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Contact: Mark Rossier
212-366-6900 x 211
mrossier@nyfa.org

**NYFA Announces Inaugural Winners of
The Basil H. Alkazzi Award for Excellence in Painting**

BROOKLYN, N.Y. (April 22, 2010) — The New York Foundation of the Arts (NYFA) has awarded The Basil H. Alkazzi Award for Excellence of \$40,000 to Mr. Bruce Pearson and Ms Mary Temple, both of Brooklyn, NY. They will each receive \$20,000.

The recipients were selected by Alkazzi and Lowery S.Sims, Curator at the Museum of Arts and Design, from a pool of 1,277 applicants.

“We live in a fast-moving culture that grows increasingly more abstract, away from the physical touch, away from the physical ground of being - away from the act of creation by hand,” said Alkazzi regarding the creation of the award. “I want in my own way, to encourage the glorious expressions of pencil, brush, and paint, and to nurture the kind of artist and the kind of art that I like and respect.”

“I loved Bruce Pearson's highly creative work, and found total empathy with his gouache on paper paintings, it is a medium very close to my heart, and one that as an artist, I always use,” said Alkazzi.

Upon receiving the news Pearson said, “I feel like I just won the Academy Award. It is incredibly generous for an artist to have set up an award that would benefit other artists. I am very excited, and honored to have been chosen this year. The award means a lot to me and is going to help so much this year. Thank you so much Basil Alkazzi. Thank you so much, NYFA.”

During the selection process, Alkazzi and Sims were equally struck by Temple’s paintings.

“Mary Temple's work is mesmerizing,” continued Alkazzi. “She has taken painting onto a plane I had not envisaged or imagined.”

Temple will use the prize to fund a new body of work she is beginning and she wishes to thank Alkazzi, Sims and NYFA, as well.

“Receiving the Basil Alkazzi Award for Excellence is an incredible honor, and something I see as a landmark event in my life,” said Temple. “It is critical for me to know that I am making connections to my audience through the work I make. This award represents that communication and helps sustain it. It is strengthening, so that even as I work alone in the studio, I feel connected and supported by my community.”

“NYFA is inspired by the generosity of Basil Alkazzi and honored that he has asked us to administer this important award,” said NYFA Executive Director Michael L. Royce. “At a time when artists are truly struggling, it is a thrill to present \$20,000 to each of these two extraordinary painters.”

Photos of Ms. Temple, Mr. Alkazzi and Mr. Pearson are attached. Ms. Temple’s work may be seen at www.marytemple.com and Mr. Pearson’s at www.brucepearsonstudio.com.

The British artist, Basil Alkazzi, is a prolific and, in his own words, a “compulsive” painter. His distinguished career as an artist spans almost 50 years. Six monographs of work have been published, the most recent being *Resonant Echoes – The Art of Basil Alkazzi* by Dennis Wepman in 2007. His work is held in the public collections of museums worldwide including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Hirshorn Museum – Smithsonian Institute in Washington, the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, Santa Barbara Museum, California, The Tel-Aviv Museum of Art in Israel, The National Council in Kuwait, and Centrum Sztuki in Warsaw, Poland. In addition to being a gifted painter, Mr. Basil Alkazzi is also a generous philanthropist. In 1986, he established The Basil H. Alkazzi Foundation Awards, which are presented annually at the Royal College of Art in London. A cosmopolitan, he has travelled widely, and he has lived and exhibited in London, Athens, and New York. He currently resides in Monaco.

The New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) was founded in 1971 to empower artists at critical stages in their creative lives. Each year we provide over \$1 million in cash grants to individuals and small organizations. Our fiscal sponsorship program is the largest and most established in the country and helps artists and organizations raise and manage over \$3 million annually. Our NYFA Learning programs provide thousands of artists with professional development training and our website, NYFA.org, received over 1.9 million unique visitors last year and has information about more than 8,000 opportunities and resources available to artists in all disciplines.

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