

News

Nnena Kalu wins Turner Prize 2025.

Maxwell Rabb

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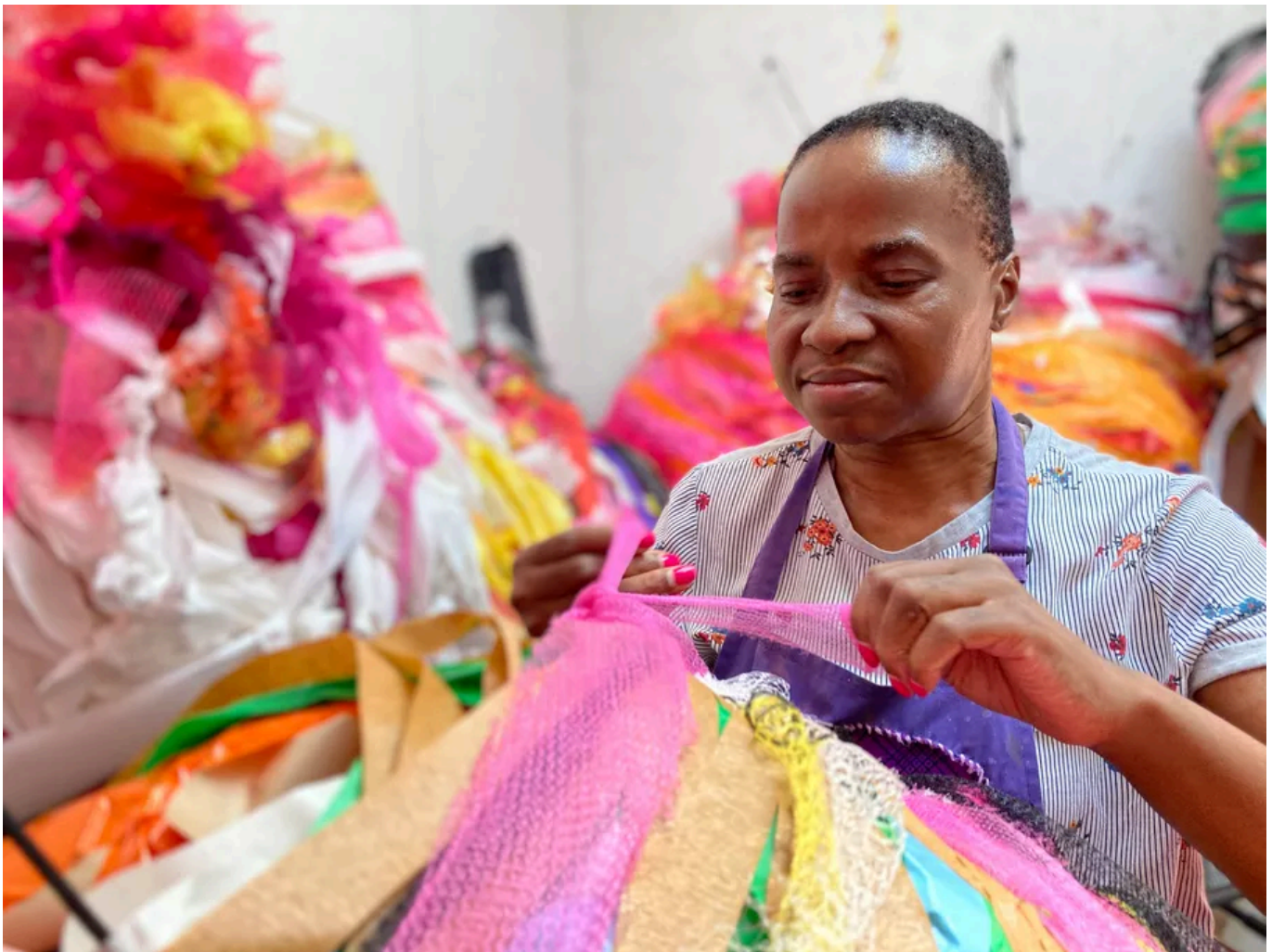
Portrait of Nnena Kalu. Turner Prize 2025. Photo © James Speakman: PA Media Assignments. Courtesy of Tate.

Nnena Kalu, known for her rhythmic and boldly colored abstract work, has won the 2025 Turner Prize, the top award for contemporary artists in the United Kingdom. The news was announced on December 9th during a ceremony at the Bradford Grammar School in England. Kalu is the first neurodivergent artist to win the prize.

“This is a major, major moment for a lot of people,” Charlotte Hollinshead, Kalu’s artistic facilitator, said in an acceptance speech. “It’s seismic. It’s broken a very stubborn glass ceiling.... Nnena’s career reflects the long, often very frustrating journey

we've been on together...to challenge people's preconceptions about differently-abled artists."

The London-based artist will receive £25,000 (\$33,000). The jury recognized Kalu's work from two 2024 exhibitions: *Drawing 21* (2021), a work on paper featured in "Conversations," a group show at Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery; and *Hanging Sculpture 1 to 10. Barcelona*, an installation that was featured in Manifesta 15 in Barcelona.



Portrait of Nnena Kalu. Courtesy of the artist and ActionSpace.

Born in Glasgow in 1966, Kalu is celebrated for her vivid, tactile approach to sculpture and drawing. She works with repurposed materials—VHS tape, fabric, rope, and paper—to build cocoon-like forms through repeated wrapping and binding gestures. Her layered works on paper bear similarly energetic marks.

A longtime resident artist at ActionSpace (a London-based studio for disabled artists), Kalu has recently gained wider recognition. Kalu has mounted plenty of solo exhibitions in recent years, including “Creations of Care” at Norway’s Kunsthall Stavanger in 2025 and an eponymous show at London’s Arcadia Missa in 2024, to name a couple.

The other artists shortlisted for the 2025 Turner Prize were Rene Matic, Mohammed Sami, and Zadie Xa. Those artists will each receive £10,000 (\$13,500). The Turner Prize exhibition, featuring all four artists, will remain on view at Bradford’s Cartwright Hall Art Gallery through February 22, 2026.

The Turner Prize was founded in 1984, named after J.M.W. Turner. Last year, Jasleen Kaur won the prize, with shortlisted artists including Pio Abad, Claudette Johnson, and Delaine Le Bas. Notable past winners include Lubaina Himid in 2017, Steve McQueen in 1999, and Anish Kapoor in 1991.

Maxwell Rabb



Maxwell Rabb (Max) is a writer. Before joining Artsy in October 2023, he obtained an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA from the University of Georgia. Outside of Artsy, his bylines include the Washington Post, i-D, and the Chicago Reader. He lives in New York City, by way of Atlanta, New Orleans, and Chicago.