

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Brian Boucher, "Carrie Mae Weems Wins \$625,000 MacArthur
'Genius' Award," *Art in America*, November 25, 2013



Carrie Mae Weems Wins \$625,000 MacArthur “Genius” Award

by Brian Boucher

Artist Carrie Mae Weems is one of 24 recipients of this year's fellowships from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, commonly referred to as "genius" grants. Over five years, she will take home \$625,000. At 60, Weems is the oldest recipient this year.

For more than three decades, Weems has worked principally in photography and video, often combining text with images of Africans and African-Americans to explore the complex history of black identity in America.

"It is Weems's conviction that radicalism and beauty are complementary, not antithetical, that gives her work its distinctive edge," wrote Ernest Larsen in *A.i.A.* in 1999.

In a [video](#) on the foundation's website, Weems pushes back at simplistic views of her and her work: "My disadvantage is that for the most part, . . . I'm viewed only in relationship to my black subjectivity, even though I'm a very complex woman working on many, many different levels."

She also relates her initial disbelief, when she got the call, at being chosen for the grant.

"Not me! Can't be me. Gotta be a mistake," she says. "You know, I put my head down and I cried."