

## CHARLOTTE STREET ANNOUNCES 2024 ART OMI RESIDENCY + BYRON C. COHEN AWARD RECIPIENTS



(Left to right) 2024 Art Omi Artist Residency recipient Jill Downen (Photo by Honesty Taszhé Gant); 2024 Byron C. Cohen Award recipient Aleah Washington

**KANSAS CITY, MO, February 27, 2024:** Charlotte Street is pleased to announce the selection of Kansas City visual artists **Jill Downen** for the [Art Omi International Artist Residency Program](#) and **Aleah Washington** for the [Byron C. Cohen Award](#). Each year Charlotte Street provides past Visual Artist Award Fellows the opportunity to advance their artistic careers and professional development through these additional awards.

Since 2005, a Charlotte Street Award Fellow has been chosen to attend the **Art Omi Residency**, a highly respected international artists residency program in Upstate New York. All past award recipients are invited to submit applications to Art Omi with one spot guaranteed for a Charlotte Street Fellow. Artists are selected by the Art Omi selection panel.

This year's recipient, **Jill Downen**, is a **2015 Visual Artist Award Fellow** who works in site-responsive installations, sculpture, and drawing. **Downen** writes, "As an artist-in-residence at Art Omi, I look forward to engaging in dialogue with visiting critics and participating in a community of international artists while I make new work. I want to transform my studio into an art installation; with Dia Beacon nearby, I know I'll have plenty of inspiration." Not only does the selected artist benefit from the fully-funded residency and professionally curated exhibition, but all applicants have their work viewed by a selection panel comprised of nationally known artists, arts professionals, and art collectors.

# CHARLOTTE STREET

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The **Byron C. Cohen Award** provides one Kansas City-based visual artist with funding to attend a leading national/international art fair of their interest. **Aleah Washington** is a textiles artist and one of this year's Visual Artist Award Fellows. The award is administered by Charlotte Street and funded by contributions made to Charlotte Street in memory of Byron C. Cohen. The artist for the annual award is selected by a panel of local and national curators as part of Charlotte Street's Visual Artist Awards selection process.

For interview requests or other press inquiries, contact Marketing + Communications Manager Hope-Lian Vinson at [hope@charlottestreet.org](mailto:hope@charlottestreet.org).



### ABOUT JILL DOWNEN

Jill Downen (b. 1967, Belleville, IL) is a non-binary American artist based in Kansas City who works in site-responsive installations, sculpture, and drawing. Significant awards include the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Stone and DeGuire Contemporary Art Award, the Charlotte Street Visual Artists Award, and a Santo Foundation Grant. Jill Downen has created installations at The Momentary/Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, The Oklahoma City Museum of Art, and for *Open Spaces: The Exhibition*. Their residencies include MASS MoCA, the MacDowell Colony National Endowment for the Arts residency, and Cité International des Arts residency in Paris, among others. Downen has lectured about their work extensively, including the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and the Luce Irigaray Circle Philosophy Conference in New York. They hold a B.F.A. from the Kansas City Art Institute and an M.F.A. from the Sam Fox School at

Washington University in St. Louis. Jill Downen is the chair of sculpture at the Kansas City Art Institute and is represented by the Bruno David Gallery in St. Louis.



### ABOUT ALEAH WASHINGTON

Aleah Washington is a Dallas, Texas native who currently lives in Kansas City, Missouri. She uses fabric to create abstract work that takes topographical maps and sewing techniques as inspiration. A playful collage approach is then used that creates texture through improvisational quilting methods, with themes that explore identity and environment. Ideas of unity build strength among people while reflection of history exposes a vulnerable past of land and various bodies of water. Having a background in painting and drawing influenced her quilts to be displayed and designed in a similar

composition. Aleah received her B.F.A. from the Kansas City Art Institute in 2022 and is currently a Charlotte Street Artist Studio Resident.

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### **ABOUT ART OMI**

Art Omi International Artists Residency invites visual artists from every continent, representing a wide diversity of artistic styles, to gather in rural New York State to experiment, collaborate, and share ideas. During four weeks each June-July, concentrated time for creative work is balanced with the stimulation of cultural exchange and critical appraisal. Learn more at [www.artomi.org](http://www.artomi.org)

### **ABOUT BYRON C. COHEN AWARD**

The Byron C. Cohen Award honors Byron's passion for art, artists, and travel, and his desire to connect Kansas City and its artists to the national and international art world. Byron was adamant that exposure to premier art fairs such as Art Basel, New York art fairs, and various satellite fairs would enable collectors and artists to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the visual arts. With this in mind, the Byron C. Cohen Award was established to provide local artists funding to attend premiere fairs. A panel of local and national curators selects the Byron C. Cohen Award recipient annually as part of Charlotte Street's annual Visual Artist Awards selection process. Eileen Cohen, Toma Wolff, and Mark Cohen serve as advisors to the Byron C. Cohen Fund at Charlotte Street.

### **ABOUT CHARLOTTE STREET**

Charlotte Street centers Kansas City's most forward-thinking visual artists, writers, and performers—acting as the primary incubator, provocateur, and connector for the region's contemporary arts community, and its leading advocate on the national stage. Since 1997, Charlotte Street has distributed over \$2.5 million in awards and grants to artists and their innovative projects, and connected individual artists to each other and to the greater Kansas City community. For more information about Charlotte Street, its awards, programs, and initiatives, visit [www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org).

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