

## Seoul Museum of Art announces 2025 SeMA-HANA Media Art Award.



2025 SeMA-HANA Media Art Award recipients Hiwa K, Anocha Suwichakornpong, Ernest A. Bryant III

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Recognizing standout contributions to the 13th Seoul Mediacity Biennale, *Séance: Technology of the Spirit*, the 2025 SeMA-HANA Media Art Award was last week awarded to Hiwa K and Anocha Suwichakornpong, with an honorary mention for Ernest A. Bryant III.

The sixth edition of the award was announced by Seoul Museum of Art Director Eunju Choi. It was adjudicated by head of the jury, Mika Kuraya (Director of Yokohama Museum of Art); scholars Elena Vogman and Youngbin Kwak; the Biennale's Artistic Directors (Anton Vidokle, Hallie Ayres, and Lukas Brasiskis); and Eunju Choi.

The 13th Seoul Mediacity Biennale, *Séance: Technology of the Spirit*, is on view through November 23. For further information, including an extended program of talks and films, please visit the SMB website.

### **Hiwa K**

Commissioned for the Biennale, *You Won't Feel a Thing* (2025) is a 22-minute video that unfolds from the personal experience of the artist. Suffering a "sharp, deep, and ancient" pain, he seeks treatment first at a hospital and then from a traditional healer. In telling this story, the artist

questions how the corporate logics embedded in Western medicine—“invasive, like the wars brought to Kurdistan”—have marginalized local practices. This leads to a moving reflection on the “cold, distant gaze” of contemporary surveillance, medical, and military technologies and the potential of art to foster alternative perspectives and connections.

The jury admired the work’s representation of the artist not as “a superhuman with special talents, but as an ordinary individual with a vulnerable body.” Its attention to the corporate monopolization of healing also resonated with the exhibition’s attention to the consequences of separating material from spirit, body from mind.

### **Anocha Suwichakornpong**

Anocha Suwichakornpong’s commissioned work, *Narrative* (2025), stages a meeting between people who lost relatives during the 2010 massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in Bangkok and who continue to seek justice despite fifteen years of obstruction by the Thai government. Through its subtle interleaving of documentary and fiction, Suwichakornpong’s film shows not only how the historical record is constructed but how it might be contested.

The jury commended the work for what it reveals of the operations of trauma and memory, which illuminated the exhibition’s broader enquiry into film as a medium through which to access unconscious processes. The theatrical workshop that gives the film its structure can equally be understood as ritual, a psychoanalytic session, and means of alerting the audience to the mediated nature of reality.

### **Honorary mention: Ernest A. Bryant III**

The honorary mention was introduced this year to reaffirm the award’s mission of encouraging artists working in diverse media.

Ernest A. Bryant III investigates how objects and images function in different cultures and contexts. *Self-Medication* (2005) is an interactive sculpture inspired by early twentieth-century Kongo Nkisi figures that dramatizes the encounter between different systems of medicine, belief, and magic; the multimedia installation *Flight Jacket* (2006–2008) was inspired by the potlatch tradition of North America and records an intimate, ritualistic gesture rooted in community.

The jury highlighted Bryant's use of sculptural forms embedded with monitors, prompting reflection on the meaning of encounter. They also praised his proposal of "another economy of generosity and sharing beyond capitalist value systems."

### **Remarks from the Jury and Museum Director**

Head of the jury Mika Kuraya stated: "The jury focused on the award's mission of supporting the practice of living artists. We discussed the sociopolitical dimensions of the curatorial theme and its relationship to capitalism and advanced technologies, making these complex entanglements a central criterion. With the Biennale featuring a significant number of moving-image works, we sought to maintain balance by not privileging any single medium."

Eunju Choi, Director of Seoul Museum of Art, remarked: "Through the jury process, we were reminded that the theme of connecting to worlds beyond waking life is one of art's oldest and most fundamental aspirations. I hope that audiences will revisit this Biennale with the spirit of embarking on a journey into unseen worlds that have always been close, yet are often overlooked."

### **About the SeMA-HANA Media Art Award**

The SeMA-HANA Media Art Award was established in 2014 with the sponsorship of Hana Financial Group to raise the visibility of contemporary art in Korea and expand its audience base. The award honors one or more participating artists in the Seoul Mediacity Biennale whose works present a strong artistic vision, advance new media languages and practices, and resonate with the theme of the Biennale.

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**For high-resolution images, please follow the below**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uvRHjw-o2sfI0iBunC7rxK9z4S0RFjtL?usp=sharing>

**The 13th Seoul Mediacity Biennale Website** <http://mediacityseoul.kr>

**Seoul Museum of Art Website** <http://sema.seoul.go.kr>

### **SMB Social Media channels**

Instagram: [instagram.com/seoulmediacitybiennale](https://www.instagram.com/seoulmediacitybiennale)




X(Twitter): [x.com/mediacityseoul](https://twitter.com/mediacityseoul)

Facebook: [facebook.com/mediacityseoul](https://www.facebook.com/mediacityseoul)

Youtube: [youtube.com/seoulmediacitybiennale](https://www.youtube.com/seoulmediacitybiennale)

## [Appendix A] Images and credit

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|    | <p>2025 SeMA-HANA Media Art Award co-recipient Hiwa K, Photo: Thomas Pirot. Courtesy of the artist and KOW, Berlin.</p>  |
|   | <p>Hiwa K, <i>You Won't Feel a Thing</i>, 2025. single-channel video. 22 min. The 13th Seoul Mediacity Biennale <i>Séance: Technology of the Spirit</i>, Seoul Museum of Art, 2025. Photo: Hong Cheolki. Courtesy of the Seoul Museum of Art</p> |
|  | <p>2025 SeMA-HANA Media Art Award co-recipient Anocha Suwichakornpong, Photo: Alex Xiao. Courtesy of the artist</p>  |

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|    | <p>Anocha Suwichakornpong, <i>Narrative</i>, 2025. single-channel video. 49 min. The 13th Seoul Mediacity Biennale <i>Séance: Technology of the Spirit</i>, Seoul Museum of Art, 2025. Photo: Hong Cheolki. Courtesy of the Seoul Museum of Art</p>  |
|   | <p>2025 SeMA-HANA Media Art Award Honorary mention Ernest A. Bryant III, Courtesy of the artist</p>  |
|  | <p>Ernest A. Bryant III, <i>Self-Medication</i>, 2005 wood, CRT monitor, CCTV camera, "African-Oceanic" museum color matched paint, other natural materials. 10 × 46 × 13 cm. The 13th Seoul Mediacity Biennale <i>Séance: Technology of the Spirit</i>, Seoul Museum of Art, 2025. Photo: Hong Cheolki. Courtesy of the Seoul Museum of Art</p> |



Ernest A. Bryant III,  
*Flight Jacket (Chicken  
Party Flight Jacket  
Potlatch. I, II, III)*,  
2006-2008 chicken  
bones, string, public  
events. 70 × 50 × 10  
cm. The 13th Seoul  
Mediacity Biennale  
*Séance: Technology  
of the Spirit*, Seoul  
Museum of Art,  
2025. Photo: Hong  
Cheolki. Courtesy of  
the Seoul Museum of  
Art

## **[Appendix B] About Seoul Mediacity Biennale**

Since its inauguration in 2000 as an initiative of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul Mediacity Biennale (SMB) has earned international recognition for its experimental engagement with the contemporary condition, new developments in media, and the changing fabric of the city. These themes were first explored in the Biennale's precursor exhibition, SEOUL in MEDIA, which was held three times between 1996 and 1999. Since then, SMB has presented twelve editions, each embodying ideas and activities that resonate with their time.

Each edition of SMB features approximately 50 artists/teams and attracts an average of 140,000 visitors, mediating various forms of participation through exhibitions and programs held at the Seoul Museum of Art (SeMA) and other satellite venues throughout the city. The pre-Biennale program, operated by SeMA since 2022, explores SMB's identity through the museum's permanent collection and digital archives as a means of reiterating SMB's foundational characteristics.