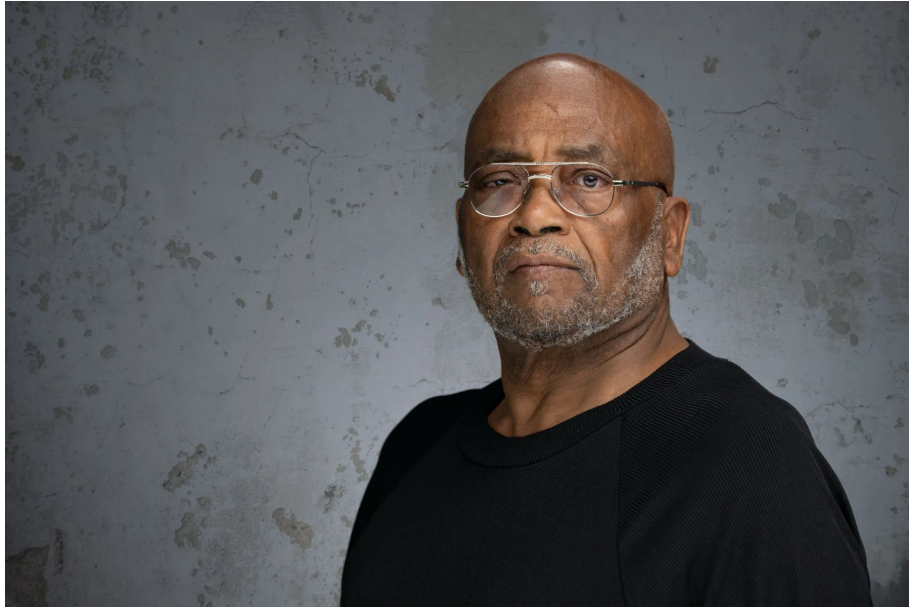


NEWS

AKINSANYA KAMBON WINS HAMMER MUSEUM'S MOHN AWARD

By News Desk 𠄎

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The [Hammer Museum](#) has announced sculptor, painter, and ceramicist Akinsanya Kambon as the winner of the Mohn Award, which the institution presents in connection with its Made in LA Biennial. The prize honors underrecognized and emerging artists from the Los Angeles area, whose work the biennial was established to support. Kambon will receive \$100,000 and will see a catalogue of his work published following the event's December 31 close.

Curated by independent curator Diana Nawi and the Hammer Museum's Pablo José Ramírez, this year's edition of Made in LA was titled "Acts of Living" after a quote from artist Noah Purifoy: "One does not have to be a visual artist to utilize creative potential. Creativity can be an act of living, a way of life, and a formula for doing the right thing." Though he is an accomplished visual artist, Kambon's work, life, and career fit neatly into this rubric. Born Mark Teemer in Sacramento in 1946, he was stricken with polio as a child. While recovering, he turned to drawing for solace. In 1966, he was drafted into the Marine Corps, serving in Vietnam until 1968. On his return home, he became lieutenant of culture for the Sacramento Chapter of the Black Panther Party, a role he retained throughout the 1960s and 1970s, during which time he made *The Black Panther Coloring Book* in an effort to bring attention to social injustice and racial inequality.

Kambon earned a BA and an MA from California State University, Fresno, in 1974 and 1976, respectively, and began teaching free art classes for kids and organizing gang summits with the aim of creating truces and thus reducing violence among California youths. Through a practice embracing drawing, painting, sculpture, and ceramics, he explores themes of colonization, slavery, power, and spirituality. At the Made in LA Biennial, he presented a group of ceramic vessels, sculptures, and plaques tracing Black diasporic history from Africa to America. “Everybody has a different reason for doing art. I think art is a way of educating and uplifting humanity,” he told the *Art Newspaper*.

The Hammer Museum announced the winners of two other Made in LA–affiliated prizes as well. Conceptual artist Pippa Garner (also a Vietnam vet) won the Career Achievement Award, while Jackie Amézquita won the Public Recognition Award. Each will receive \$25,000.