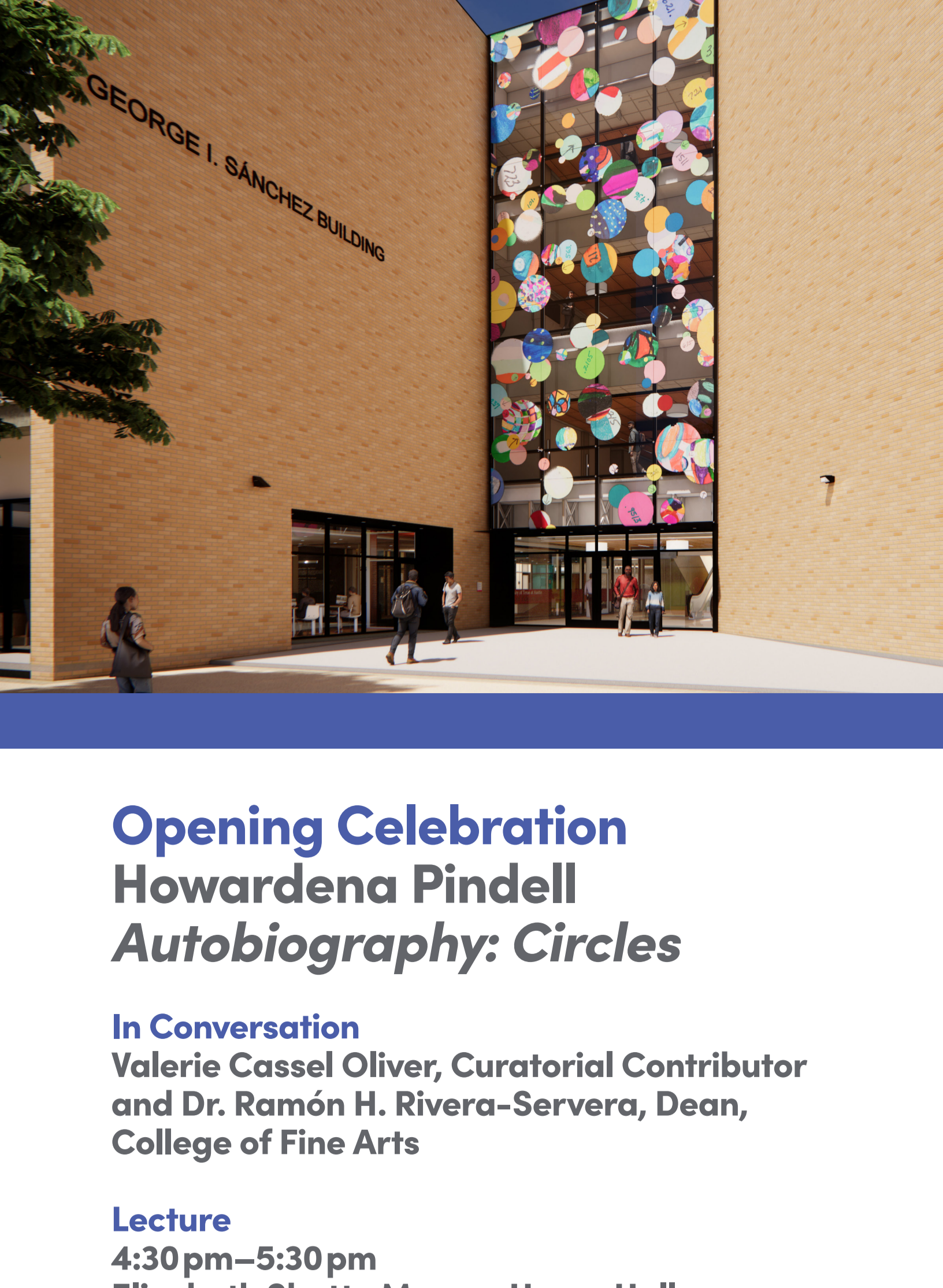


HOWARDENA PINDELL

Autobiography: Circles



Opening Celebration Howardena Pindell Autobiography: Circles

In Conversation

**Valerie Cassel Oliver, Curatorial Contributor
and Dr. Ramón H. Rivera-Servera, Dean,
College of Fine Arts**

Lecture

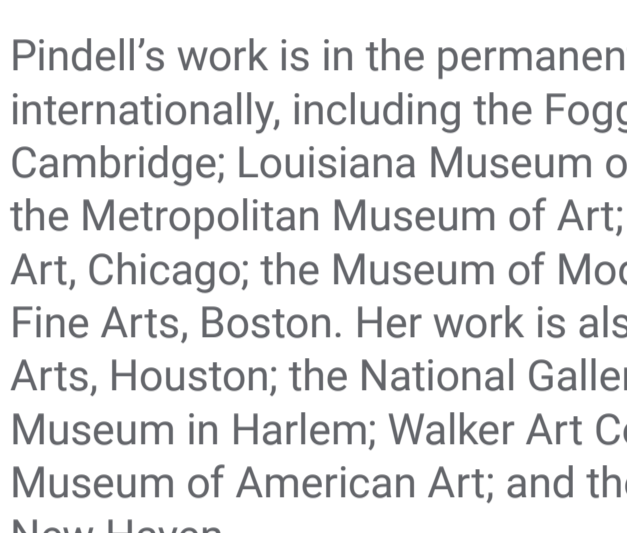
4:30pm–5:30pm

**Elizabeth Shatto Massey Honor Hall
SZB 2.500**

Autobiography: Circles reflects Howardena Pindell's unique approach to abstraction, with dots organized in layered constellations that create depth and movement. It draws on the artist's rich personal and political narrative, blending recurring themes and borrowing visual elements from works made throughout her career. Her use of colored circles is a practice informed by her appreciation of the shape in nature, and a childhood memory of red circles marking dishes designated for Black customers during segregation. Numbers and arrows reflect the artist's interest in mathematics and systems, while also pointing to broader ideas of movement, transformation, and social justice.

The art is integrated into the renovated building façade—designed by McKinney York Architects—through a digital print process in which ceramic ink is fused to the glass panels and carefully lit from the sides. Measuring approximately 25 by 50 feet and spanning multiple stories, the installation evokes the luminous quality of stained-glass.

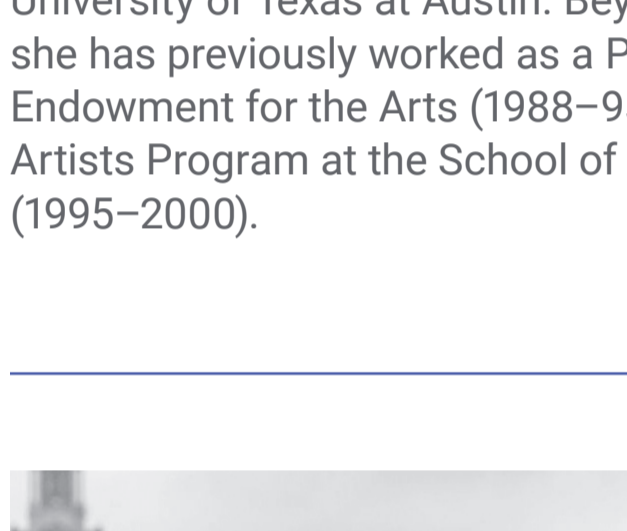
Autobiography: Circles builds on Landmarks' dedication to commissioning artists whose varied perspectives enrich the campus landscape. It also creates curricular connections across disciplines, and fosters new programs for the university and broader community.



Howardena Pindell

Born in Philadelphia in 1943, Howardena Pindell studied painting at Boston University and Yale University. After graduating, she worked at the Museum of Modern Art from 1967–1979, first as Exhibition Assistant, then as Assistant Curator in the Department of National and International Traveling Exhibitions, and finally as an Associate Curator and Acting Director in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books. The role made her the museum's first African American curator. In 1979, Pindell began teaching at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. In 2019, the university honored her as a distinguished professor. She is also a founding member of A.I.R. Gallery, the first all-female cooperative gallery in the United States.

Pindell's work is in the permanent collections of major museums internationally, including the Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Modern Art; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Her work is also held by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the National Gallery of Art, Washington; The Studio Museum in Harlem; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Whitney Museum of American Art; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.



Valerie Cassel Oliver

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 (2000–2017). At the CAM Houston, Cassel Oliver organized numerous exhibitions including the acclaimed *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970* (2005); *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* (2012); and major survey exhibitions for Donald Moffett, Benjamin Patterson, Jennie C. Jones, Angel Otero, and Annabeth Rosen.

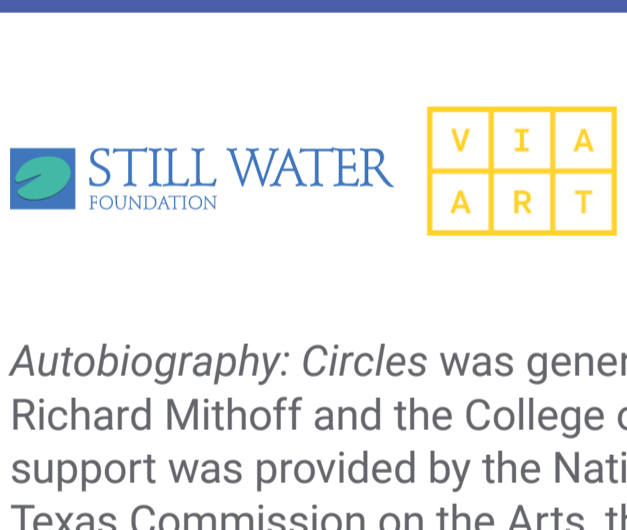
Cassel Oliver holds an Executive MBA from Columbia University, New York; an M.A. in Art History from Howard University in Washington, D.C.; and a B.S. in Communications from the University of Texas at Austin. Beyond her curatorial endeavors, she has previously worked as a Program Officer at the National Endowment for the Arts (1988–95), and as Director of the Visiting Artists Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1995–2000).



Dr. Ramón H. Rivera-Servera

Ramón H. Rivera-Servera is the dean of the College of Fine Arts, chair in Latin American Art History and Criticism, and the Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Fine Arts at The University of Texas at Austin. Rivera-Servera is an interdisciplinary scholar in the arts with a focus on creative ethnography, new work development in performance and other ephemeral art forms, and Black and Latinx arts and cultures in North America and the Caribbean. His work documents a wide array of performance practices ranging from theater and concert dance to social dance, fashion, and speech.

An alumnus of The University of Texas at Austin, he was the first student to graduate from the Performance as Public Practice doctoral program in the Department of Theatre and Dance.



Landmarks

Landmarks is the award-winning public art program of The University of Texas at Austin and the College of Fine Arts. Its collection of modern and contemporary art celebrates varied perspectives, featuring commissioned projects alongside sculptures on long-term loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Landmarks inspires thought and growth by making great art free and accessible to all.



College of Education

Consistently ranked among the top schools of education in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin is committed to preparing educators, researchers and leaders to transform education and public health across Texas and beyond. The college is home to five academic departments and a range of research centers, institutes and innovative programs dedicated to expanding educational opportunities and improving health outcomes to create a lasting impact on our students, families and communities.



Autobiography: Circles was generously funded by Ginni and Richard Mithoff and the College of Education. Additional support was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, Texas Commission on the Arts, the Still Water Foundation, and VIA Art Fund.

Landmarks gives special thanks to the following:

Leadership

Andrée Bober and Landmarks
Katie Brock and the Office of the Vice President for Operations
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Landmarks Advisory Committee
Charles Martinez and the College of Education
Ramón Rivera-Servera and the College of Fine Arts
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Carrie West and Planning, Design and Construction

Project Team

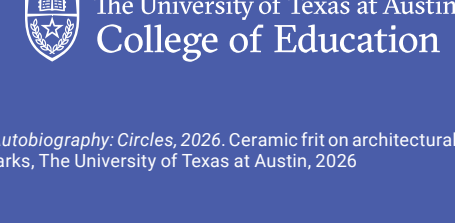
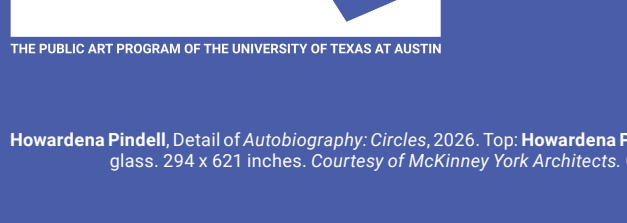
Austin Glass & Mirror, Inc., installation
Andrée Bober, curator and director, Landmarks
Kathleen Brady Stimpert, deputy director, Landmarks
Robin Camp, project manager, Planning, Design and Construction
Duggal Visual Solutions, scanning
Four Point Lighting Design, lighting
Garth Greenan Gallery, project management
Lonestar Environmental Services, abatement monitor
McKinney York Architects, architecture
Howardena Pindell, artist
QA Construction Services, construction
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Valerie Cassel Oliver, curatorial contributor
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Marni Windschitl, Viracon
Sharon Wood, former provost

[Go to Artist Page](#)

Learn more about Howardena Pindell's
Autobiography: Circles



Howardena Pindell, Detail of *Autobiography: Circles*, 2026. Top: Howardena Pindell, *Rendering of Autobiography: Circles*, 2026. Ceramic fit on architectural glass, 294 x 621 inches. Courtesy of McKinney York Architects, Commission, Landmarks, The University of Texas at Austin, 2026.