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## **Cécile Whiting Is Awarded the 21st Annual Eldredge Prize for Her Book on Pop Art in Los Angeles**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum has awarded the 2009 Charles C. Eldredge Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in American Art to Cécile Whiting for her book “Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s” (University of California Press, 2006). It is recognized for its “impeccable yet adventurous research, which invites a reconceptualization of pop art and opens a discussion about a region and a period that has needed further exploration.”

The three jurors who awarded the \$3,000 prize were Patricia Hills, acting chair of the department of art history and professor of American art at Boston University; Joy Kasson, professor of American studies and English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and Margaretta M. Lovell, the Jay D. McEvoy Professor of the history of art at the University of California, Berkeley.

The jurors wrote, “Through Whiting’s analysis of the city of Los Angeles and its artists, the reader is persuaded that Los Angeles was a natural birthplace of pop art in the United States. To artists and newly arrived immigrants, Los Angeles represented the essence of the popular: movies, sun, surf, car and motorcycle culture, endless freeways and urban sprawl, billboard advertising everywhere and a relaxed lifestyle. Whiting provocatively suggests that ‘during the 1960s . . . the conception of the city pioneered by pop artists in Los Angeles began to spread, eventually characterizing cities and cultural life throughout the United States.’”

“Cécile Whiting has written a compelling book about the development of pop art in Los Angeles that contributes an important new perspective to the scholarship about American art in the mid-20th century,” said Elizabeth Broun, The Margaret and Terry Stent Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Whiting is chair of the department of art history and a member of the faculty in the graduate program in visual studies at the University of California, Irvine. She earned a doctorate degree from Stanford University in 1986. Whiting has written several books about American art in the mid-20th century, such as “Antifascism in American Art” (1989) and “A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender and

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Consumer Culture” (1997), as well as numerous articles, including most recently “It’s Only a Paper Moon: The Cyborg Eye of Vija Celmins” for the spring issue of the museum’s journal *American Art*. Currently she is working on a project about the trans-Atlantic exchange between Los Angeles and London in the mid-20th century and another about the way in which artists, writers and filmmakers revisited World War II during the 1960s.

The Eldredge Prize, named in honor of the former director of the museum (1982-1988), is sponsored by the American Art Forum, a patrons’ support organization. This annual award, initiated in 1989, seeks to recognize originality and thoroughness of research, excellence of writing and clarity of method. Single-author, book-length publications in the field of American art history appearing within the three previous calendar years are eligible. Dec. 1 is the deadline for 2010 nominations.

Recent Eldredge Prize recipients include JoAnne M. Mancini (2008) for “Pre-Modernism: Art-World Change and American Culture from the Civil War to the Armory Show” (Princeton University Press, 2005) and Rebecca Zurier (2007) for “Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School” (University of California, 2006). A complete list of past winners is available on the museum’s Web site at [americanart.si.edu/research/awards/eldredge](http://americanart.si.edu/research/awards/eldredge).

The museum’s research programs include fellowships for pre- and postdoctoral scholars, extensive photographic collections documenting American art and artists, and unparalleled art research databases. An active publications program of books, catalogs and the journal *American Art* complements the museum’s exhibitions and educational programs.

### **Eldredge Prize Lecture**

On Thursday, Dec. 3, at 4 p.m., Whiting will present the annual Eldredge Prize lecture “California War Babies: Picturing World War II in the 1960s” in the museum’s Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium. A reception follows the event. The lecture and reception are free and open to the public.

### **About the Smithsonian American Art Museum**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum celebrates the vision and creativity of Americans with artworks in all media spanning more than three centuries. Its National Historic Landmark building is located at Eighth and F streets N.W., above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Follow the museum on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, ArtBabble, iTunes and YouTube. Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Web site: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

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