

MASSART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

MEDIA CONTACT:

Matt Wilder

617-504-1718

matt@wilderstrategies.com

Somerville Public Schools Art Teacher May Chau to be Honored with 2024 MassArt Common Good Award

BOSTON – Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) President Mary K. Grant has announced that **May Chau** (BFA '07, Arts Education), Visual Arts Supervisor for Somerville Public Schools, will be one of six recipients of a 2024 MassArt Common Good Award. Chau, a resident of Arlington, will receive the Frances Euphemia Thompson Award for Excellence in Teaching, in recognition of her dedication to fostering creativity and critical thinking through arts education.

“May’s dedication to arts education has shaped countless young minds and inspired creative futures,” said President Grant. “As an artist and educator, she exemplifies the power of mentorship, collaboration, and imagination to spark lifelong learning and build inclusive communities. We are proud to celebrate her work with this year’s Common Good Award.”

As Visual Arts Supervisor, Chau oversees the arts education of nearly 5,000 students across 10 schools in Somerville, fostering an inclusive and exploratory environment where students can experiment and develop transferable skills. Her collaborative approach to teaching emphasizes the value of creativity as a foundation for success in any field, encouraging students to draw connections between their artistic experiences and broader applications in their lives.

Chau’s commitment to lifelong learning and professional development has been instrumental in shaping her approach to arts education. In addition to earning a graduate certificate in Creative Leadership through the Perrone Sizer Institute, she has participated in workshops at renowned institutions such as Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program and Harvard’s Office of the Arts. An alumna of MassArt (BFA '07, Arts Education), Chau has also been an active member of professional organizations, including the National Art Education Association and the National Council on Education for Ceramic Arts. Her dedication to her craft and her students has earned her recognition as a leader in the field, reflecting her passion for cultivating creativity in others.

MASSART

Chau will be celebrated alongside five other distinguished honorees, including **Shirley Ann Session Edgerton**, community activist, educator, and founder of Rites of Passage and Empowerment Program (R.O.P.E.); **Toni Elka** (BFA Painting '86), founder of Future Chefs; **Yinette Guzman** (BFA Architecture '08), Senior Project Manager of Design and Placemaking at the North Shore Community Development Coalition; photographer **Thaddeus Miles**, Senior Director of Diversity Initiatives at MassHousing and founder of the Black Joy Initiative; and acclaimed documentary filmmaker **Frederick Wiseman**. Each honoree will receive a custom-made, inscribed artwork by Sam Kim, a Lowell-based ceramics artist and MassArt graduate (BFA Industrial Design and Ceramics '18).

“This year’s Common Good Award recipients reflect the many ways artists can drive societal change, change perspectives, and honor the diversity that helps communities thrive,” said President Grant. “Each of these recipients have demonstrated innovative work in education, community building, and advocacy and stand as a testament to the essential role that creativity plays in shaping our collective future. We are honored to recognize their contributions to the common good.”

The MassArt Common Good Awards ceremony will take place on Saturday, December 7, 2024, at noon at MassArt’s Design and Media Center (621 Huntington Avenue, Boston). The event is free and open to the public, though tickets are required.

For more information on attending the event or learning about the MassArt Common Good Awards, visit www.massart.edu/massart-common-good-awards.

###

About Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt)

Founded in 1873, Massachusetts College of Art and Design is the nation’s first public, independent college of art and design. The College is dedicated to fostering the creativity of artists, designers, and educators who will shape communities and culture for the common good.

About MassArt Common Good Awards

The MassArt Common Good Awards celebrate individuals and organizations who use art and design to make a positive impact on society. Honorees demonstrate the essential role of the arts in advocacy, education, and community development, contributing to the quality of life and problem-solving efforts in today’s world.

About Frances Euphemia Thompson

Alumna Frances Euphemia Thompson was a groundbreaking artist and lifelong educator who

MASSART

was one of the first African-American women to graduate from MassArt (then called the Massachusetts Normal Art School), in 1923. At MassArt, Thompson developed her own art education methodology, which became her thesis, and later, her book. *Art in Elementary Schools, A Manual for Teachers* was published by the Tennessee State Department of Education in 1943 and helped to further scholarship on art education for rural Black students in Tennessee. Thompson spent most of her career as an art professor and director of the art department at Tennessee State University.