



# ANONYMOUS WAS A WOMAN

Anonymous Was a Woman is an awards program for women artists over the age of 40 that started in 1996 and has paid out a total of \$5.8 million to 230 artists. The intention of the grant is to encourage women artists over 40 to continue their work despite the often uneven treatment and pay between men and women in the art world. The fund name is “in reference to a line in Virginia Woolf’s ‘A Room of One’s Own,’ to pay tribute to female artists in history who signed their paintings ‘Anonymous’ so that their work would be taken seriously.”

The donor behind the grant, Susan Unterberg, was anonymous until last summer, when the program was profiled by [the New York Times](#). She worried that her funding of the grant may impact the way in which she or her art was perceived. Now, “she has decided to come forward so that she can more openly argue on behalf of women who are artists, demonstrate the importance of women supporting women, and try to inspire other philanthropists.”

“Ms. Unterberg, 77, is based in New York, and has had her photographic work in a few major museum collections — including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Jewish Museum — and she had a career retrospective at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati in 2004. But she said she has experienced firsthand the hurdles faced by female artists all over the world.

“They don’t get museum shows as often as men, they don’t command the same prices in the art world,” she said. “And it doesn’t seem to be changing.”

The need for this type of support, Ms. Unterberg said, remains as pronounced as it was when she started. “It’s still a political moment two decades later,” she said, adding that the National Endowment for the Arts “is still under threat and women are still facing challenges in midcareer.”

“Statistics cited by the National Museum of Women in the Arts show that female artists earn 81 cents for every dollar made by male artists; that work by female artists makes up just 3 percent to 5 percent of major permanent museum collections in the United States and Europe; and that of some 590 major exhibitions by nearly 70 institutions in the United States from 2007 through 2013, only 27 percent were devoted to female artists.”

It is because of these challenges that her awards have been all the more impactful for its recipients. The artist Carrie Mae Weems recalls sitting at her desk in Syracuse in 2014 “feeling very anonymous and misunderstood and trying to figure out how to make some new work” when she got the call.

“I was offered this extraordinary gift,” she said. “It was important, because I needed the money, but more than anything, I needed the encouragement and the support to keep making, to keep pushing — to continue to work in spite of all of the pressures.” “‘It came right on time,’ said Amy Sherald, who received the award in 2017 before it was announced that she would be painting Michelle Obama for the National Portrait Gallery. ‘The time I got the check I actually was at a point where I couldn’t pay my rent,’ she said in a telephone interview. ‘I had \$1,500 left and that’s exactly what my rent was. The announcement of the portrait had just come out and I was sitting there flat broke. It saved my life in terms of securing my studio to make that portrait.’”

Ms. Unterberg has been the sole funder of the program since its inception from funds from the foundation she and her sister inherited after the death of their father, Nathan Appleman. The program is administered by FJC and we are continually inspired by this long-term and influential philanthropic giving and are honored to be a part of the Anonymous Was a Woman community.

\*Information was pulled from the New York Times article [“She Gave Millions to Artists Without Credit. Until Now.”](#) published on July 20th, 2018, by Robin Pogrebin.



First Lady Michelle Obama by Amy Sherald, 2018. Oil on linen. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery



## CHARITY SPOTLIGHT

### INSIDE FJC

Please join us in congratulating Meghan Hudson on her new position as Chief Operating Officer for FJC! Meghan is moving from her role as Director of Financial Services and has served the FJC community for over eighteen years.

The FJC Fiscal Sponsorship Program is excited to welcome The Filomen D'Agostino Greenberg Music School, which has served the blind and visually impaired for over 100 years through their commitment to helping people pursue their study of music while addressing the challenges posed by vision loss. The recent New York Times Article, highlights both the immense musical achievements of the students and faculty, as well as their unwavering determination in saving the school in a time of great uncertainty.

At the end of 2018, The Filomen D'Agostino Greenberg Music School separated from their long-time parent company. This left the school searching for a new partner and a new space with little notice. It is with great enthusiasm that FJC has taken on this partnership, providing fiscal sponsorship and support where it is needed.

[The New York Times article](#) highlights the impressive reputation the music school has established over its century of operation: "The school has been an unsung staple of New York City arts circles for decades, including 20 years of performances at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and holiday recitals at Midtown Manhattan office buildings. In addition to several performance groups, the school has an archive of roughly 25,000 Braille and large-print musical scores that it said is second in size only to the collection held by the Library of Congress."

"The school serves 120 students, children and adults of varying musical levels. All students attend part time, for lessons, classes and other services, including Braille music transcription." The distinguished students include blind teenage jazz prodigy Matthew Whitaker and the accomplished alumnus, José Feliciano. Feliciano, "sent a statement recalling that the school helped him learn music transcription and other skills."

The music school plays an important role in both the musical and visually impaired communities. With its new partnership with FJC, the school has reopened for the spring semester. For more information on classes, music transcription or about The Filomen D'Agostino Greenberg Music School in general, you can visit their website at <https://www.fmdgmusicschool.org/>.

## FJC WELCOMES FILOMEN D'AGOSTINO GREENBERG MUSIC SCHOOL



Image courtesy of the Filomen D'Agostino Greenberg Music School