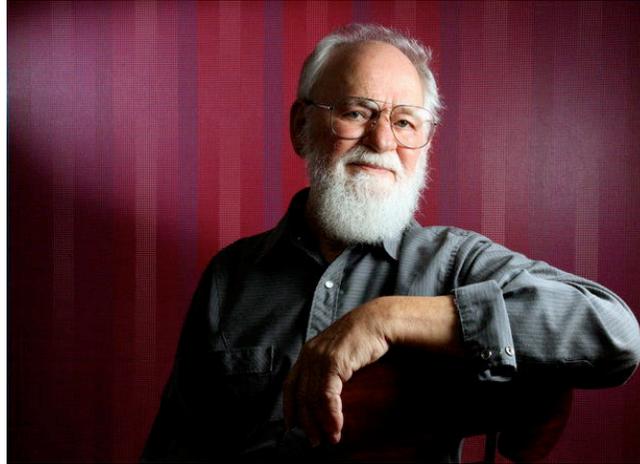


Mike and Jules Belkin, Julian Stanczak among 2015 Cleveland Arts Prize winners



Julian Stanczak, the Special Honoree in the Cleveland Arts Prizes of 2015, in front of his painting "Hot Seven" in his home studio in Seven Hills in 2009. (*Tracy Boulian/The Plain Dealer*)

By **Joanna Connors, The Plain Dealer**

Major artists and arts advocates in Cleveland, among them concert promoters Mike and Jules Belkin and leading Op Art painter Julian Stanczak, are among the artists who have been awarded the 2015 Cleveland Arts Prize, the organization announced.

The winners of the annual awards, now in their 55th year, will be honored at the Cleveland Museum of Art at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 25.

The Belkin brothers won the Martha Joseph Prize, given to arts leaders whose "exceptional commitment, vision, leadership or philanthropy have made a significant contribution to the vitality and stature of the arts in Northeast Ohio."

The Belkins were recognized for "all that they have done to make Cleveland a vibrant, nationally celebrated music, arts and entertainment center," the arts prize announcement said, noting that they launched their business in 1966 with a double bill of The New Christy Minstrels and the Four Freshmen. "As rock and roll exploded as a popular genre, they quickly became leaders in producing musical events that grew into a worldwide industry. Their hard work made Cleveland the most coveted stop between Los Angeles and New York."

William Gould won the Robert P. Bergman Prize, named for the late director of the Cleveland Museum of Art. The prize is awarded to individuals "whose life and activities communicate the joys, excitement and deep human relevance of the arts to broad segments of the Northeast Ohio community."

Gould, the announcement said, "is an artist of multiple talents, from architecture and urban planning to watercolor paintings of industrial and residential scenes. During his more than 50-year career, he has had a significant impact on the Cleveland urban landscape, including the preservation of significant historical industrial buildings."

The Emerging Artist Awards this year go to Gianna Commito (visual arts) and Mary Weems (literature). The Mid-Career Awards go to Felise Bagley (dance) and Michelangelo Lovelace (visual arts).

The Emerging and Mid-Career winners each will receive \$10,000 as part of their prize, as will the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award, H. Leslie Adams, honored for his career as a musician and composer.

Stanczak, an internationally recognized artist and major figure in the Op Art movement, is a Special Honoree for 2015. He won the Cleveland Arts Prize in 1969.

Performances will take place throughout the Cleveland Arts Prize program on June 25, as the honorees receive their prizes. Ticket prices range from the \$250 Red Carpet Ticket and the \$125 Winners Circle Ticket to the \$75 Friend Ticket. A portion of each will be tax deductible. Information about the event and ticket levels are available on the Cleveland Arts Prize website, www.clevelandartsprize.org.