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Author Susan Choi, artist Tala Madani, and arts advocate Michael Fernon to be honored at Fine Arts Work Center's Summer Awards Celebration Gala on July 15th

The annual fundraiser will celebrate the Work Center's commitment to artistic freedom and nurturing the next generation of artists who will shape contemporary culture

Provincetown, MA (June 5, 2023) - National Book Award-winning author Susan Choi and acclaimed visual artist Tala Madani, two past Fine Arts Work Center Fellows, will be honored for their groundbreaking contributions to their respective fields at the Work Center's annual awards gala on Saturday, July 15th.

The annual [Summer Awards Celebration](#) will also recognize long-term patron Michael F. Fernon, who has been instrumental in helping the Work Center achieve a new level of financial sustainability and advance the organization's mission to nurture artists and writers.

Dedicated to honoring past Fellows and leaders whose writing, art, and advocacy have shaped contemporary culture, the awards have previously recognized authors Michael Cunningham and Ann Patchett; poets Mary Oliver and Major Jackson; playwrights Tony Kushner and Paula Vogel; and artists Ai Weiwei, Firelei Báez, Sam Messer, and Robert De Niro, Sr.

Taking place on the grounds of the historic Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, this year's Summer Awards Celebration will bring together more than 400 people for a star-studded evening of cocktails, fine food, entertainment, and breathtaking views of the Provincetown Harbor. This year's Honorary Chair is past Fellow and current U.S. Poet Laureate [Ada Limón](#), who last week became the first person to be [appointed](#) to a second two-year term as U.S. Poet Laureate. Celebrated singer-songwriter and Cape Cod native [Tianna Esperanza](#), whose new album, "Terror," was [hailed](#) as "masterful" by NPR, will be featured at the gala with a special live performance.

"At a time when artistic freedom is under increased threat, we are proud to honor two past Fellows and fearless artists, Susan Choi and Tala Madani, who have used their extraordinary talent, insight, and often sharp humor to explore the complexities of race, gender, and cultural identity," said Sharon Polli, Executive Director of the Fine Arts Work Center. "We are also thrilled to celebrate Michael Fernon, a tireless champion of the Fine Arts Work Center who has played a vital role in ensuring we are well-positioned to support the next generation of artists who will follow in Susan and Tala's footsteps."

The Fine Arts Work Center was founded in 1968 by a group of leading artists and writers, including painter Robert Motherwell and poet Stanley Kunitz. Originally conceived to provide



artists and writers with a community where they could live and work together in the early stages of their creative development, the Work Center today runs one of the world's most influential residency programs. Among its alums are Nobel Prize-winning poet Louise Glück, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Viet Thanh Nguyen, and photographer Jack Pierson.

A Fine Arts Work Center Writing Fellow in 1997-98, [Susan Choi](#) is the author of five novels regarded as some of the most important works of contemporary American literature. Her book, *Trust Exercise*, which explores power and privilege at a performing arts high school in the 1980s, won the 2019 National Book Award for fiction. Her first novel, *The Foreign Student*, a coming-of-age novel set in the 1950s, won the Asian-American Literary Award for fiction. Her second novel, *American Woman*, a fictionalized account of the kidnapping of Patty Hearst, was a finalist for the 2004 Pulitzer Prize. Hailed by [Joan Didion](#) as “a natural – a writer whose intelligence and historical awareness effortlessly serve a breathtaking narrative ability,” Choi currently serves on the Work Center’s Writing Committee and as a trustee of PEN America.

[Tala Madani](#), a Fine Arts Work Center Visual Arts Fellow in 2006-07, is an Iranian-American artist born in Tehran in 1981. Her paintings and animations combine wide-ranging modes of critique, prompting reflection on gender, political authority, and questions of who and what gets represented in art. She has exhibited her work extensively worldwide, including in solo shows at Start Museum, Shanghai (2020); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2019) and The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, which presented her first North American survey, [Biscuits](#), earlier this year. In a 2023 profile of Madani, *The New Yorker* called her “a rarity: a wildly imaginative innovator with a gift for caricature and visual satire.”

A patron of the Fine Arts Work Center since 2002 and past member of the Board of Advisors, Michael F. Fernon is a Senior Vice President/Senior Consultant with the Fernon/Arabadzhev Group at Merrill Lynch Wealth Management. For the past two decades, he has worked with individuals, their families, and selected non-profit organizations such as the Fine Arts Work Center on Cape Cod. Fernon and his partner are avid art collectors and split their time between Provincetown, MA and Fort Lauderdale, FL.

What:

Fine Arts Work Center Summer Awards Celebration

When:

Saturday, July 15, 2023, 5:30 pm cocktails; 7 pm seated dinner

Where:

Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, 1 High Pole Road

Tickets:

[Tables and Tickets Packages](#)



About The Fine Arts Work Center

The Fine Arts Work Center is an international home for artists and writers in Provincetown, Massachusetts — the country's most enduring artists' community. Founded in 1968 by a group of luminary creators including Stanley Kunitz, Robert Motherwell, Josephine and Salvatore Del Deo, and Hudson and Lone Walker, the Work Center has given artists and writers the space and time to pursue their work within a community of peers for more than half a century. The artist-led Work Center supports emerging artists and writers through its world-renowned Fellowship program, and also offers summer workshops and year-round virtual learning opportunities to advance creative practice. Fine Arts Work Center Fellows who have arrived in Provincetown as emerging writers have gone on to win Pulitzer Prizes, National Book Awards, MacArthur Fellowships, and the Nobel Prize in Literature. Visual Arts Fellows have presented their work at the Venice Biennale, The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, and at other venues around the globe. The Fine Arts Work Center supports artistic freedom, nurtures creative connections, and makes possible artistic achievements important to the larger culture.

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