



Artists Kevin Beasley and Roberto Lugo win Heinz Awards, receiving \$250,000 each

Beasley and Lugo—best known for their sculptures made of, respectively, textiles cast in resin and ceramics—are among the six honorees in the awards’ 28th edition

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The American artists Kevin Beasley and Roberto Lugo were revealed as winners of the Heinz Awards for Arts on Wednesday (20 September). Each will receive an unrestricted cash award of \$250,000. The awards, bestowed by the Pittsburgh-based Heinz Family Foundation since 1993, are named for the late US Senator John Heinz and honour individuals working in the arts, economy and environment.

Beasley, based in New York City, is best known for his sculptures made of colourful, translucent resin poured over and around garments and clothing fragments. His work also spans installation, video, sound and performance. His most recent solo exhibition at New York’s Casey Kaplan gallery included not only freestanding sculptural assemblages and wall-mounted resin sculptures (that approximated the proportions and imagery of painting), but also an audio installation featuring recordings from a participatory performance staged in a Brooklyn apartment.

“I have a belief that histories are not only written through language but, even more importantly, inscribed, collected and gathered through objects, ephemera and places we encounter,” Beasley said in a statement. “Whether it’s the texture of a weathered

surface or the accumulation of stuff, the presence and existence of our activities and, ultimately, our lives is evidenced by what we leave behind, from footprints to legacy.”

Lugo, who is based in Philadelphia, takes a very different approach to honouring histories and legacies. His ceramic sculptures use forms that were long dismissed as craft—ornate pots, vases and other vessels—to memorialise people from his own life and important historical and cultural figures, from murdered rappers to Civil Rights activist Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander. His current solo exhibition at R & Company in New York, *The Gilded Ghetto* (until 27 October), reinterprets the imagery of ancient Greco-Roman vases to chronicle the experiences of Afro-Latino communities.

“My husband, John Heinz, embraced the conviction that life is made worth living by continuous questioning, examination and exploration, and he viewed the arts as a lens through which a society examines its conscience,” Teresa Heinz, the Heinz Family Foundation’s founder and chair, said in a statement. “Kevin’s multilayered, interdisciplinary work calls us to do just that, drawing us in to reflect on and better understand the truth of our past and inspiring us to rethink how we, together, shape what comes next.”

Heinz added: “Roberto’s powerful and moving body of work is both informed by a life story of struggle and infused with optimism and the vision that art can change how we understand our past and inform how we interpret the events in the world around us.”

A ceremony honouring the recipients of this year’s Heinz Awards will be held in Pittsburgh next month. In addition to Beasley and Lugo, four others received awards this year: Kathryn Finney and Leah Penniman for their work in economics, and Nicole Horseherder and Colette Pichon Battle for their environmental work.

Last year, the artists Cauleen Smith and Vanessa German were among the Heinz Awards winners; and in 2021, Sanford Biggers and Tanya Aguiñiga won the awards. With this year's cohort, the Heinz Awards will have distributed more than \$31m to 171 honorees.

With their unrestricted \$250,000 cash prize, the Heinz Awards are among the most financially significant honours for artists in the US, along with others like the \$800,000 so-called MacArthur Genius Grants and the \$100,000 Bucksbaum Award, the latter of which is given to a stand-out participant in each edition of the Whitney Biennial.