



Sridhar Balasubramaniyam



Sridhar Balasubramaniyam, Manarsuzhal, 2019-2025

CPW Announces its 2026 Saltzman Prize Winner: Sridhar Balasubramaniyam

Kingston, NY, March 4- [CPW](#) is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2026 Saltzman Prize for Emerging Photographer is **Sridhar Balasubramaniyam**. Selected by a distinguished jury from a shortlist of ten international candidates, Balasubramaniyam is an Indian visual artist based in Chennai, whose work in photography and video explores the intricate relationship between body and land.

The CPW Saltzman Prize, now in its third year, recognizes the extraordinary achievements of an emerging photographer whose recent work has garnered wider visibility and whose distinctive voice contributes fresh perspectives to the dialogue surrounding photography and visual culture. The prize carries a \$10,000 award and will be presented as part of the 2026 CPW Vision Awards gala on May 16. Balasubramaniyam's work will also be featured in a solo exhibition at CPW in 2027.

"We are excited to recognize the outstanding achievements of Sridhar Balasubramaniyam," said CPW Executive Director Brian Wallis. "And we are thrilled to engage with Sridhar and other international artists and photographers in India and beyond."

Drawing on over ten years of experience as a performance artist and photographer in theaters across India, Sridhar Balasubramaniyam creates work that reflects a deep engagement with the folk stories, performances, and tribal weddings of southern India's Dravidian communities. Dravidian refers to a family of languages, wholly distinct from Indo-European, spoken mostly in

southern India and Sri Lanka and including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and, in Pakistan, Brahui.

Balasubramaniyam's acclaimed project, "Body and Land," has earned significant recognition, including the Alkazi Theatre Photography Grant in 2020 and the Serendipity Photography Grant (2020). This work was exhibited at the Alkazi Theatre Archives in 2022 and featured at the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2024. He was a Joop Masterclass nominee in 2025—the educational program of World Press Photo—, and a finalist for [Kg+](#), the open-entry satellite festival of Kyotographie, in 2026.

"I am truly honored to be selected as the recipient of the 2026 Saltzman Prize for Emerging Photographer," Balasubramaniyam said. "To have my work recognized by such an esteemed jury, including my all-time inspiration Carrie Mae Weems, means a great deal to me."

This year's Saltzman Prize was chosen by a jury composed of **Clément Chéroux**, Director, Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson; **Carrie Mae Weems**, visual artist; and **Sarah Meister**, Executive Director, Aperture. From the 2026 Saltzman Prize shortlist, the jury also singled out for honorable mention [Widline Cadet](#) (Los Angeles, CA), and [Kerr Cirilo](#) (Brooklyn, NY).

The Saltzman Prize was created in 2024 by CPW Trustee Lisa Saltzman, in collaboration with CPW, to honor emerging photographers and to pay tribute to her parents Ralph and Muriel Saltzman, passionate collectors, devoted arts patrons, and philanthropists. **Last year's winner, Qiana Mestrich, has a solo exhibition, *Do Not Fold, Spindle, or Mutilate*, now on view at CPW through May 10, 2026.**

About CPW

Founded in 1977 as the Center for Photography at Woodstock, [CPW](#) is a not-for-profit arts organization with a dual mission: to support artists working in photography and related media, and to engage audiences through creation, discovery, and learning. At the heart of CPW's mission is programming that is community-based, artist-centered, and collaborative. To foster public conversation around critical issues in photography, CPW offers exhibitions, workshops, artists' residencies, and access to its Digital Media Lab workspaces. In 2022, CPW relocated from Woodstock to Kingston, NY, and in January 2025, CPW opened its newly renovated headquarters—including a photography museum, and an educational and community center—in a 40,000-square-foot factory building at 25 Dederick Street.

Follow CPW on social media: Instagram [@cpw_kingston](#) | Bluesky [@cpw-kingston.bsky.social](#) | YouTube [@cpw_kingston](#) | X [@cpw_kingston](#)

Press contacts: Press@cpw.org

Myrtille Beauvert, +1 347- 295-7694

Meryl Cooper, +1 917-974-0022