

2026 Definitions of Special Awards

Conrad House Innovation Award (\$3,500): The mission of the Heard Museum is to advance American Indian art. The Conrad House Innovation Award is given to a work of art that in both concept and quality-of-execution serves **to advance an American Indian art form.**

Winning art of Classifications I through VIII Innovation Awards compete for this award. The Conrad House Innovation Award winner competes for Best of Show. This award honors Conrad House (Navajo/Oneida), an artist who participated in the Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair and Market for many years. House worked in several media—paint, glass, collages, ceramics, textiles—all with a brilliant sense of drama and color. His early death in 2001 deprived the world of American Indian art and modern American art in general of a major innovative talent. Profoundly grounded in his Navajo and Oneida heritage, House used the symbols of that heritage to explore and express the problems of contemporary life.

The Conrad House award was established the year of House's death. The award is given to an artist who is grounded in traditional precepts yet shows originality, vision, and innovation. The work, which may be entered in any of the classifications of artwork, must exemplify House's vision as expressed in his artist statement:

"My concerns as an Artist reflect life and all its complexities, from color and textural relationships, to confronting contemporary issues (i.e., impact of A.I.D.S., political beliefs, spiritual values, environmental destruction, trips to Europe, Sweet Love Relationships, etc.), the list goes on, but are all interrelated. My concerns can change as drastically as the many mediums I play with, from pastels, to clay, to glass, to beads, to collages, to paints, then back to pastels. Freedom of choice is essential.

"With the drawing mediums I can spontaneously release my thoughts and findings, whether literal or not. I am always trying to learn and explore other possibilities freely, therefore growing and changing."

The Idyllwild Arts and Indian Arts & Crafts Association are judged by the Basket Judges.

Idyllwild Arts Imagination Award (\$3,500): The winning work expresses the unique vision and imagination of the artist **in addressing issues of importance to indigenous communities.** The spectrum of the **"imagination" includes concept and/or use of materials and may defy traditional classification.**

We are proud that Idyllwild Arts Foundation - Native American Arts Program & Festival is sponsoring the award. The winning art will be **selected from among all the art** that is entered into Juried Competition.

Indian Arts and Crafts Association Commemorative Award (\$3,500): This award continues the work of 40+ years of the Indian Arts and Crafts Association and honors those artists who seek to carry on its mission. The recipient(s) (artist or collaborators) who have created an artwork which best exemplifies any or all these facets:

- 1) An artistic reference that acknowledges and educates viewers about cultural tradition, authenticity, or the history of American Indians, either through subject matter or execution,
 - 2) What Native Identity means, currently and in the future, and
 - 3) Cultural Appropriation, including the inappropriate use of Native imagery and symbols as well as the fraudulent imitation, production, and marketing of American Indian arts and crafts by non-Native people.
- The winning art will be **selected from among all the art** that is entered into Juried Competition.