



## Massachusetts College of Art and Design Announces 2023 MassArt Common Good Award Honorees

**Wilco, Western Avenue Studios in Lowell, artist Silvia López Chavez, art teacher Jozeph Zaremba, The Secret Society of Black Creatives, and Dr. Lisa Wong** to be honored for their work at the intersection of art and civic life.

**November 14, 2023 (BOSTON, MA)** – Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) is proud to announce the honorees of the [MassArt Common Good Awards](#), established as a part of its 150th anniversary year to recognize the inclusion of arts and culture in civic life and practice. Celebrating the valuable impact of arts and culture, each of the six honorees pushes the boundaries of advocacy, teaching, placemaking, design thinking, and making in the realm of arts and culture to advance the public influence of the arts and their role in problem solving.

The inaugural recipients of the MassArt Common Good Awards are as follows:

Dominican-American artist **Silvia López Chavez** ('00 Graphic Design and Illustration) will be honored with the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award for her community-centered murals that form connections across disciplines and cultural boundaries. She uses joy as an act of resistance and celebration through her vibrant murals. Her work, which can be seen all over the Commonwealth and beyond, transforms urban spaces by honoring the identity of a place and its people.

Real estate developer **Karl Frey** and his wife **Patty Cullen** will be honored along with the **Arts and Business Council of Greater Boston** for their partnership, with support from tenant artists, to permanently preserve **Western Avenue Studios in Lowell**. One of the largest artist communities in the country, Western Avenue is comprised of 250 artist work studios, 50 artist live/work lofts, an artist gallery, and a 250 person live music performance venue. Western Avenue is home to at least 23 MassArt alumni.

The founders of **The Secret Society of Black Creatives** (SSBC), Evelyn Brito, Malik Williams, MassArt alumni Vladimir Minuty and MassArt faculty member Nerissa Williams Scott, all creative professionals, will be honored for their dedication to creating a pipeline for Black creators into film, music, advertising, and other areas of production. From The Drop, their work in schools and with youth groups to expose young people to the creative industry, to The Konnect, their networking events for young people interested in creative careers, to The Dojo, their mentoring program, SSBC is giving back so youth can see themselves in lucrative production careers.

American rock band **Wilco** will be honored for Solid Sound, the festival they founded in 2010 in partnership with the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA) in North Adams. A testament to their incredible work in collaboration with Mass MoCA, their commitment to the Berkshires, and their adventurous curatorial vision, the Solid Sound festival is a shining example of creating community through arts and culture. They set out to create the kind of festival they, as music fans, would like to attend, and in the process, cultivated a longstanding civic institution that brings thousands of people, economic activity, an unmistakable sense of community, and international visibility to one of the most beautiful corners of the Commonwealth.

Pediatrician, musician, and author, **Dr. Lisa Wong** is an assistant professor of pediatrics and associate co-director of the Arts and Humanities Initiative at Harvard Medical School. With a deep interest in the intersection between the arts and health, she is heavily involved in interdisciplinary programming as well as scholarship on the local, national, and international levels. Lisa has been a pediatrician at Milton Pediatric Associates since 1986, and served as president of the Longwood Symphony Orchestra for 21 years. There, she was the lead designer of the orchestra's "Healing Art of Music Program" which she documented in her book, *Scales to Scalpels: Doctors who practice the healing arts of Music and Medicine*. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Lisa helped create Boston Hope Music to provide music and music education virtually to patients, staff and caregivers. She currently teaches a course on music, health and education at Harvard University and serves on the boards of Conservatory Lab Charter School, A Far Cry ensemble, and BPS Arts Expansion initiative. Most recently she has been working with the Massachusetts Cultural Council on Culture Rx, an innovative model of cultural social prescription for health.

Recently retired Boston Public Schools art teacher **Jozeph Zaremba** ('81 Illustration) will be honored with the inaugural Frances Euphemia Thompson Award for Excellence in Teaching. The award is named for a groundbreaking artist and lifelong educator who graduated from MassArt (then called the Massachusetts Normal Art School) in 1936. Mr. Zaremba, known as "Mr. Z," taught at the Henderson Inclusion and Harbor Schools in Dorchester. A graduate of Lesley College (now Lesley University), a two time Fund For Teachers fellowship recipient, art director at Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester, and a founding teacher of the Harbor School, Mr. Zaremba, like Ms. Thompson, inspired a generation of young students.

Announcing the honorees, President Grant said, "As the nation's only independent public college of art and design, we see ourselves as embedded in our communities, and we know that our job is to create connections that allow for arts and culture to thrive. We celebrate this group of artists, organizers, and innovators, each of whom has applied their unique artistic ability to their individual fields to contribute to the rich fabric of our everyday lives. Their efforts serve as a call to action and remind us all of the important impact that art and design make on our communities and our society."

The honorees will be celebrated at a ceremony on Saturday, December 16, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at the College's Design and Media Center (621 Huntington Avenue, Boston). The event will be

ticketed and open to members of the public. For more information visit [www.massart.edu/massart-common-good-awards](http://www.massart.edu/massart-common-good-awards).

All honorees will receive a custom-made artwork by Fiamma Glass, a Waltham, Massachusetts-based small business owned and operated by two artists and alumni, Caterina Urrata ('12 Glass) and David Weintraub ('10 Glass).

### **About MassArt Common Good Awards**

*MassArt Common Good Awards* celebrate the valuable impact of arts and culture by honoring individuals and organizations that push boundaries of advocacy, teaching, placemaking, design thinking, and making in the realm of arts and culture, placing an emphasis on the public influence of arts and its role in problem solving and quality of life. Nominations for this inaugural cohort were solicited from the MassArt community and from the general public.

### **About Massachusetts College of Art and Design**

[Massachusetts College of Art and Design \(MassArt\)](http://www.massart.edu) is a public, independent institution that prepares artists, designers, and educators to shape communities, economies, and cultures for the common good. Since 1873, MassArt has built a legacy of leadership as the first freestanding public college of art and design in the country, and the nation's first art school to grant a degree. MassArt offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as lifelong learning opportunities in art, design, and art education, taught by world-class faculty.