

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Davis Museum at Wellesley College Announces
Joanna Tam as Winner of the 2024 Prilla Smith Brackett Award**



WELLESLEY, Mass. – The Davis Museum at Wellesley College is delighted to announce that Joanna Tam is the recipient of the 2024 Prilla Smith Brackett Award. Tam will receive \$15,000 to support her art practice and will be featured in a virtual exhibition that will go live on the Davis Museum website in October 2024.

Joanna Tam uses video, photography, performance, and installation to examine migration, the notions of safety, and one's connection to a place. Her interdisciplinary practice is driven by her interest in using art to unpack and reflect cultural and socio-political phenomena.

“I am immensely honored to receive the 2024 Prilla Smith Brackett Award,” said Tam. “Institutional support such as this one is crucial to sustaining an artist's practice. This recognition will allow me to continue developing my current body of work, expanding my research, experimenting with new ideas, and sharing my art with a broader audience. I am also grateful for my community of artist friends. Without

their generosity and inspiration, I would not have grown to be the artist I am today.”

The biennial Prilla Smith Brackett Award honors an outstanding female-identified visual artist based in the Greater Boston area. The jury was particularly impressed by Tam's recent body of work, *Visibility Studies*, which examines the meaning of hypervisibility and invisibility pertaining to safety, with a focus on the histories and stories of Asian Americans.

“Tam takes conceptual and personal risks in her work,” says Dr. Amanda Gilvin, the Davis Interim Co-Director, Sonja Novak Koerner '51 Senior Curator of Collections, and Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs. “In her recent performances in public spaces around Boston, she surveils the surveillance of her performances, resulting in an original and incisive social critique.”

The jury was composed of Gilvin, 2022 Prilla Smith Brackett Award winner Maria Molteni, independent curator Rachael Arauz '91, and Wellesley Professor of Art and Art Department Chair David Olsen. Their task was challenging, given a pool of 87 applicants and three exceptional finalists, who also included Cathy Della Lucia and Dell Marie Hamilton.

The Davis Museum will host a celebratory reception and presentation of the artist's work on Monday, October 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the Davis Lobby and Galleries. Tam, award sponsor Prilla Smith Brackett, and the jurors will be in attendance to discuss the artist's work. The event is free and open to the public, and the Davis galleries will remain open until 8:30 p.m. for event attendees.

About the Artist

[Joanna Tam](#) (b. 1972, Hong Kong) is a visual artist and educator who lives and works on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Wampanoag and the Massachusett People, also known as Boston. Her interdisciplinary practice examines the issue of migration, the construction of national identity, and one's connection to places through video, photography, performance, installation, and community engagement. Her current body of work, "Visibility Studies" (2021 - present), unpacks the complex connection between hypervisibility and invisibility in relation to safety and vulnerability for folx at the margins. Tam is a visiting lecturer at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and a member of the Mobius Artists Group.

About the Prilla Smith Brackett Award

[Prilla Smith Brackett](#) is an artist known for working conceptually with landscape, depicting more than a description of a place. She has exhibited throughout the eastern US, including a solo show traveling to eight venues in New England and the Mid-Atlantic States. Other solo exhibitions have been held at the DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, MA; National Academy of Sciences, DC; and The Art Complex Museum, MA.

The biennial Prilla Smith Brackett Award supports a female-identified artist whose work and exhibition record demonstrate extraordinary artistic vision, talent, and skill. Recipients will receive a \$15,000 cash award to be used for travel, research, project development, or any other expenses related to career advancement. The inaugural award was given in 2019.

ABOUT THE DAVIS MUSEUM

A vital resource for communities on the Wellesley College campus and beyond, the Davis Museum is one of the oldest and most acclaimed academic fine art museums in the United States. Its signature Rafael Moneo building houses collections that span the history of art worldwide, from antiquity to the present. Guided by commitments to diversity and inclusion, excellence and innovation, and access for all, the Davis is at the core of Wellesley's liberal arts mission of educating women to make a difference in the world. With exceptional encyclopedic holdings, rotating special exhibitions, and enriching public programs, the Davis warmly welcomes all visitors, including scholars and students of all ages. For visitor information: <https://www.wellesley.edu/davismuseum/visit/directions>.

ABOUT WELLESLEY COLLEGE AND THE ARTS

The Wellesley College arts curriculum and the highly acclaimed Davis Museum are integral components of the College's liberal arts education. Departments and programs from across the campus enliven the community with world-class programming— classical and popular music, visual arts, theatre, dance, author readings, symposia, and lectures by some of today's leading artists and creative thinkers—most of which are free and open to the public.

Since 1875, Wellesley College has been a leader in providing an excellent liberal arts education for women who will make a difference in the world. Its 500-acre campus near Boston is home to some 2,400 undergraduate students from 49 states and 58 countries.

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Image caption: Joanna Tam, *On Time and Water*, 2023, Performance & Water Calligraphy.

Location: Lot Lab in Charlestown Navy Yard, MA. Photo credit: James Barham. Courtesy of the artist.

DROPBOX LINK TO IMAGES:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/obt72dcuhgj2m98g5kxk2/ADw3BJemTholc_QOufTd4VQ?rlkey=ejm155zx1scj41zseg14e9n&e=1&st=c5u4sh10&dl=0

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