

National women's art caucus to honor art historian for outstanding achievement

LAWRENCE -- Marilyn Stokstad, who challenged the art world by showcasing women artists in her now widely used textbook, "Art History," is among five women who will be honored in 2002 for her lifetime contributions to art in America.

The National Women's Caucus for Art will give its annual Honor Award to Stokstad, the Judith Harris Murphy distinguished professor of art history at the University of Kansas, at its national conference Feb. 20 at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia.

The Honor Awards were first presented in 1976 in a White House ceremony. President Jimmy Carter gave the awards to Isabel Bishop, Selma Burke, Alice Neel, Louise Nevelson and Georgia O'Keeffe.

In choosing Stokstad, the caucus noted that her 1995 survey textbook was a direct challenge to the publisher's previous major survey textbook, by H.W. Janson. The Janson book did not include any women among its 3,000 artists.

Abrams/Prentice Hall publishers soon will issue the second edition of Stokstad's "Art History," which was the first new text in the field in more than 20 years. The book has been adopted as the introductory art history textbook in hundreds of colleges and universities throughout the United States.

The book was featured in a profile of Stokstad on the CBS "Sunday Morning" program following its publication and more recently was featured on NBC's "Today" show.

"I am dedicated to education and to the appreciation of the role of the arts in society," Stokstad said. "The reason I began writing for students and for the general public was a missionary zeal to introduce the largest possible number of people to the visual arts."

Stokstad, an expert in medieval art and Spanish art, joined the KU faculty in 1958. She has taught more than 20 courses, ranging from introductory art history courses to graduate seminars. She also wrote "Art: a Brief History" and "Medieval Art."

A strong supporter of women in leadership roles, Stokstad was the second woman president of the College Art Association, a national organization of artists and art historians, and was president of the International Center of Medieval Art.

The four other women's caucus honorees are:

- sculptor Camille Billops, who co-founded New York City's Hatch-Billops Collection, a major archive on African-American visual artists, poets, dancers and playwrights;
- prize-winning printmaker Judith Brodsky, provost of Rutgers University, who greatly expanded the participation of women on the College Art Association board;
- Muriel Magenta, professor of inter-media art at Arizona State University, who has had a major role in promoting world conferences of women artists from Beijing to Nairobi;
- Linda Nochlin, distinguished professor of modern art at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, who is considered the "mother" of feminist art historians. She published her now-famous essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" in 1971 and has published countless texts on women, art and realism.

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