

# ARTnews



Tanya Aguiñiga and Sanford Biggers. From Left: Photo: Katie Levine; Photo: Justin Lubke

## Artists Tanya Aguiñiga and Sanford Biggers Win \$250,000 Heinz Awards

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The Heinz Family Foundation has given out its two annual arts awards this year to Tanya Aguiñiga and Sanford Biggers. They will each receive an unrestricted cash prize of \$250,000.

Aguiñiga, who is based in Los Angeles, is best known for an interdisciplinary practice that blends craft, sculpture, and performance to think about issues related to migration—particularly as it relates to the U.S.-Mexico border at San Diego, where the artist was born—and Tijuana, where the artist grew up. Her 2020 piece *Metabolizing the Border* consisted of a bodysuit that incorporated pieces of the border wall that she then wore while walking along the wall into the Pacific Ocean. She is currently at work making car-crossing survival kits to help people endure the long waits in the heat that typically accompany attempts to legally cross the border.

In a statement, Teresa Heinz, the foundation's chairman, said, "Tanya has a remarkable gift for capturing stories of the migrant experience and weaving those narratives into her art. Through her installations, visitors are called to learn and to make deeper connections with people whose lives and cultures are often misrepresented because they feel unfamiliar."

Biggers is a New York-based conceptual artist whose wide-ranging practice reflects on various facets of American history and its continued impact on society today. He is best known for his textile-based series "Codex," which is the subject of a traveling survey that opened at the Bronx Museum of the Arts in 2020, before making stops at the California African American Museum in L.A. and the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky. He was a 2017 recipient of the Rome Prize.

In her statement, Heinz said, "Across the span of history, great artists have not only produced works of compelling visual appeal, they have used their gifts to push us, the viewer and audience, to confront hard truths. Sanford creates works that are visually and viscerally powerful as well as unflinching in their examination of the issues of our time."

The foundation also gives out awards in two other categories: environment and economy. This year's two environment winners are Gabe Brown and Jacqueline C. Patterson and the economy winners are William J. Bynum and Dina J. Bakst and Sherry J. Leiwant.