

**The Liu Shiming Art Foundation Announces Hank Willis Thomas as the
Inaugural Recipient of the Liu Shiming Legacy Award**

***The honor was conferred during the Foundation's Centennial Gala in New York City,
celebrating the intersection of art, collective memory, and social impact.***



Photo Credit: Jai Lennard

New York, New York – March 2, 2026 – The **Liu Shiming Art Foundation** (LSAF) is proud to announce that acclaimed conceptual artist **Hank Willis Thomas** has been named the inaugural recipient of the **Liu Shiming Legacy Award**. The distinction was formally presented on February 25, 2026, during the Foundation's inaugural gala, an event that also commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Chinese sculptor Liu Shiming (1926–2010).

The Liu Shiming Legacy Award was established to recognize individuals whose sustained contributions to the visual arts mirror the humanistic values and enduring cultural philosophy of Liu Shiming. The award honors practitioners who utilize art as a vehicle for cross-cultural dialogue, engaging deeply with the themes of everyday life and shared social responsibility.

Willis Thomas, whose work frequently explores identity, commodity, and popular culture, shares a profound thematic kinship with Liu Shiming's dedication to representing and celebrating humanity. This similarity was explored in the Foundation's spring 2025 exhibition, *People Everyday* curated by Emann Odufu, which presented the works of Willis Thomas and Liu side by side. The exhibition highlighted their mutual commitment to uncovering the extraordinary within the ordinary, bridging the gap between historical narratives and contemporary social critique.

"The Liu Shiming Legacy Award honors those who perceive art not merely as a medium, but as a shared human experience," said Puiking Hui, Executive Director of the Liu Shiming Art Foundation. "By celebrating individuals who balance profound thoughtfulness and kindness with tangible social impact, we ensure that Liu Shiming's belief in art as a vital, connecting force can continue to inspire and transform our global community."

The presentation of the award served as the centerpiece of the Foundation's Centennial Gala. The evening brought together global cultural leaders, scholars, artists, writers, and arts workers to celebrate the Foundation and the 100-year legacy of Liu Shiming, a figure whose career as both a creator and educator emphasized the emotional and spiritual connections that bind diverse cultures.

About the Liu Shiming Art Foundation

Established in 2021, the Liu Shiming Art Foundation supports contemporary art worldwide while elevating and preserving the art of renowned Chinese artist Liu Shiming (1926-2010). Based in New York, the Foundation curates contemporary art exhibitions and provides scholarships, grants, and exchange opportunities to cultivate and grow a global arts discourse that recognizes common humanity, as Liu Shiming did as a teacher, through his art and life. [lsmartfund.org](https://smartfund.org).

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Max Kruger-Dull

Tel: +1-212-675-1800

Blue Medium, Inc.

max@bluemedium.com