

ARTFORUM

Charles McGee Wins Kresge Foundation's First Eminent Artist Award

www.artforum.com
12.09.08

The [Detroit Free Press](#) reports that the Kresge Foundation announced yesterday that Charles McGee has been honored with the foundation's first Eminent Artist Award, a new annual fifty-thousand-dollar prize designed to recognize a local artist for longstanding contributions to Detroit. The award, which puts an exclamation point on the foundation's recent \$8.8-million commitment to the arts in southeastern Michigan, was decided by a three-person panel of area experts, with input from a broad advisory committee. McGee's paintings, sculptures, and assemblages are in public and private collections across the country and on permanent display at the Detroit Institute of Arts among other institutions. McGee also started an art school for kids in 1969, along with Gallery 7, a pioneering cooperative space in Detroit, the first in the city to show black and white artists side by side. In 1978, he cofounded the Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit. Along the way, McGee taught for eighteen years at Eastern Michigan University and still teaches one day a week at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center. "He's the essence of Detroit," says Kresge president Rip Rapson.