

NEXT FESTIVAL

Dudley Memorial Lecture

VALERIE CASSEL OLIVER

Sydney and Frances Lewis Family
Curator of Modern and Contemporary
Art at Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Valerie Cassel Oliver is the Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Prior to her position at the VMFA, she was Senior Curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. Over the past two decades, Cassel Oliver has organized numerous exhibitions including the acclaimed *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970* (2005); *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* (2012) and major exhibition surveys for Donald Moffett; Benjamin Patterson, Jennie C. Jones, Angel Otero and Annabeth Rosen.

Her debut at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts was the celebrated retrospective, *Howardena Pindell: What Remains to be Seen*, co-organized with Naomi Beckwith (2018). In 2021, she mounted the groundbreaking exhibition, *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture and the Sonic Impulse* (2021) that toured nationally. She is currently organizing the exhibition, *Dawoud Bey: Elegy* that celebrates the artist's meditation on the landscape of history. Opening in November 2023, the exhibition will feature newly commissioned work of Richmond's Historic Slave Trail.

Selected Past Dudley Memorial Lectures

2018

Wendy MacNaughton
Illustrator and Graphic Journalist

2009

Art Spiegelman
Author and illustrator

2005

James Cuno
Director, Art Institute of Chicago

2000

Elizabeth Catlett
Sculptor, printmaker, educator

1999

Robert Hughes
Author and illustrator

1988

Vincent Scully
Art History Professor, Yale University

About the Program

The Dudley Memorial Lecture is an annual lecture series established at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1984 by Argentina's husband, Robert Whittier Dudley, and their six children to commemorate and perpetuate her life's work and interests. The Dudley Memorial Lecture provides memorable and enriching cultural experiences through talks given by a notable artist, curator, critic or educator in the arts.

The Corcoran welcomes gifts to the Dudley Endowment Fund. For more information, please contact Sveta Wilkson at swilkson@gwu.edu

VALERIE CASSEL OLIVER



2023 Dudley Memorial Lecture

Tuesday, April 25th
Flagg Building
Hammer Auditorium
6:00 pm



Valerie Cassel Oliver

Cassel Oliver is the recipient of numerous fellowships and awards including a fellowship from the Center of Curatorial Leadership (2009); the High Museum of Art's David C. Driskell Award (2011); and the James A. Porter Book Award from Howard University (2018). In 2022, she was presented with the Alain Locke International Arts Award, Detroit Institute of Art; the College Arts Association's Excellence in Diversity Award; the Audrey Irmas Award for Curatorial Excellence from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College; and the Brandywine Workshop and Archives' Lifetime Achievement Award. Cassel Oliver holds an Executive MBA from Columbia University, New York; an M.A. in Art History from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and a B.S. in Communications from the University of Texas at Austin.

Corcoran School of the Arts & Design

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



Argentina Copello Dudley

A native of the Dominican Republic, Argentina Copello brought her passion for art and art history with her to Washington when her father was named ambassador to the United States in 1943.

For a quarter of a century, she devoted her time and energy to the Corcoran Gallery of Art. A leader in establishing the volunteer docent program, Argentina quickly became one of the Gallery's champions. She chaired the Corcoran Ball in 1976 and served as president of the Corcoran Women's Committee from 1978 - 1980. She also promoted the establishment of a permanent education department at the Corcoran, personally providing funds for staffing.

A talented artist herself, Argie, as her friends knew her, shared her knowledge and motivated others by training dozens of docents and giving hundreds of gallery tours to children and adults.

With enormous energy and enthusiasm, Argentina Copello Dudley viewed art and art education as illuminating forces that enable people to experience the world with a greater understanding. The Corcoran was fortunate to be the recipient of the devotion and talent of this very gracious lady.

**Argentina Copello Dudley, 1960*
by Enrique Segura, Madrid
Oil on Canvas, Photograph: Robert & Aida Mates



Robert Whittier Dudley

Robert Whittier Dudley was born in Hanover, NH in 1912. At seventeen, Bob invested his meager savings in the post-crash market. Those funds and part-time jobs enabled him to graduate from the University of Wisconsin and the University of Michigan Law School. After serving in the Navy, he married Argentina Copello. For years, they lived in Spring Valley, where they raised six children, eventually moving to Bethesda, MD. Bob was CEO of United Masonry and Consumers Gas, and sat on the boards of a wide array of companies. He also served as a Trustee of Holton-Arms School and Board President for the House of Mercy.

Bob was a practical man, formal and business-like in speech and manner. An avid tennis player, Bob was a smooth dancer and had a beautiful singing voice. After Argie's death, he married Olga Hirshhorn.

When he was young, Bob learned from both bad and good experiences the importance of honesty, integrity, and openness in all his dealings, and worked with the same group of investors for decades. In addition to the edict "never spend principal," Bob instilled in his children the importance of family, steadfast friendships, education, and a sense of humor. As phrased on a memento from his colleagues, "His wisdom gave light."