

## GETTY MEDAL TO ALICE WALTON, MARTIN PURYEAR, KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH Getty's highest honor to be presented in New York City this fall



Alice Walton



Martin Puryear



Kwame Anthony Appiah

Photo by Francesca Bottazzin

LOS ANGELES – The 2020 Getty Medal, the J. Paul Getty Trust's highest honor, recognizing contributions to the arts and humanities, will be given to philanthropist Alice Walton, artist Martin Puryear, and scholar Kwame Anthony Appiah.

"The Getty Medal recognizes excellence and impact in cultural areas that help expand our understanding and appreciation of the world around us," said David Lee, chair of the Getty Board of Trustees. "This year we are thrilled to honor three influential and transformative leaders."

Philanthropist Alice Walton is dedicated to expanding access to the arts and arts education to communities throughout our nation. Martin Puryear is one of today's most influential sculptors, with powerful work that expresses respect for and mastery of craft traditions from around the world. And through his innovative scholarship, philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah deepens our understanding of identity and cosmopolitanism, helping to define what it means to be a citizen of the world.

The J. Paul Getty Medal, established in 2013, has previously been awarded to 14 distinguished individuals to honor their extraordinary contributions to the practice, understanding, and support of the arts and humanities.

Ms. Walton founded the Crystal Bridges American Art Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas, in 2011. "Through her vast and generous philanthropy, Alice Walton has advanced our understanding and appreciation of American art, increased access to art in communities across the country, and emphasized the importance of diversity on museum boards," said James Cuno, president of the J. Paul

Getty Trust. “Her work on behalf of both the arts and healthcare stems from her deep commitment to improving people’s lives.”

“I deeply appreciate the J. Paul Getty Trust’s acknowledgment of my work, and the work of my colleagues, as we help broaden understanding of and access to outstanding works of art,” said Ms. Walton. “This is a meaningful honor from an institution renowned for its dedication to the visual arts.”

Mr. Puryear’s sculpture has been recognized over 50 years for its abstract organic forms. “Martin Puryear’s powerful hand-crafted sculpture delves deeply into African American history, while reflecting global influences in craft and material,” said Mr. Cuno. “His work combines traditional techniques with timeless cultural references. He inspires us every day with ‘That Profile,’ his towering work at the Getty Center.”

Said Mr. Puryear, “It is a great honor to join the list of distinguished artists who have received the Getty Medal.”

Kwame Anthony Appiah is a professor of law and philosophy at New York University and an ethics columnist for the New York Times Magazine. “Anthony Appiah’s writings on culture and identity are of the greatest importance as we confront increasing populism and ethnic nationalism in our daily lives,” said Mr. Cuno. “It is for this reason, and the intellectual elegance of his scholarship, that we are honored to bestow upon him the Getty’s highest honor.”

“As a philosopher, I have always felt it a great privilege to be invited into conversations with those who sustain the arts,” said Professor Appiah. “The Getty Medal has established itself by the range and luster of its recipients and I am honored and humbled to join their company.”

The Getty Medal awards will be presented in September at the Morgan Library in New York City. Medalist nominations are reviewed and awardees determined by the J. Paul Getty Trust Board of Trustees.

Past recipients of the J. Paul Getty Medal include Mary Beard, Nancy Englander, Frank Gehry, Thelma Golden, Agnes Gund, Ellsworth Kelly, Anselm Kiefer, Mario Vargas Llosa, Yo-Yo Ma, Lord Jacob Rothschild, Ed Ruscha, Richard Serra, Lorna Simpson, and Harold Williams.

## **BIOS**

### **Alice Walton**

Alice Walton is a committed patron of the arts and philanthropist. She founded Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, in 2011 and serves as chairwoman of the museum’s Board of Directors. She is a board member of the Walton Family Foundation and founder of the Alice L. Walton Foundation.

Recently, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art opened a satellite location, the Momentary, which focuses on contemporary visual and performing arts. These two institutions share a mission of

providing access for all to world-class art, and to date, Crystal Bridges has welcomed more than five million visitors from around the globe.

Ms. Walton's philanthropic vision and commitment to increasing access to outstanding works of American Art extend to communities across the country. In 2017 she founded Art Bridges, a nonprofit foundation that partners with institutions of all sizes to provide greater access to American art through projects that deeply engage communities.

In addition to her focus on access to the arts, Ms. Walton recently announced the formation of the Whole Health Institute and Chopra Library. Based in Bentonville, the institute will drive radical transformation in healthcare delivery with the ultimate goal of making whole health and well-being affordable and accessible nationwide.

She was the first chairperson and driving force behind the Northwest Arkansas Council. This organization played a major role in securing the development of the Northwest Arkansas National Airport, improving transportation infrastructure throughout the region. She also established Camp War Eagle, which offers Northwest Arkansas children of differing socio-economic backgrounds an exceptional summer-camp experience.

Ms. Walton's arts and philanthropic leadership has prompted numerous accolades. She is a recipient of the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art Medal, the John Cotton Dana Medal for Visionary Leadership in Museums, and the Leonore and Walter Annenberg Award for Diplomacy through the Arts for her significant philanthropic contributions. She was recognized by TIME magazine in 2012 as one of the most influential people in the world and was inducted into the International Women's Forum Hall of Fame in 2018.

Ms. Walton has served as a member of the board of the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Trustees' Council of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity University and an honorary Doctor of Arts and Humane Letters from the University of Arkansas.

## **Martin Puryear**

Over the last five decades Martin Puryear has created a body of work based on abstract organic forms rich with psychological, cultural, and historical references. His labor-intensive sculptures are made by hand at his studio in upstate New York. They combine practices adapted from many different traditions, including wood carving, joinery, and boat building, as well as more recent technology. Growing up, Mr. Puryear studied ornithology, falconry, and archery, and in the 1960s he volunteered with the Peace Corps in west Africa, where he educated himself in the region's indigenous crafts. Since then he has continued to travel extensively, observing a range of cultures and their unique approaches to object making. "I think there are a number of levels at which my work can be dealt with and appreciated," he has said. "It gives me pleasure to feel there's a level that doesn't require knowledge of or immersion in the aesthetic of a given time or place."

Mr. Puryear was born in 1941 in Washington, D.C., and was educated at Catholic University in Washington, the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts in Stockholm, and Yale University. His first one-person exhibition was held in 1968, and since then he has exhibited throughout the world and received public commissions in Europe, Asia, and the United States. He represented the United States at the 1989 Bienal de São Paulo, where he was awarded the festival's Grand Prize, and his work was featured in Documenta 9 in 1992. In 2007 the Museum of Modern Art in New York organized a survey of his work that traveled to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the San Francisco Museum of

Modern Art, and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. In 2015 the Art Institute of Chicago organized an exhibition of 50 years of his works on paper that traveled to the Morgan Library and Museum in New York and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington. Mr. Puryear received a MacArthur Foundation award in 1989 and a National Medal of Arts from President Obama in 2011. In 2019 he represented the United States at the 58th Venice Biennale.

## **Kwame Anthony Appiah**

Kwame Anthony Appiah is Professor of Philosophy and Law at New York University.

His books include “In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture” (winner of the Herskovits and Anisfield-Wolf awards), “The Ethics of Identity” (a New York Times Editors’ Choice), “Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers” (winner of the Arthur Ross Book Award), “The Honor Code” (a T.L.S. Book of the Year), and 2018’s “The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.”

His honors and awards include honorary degrees from Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Duke, and many other universities; and the National Humanities Medal, which President Obama conferred on him in 2012. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the Royal Society of Literature. He has served as the president of PEN American Center, the Modern Language Association, and the American Philosophical Association’s Eastern Division.

Professor Appiah’s interests include probabilistic semantics, African traditional religions, African and African American intellectual and literary history, political and moral philosophy, and the philosophy of the social sciences. A special issue of the journal Neuroethics was devoted to his book “Experiments in Ethics,” which explores the interface of ethics and psychology. More recently, a special issue of New Literary History was devoted to his cultural work.

He serves on the boards of Facing History and Ourselves, the New York Public Library, and the Public Theater, and he is a member of the Visiting Committee for the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at New York’s Metropolitan Museum. Earlier he served on the advisory board of the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum for African Art and the International Team of Experts for the Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss. He is a founding member of the Society for Progress, which aims to advance the integration of ethical considerations into the conduct of business. He was a juror for the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction in 2004. In 2018 he chaired the committee of judges for the Man Booker Prize in London, and he serves as chair of the jury for the Berggruen Prize for Philosophy and Culture. He also writes “The Ethicist,” a weekly column for the New York Times Magazine.

Prior to coming to New York University, he held chaired professorships at Princeton and Harvard.

### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Julie Jaskol  
jjaskol@getty.edu  
(310) 440-7607  
Getty Communications

###

**Getty** is a leading global arts organization committed to the exhibition, conservation, and understanding of the world's artistic and cultural heritage. Working collaboratively with partners around the globe, the Getty Foundation, Getty Conservation Institute, Getty Museum and Getty Research Institute are all dedicated to the greater understanding of the relationships between the world's many cultures. The Los Angeles-based J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs share art, knowledge, and resources online at [Getty.edu](http://Getty.edu) and welcome the public for free at the Getty Center and the Getty Villa.

