhibitions worldwide, including a five-part retrospective at Dia Beacon, New York, in 2017, and, most recently, a 2015 retrospective at Tate Modern, London. That exhibition then travelled to Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Agnes Martin's paintings sell in the current art market in the millions of dollars, and they are highly sought-after by top museums throughout the world. Turner Carroll Gallery is so pleased to offer these lithographs by one of the most important female contemporary artists of all time.

### Selected Museum Exhibitions and Collections

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY  
Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX  
Dia Art Foundation, Beacon, NY  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA  
Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden  
Menil Collection, Houston, TX  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY  
Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC  
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO  
New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, NM  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY  
Tate Modern, London, UK  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY



## KAREN YANK

My life and work are synonymous and are a direct expression of my lived experience. In my practice, creating is the closest articulation of life that I have found, and the idyllic landscape is my primary influence. This is not to say that my sculptures represent nature, but rather that they represent the emotional impact one feels when immersed in nature. The work continues to be a pointed investigation of non-verbal communication and emotional nuances. It can be understood on the surface in a moment, yet the broader goal is to stimulate the viewers' response by activating emotions associated with their past experiences.

Materials like steel and stainless steel are my chosen medium. Every weld and grind mark is an intentional decision and my attempt to reflect a beauty that can only be found in the organic. The circular forms and intersecting lines I am constantly drawn to can be found throughout history. The circle and cross are two of the earliest symbols seen in human cultural development, dating back to the Stone Age. Circles reference all that is natural; such as the sun, moon, earth, cycles of life, time, and repetition. For me, the circle also represents the notion of unity while the "X" reflects transitional themes of crossing, intersecting, joining, and marking a point in time or space. The two symbols combined are emblematic of my affection for the world as a whole.

### Selected Awards, Collections, and Commissions

New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in Art

Roundabout Sculpture, City of Bend, OR

Exterior Sculpture, 20-foot tall, Albuquerque International Airport, Albuquerque, NM

New Mexico State University Art Museum Collection, Las Cruces, NM

Central New Mexico Community College, Albuquerque, NM

East Mesa Public Safety Campus, Las Cruces, NM

Americans for the Arts Public Art Award Recipient for Sculpture Commission, Boulder, CO

Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, Albuquerque, NM

Golden Cumbre Award for Public Art, I-40/Coors Freeway Interchange, Albuquerque, NM

UNM Health Sciences Center Art Collection, Albuquerque, NM

New Mexico Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM

Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, New York, NY

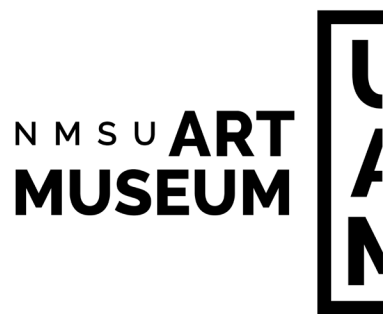
Laird Leadership in the Arts Award, WI

New Mexico Capitol Art Collection, Santa Fe, NM

Four-Story Tall Mobile, New Mexico State Library, Santa Fe, NM

Buchel Foundation Arts Grant, Grafton, WI

Scholarship Award, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Madison, ME



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