

United States Artists Awards Louise Erdrich 2022 Berresford Prize

Acclaimed author honored with the \$50,000 award for significant contributions to the advancement, wellbeing, and care of artists

CHICAGO, IL—November 10, 2022—**United States Artists (USA)** is thrilled to announce **Louise Erdrich** as the recipient of the **2022 Berresford Prize**, an annual award that honors cultural practitioners who have contributed significantly to the advancement, wellbeing, and care of artists in society. As a leading figure in American literature, Erdrich has brought Native American stories to national and international audiences, as well as paved new pathways for Native American artists through her bookstore, Birchbark Books.

Over several decades, the prolific writer, bookseller, artist, and Native Arts advocate has transformed the literary world through both her own authorship, and her advocacy for Native American artists and creative practitioners. The author of twenty-eight genre-spanning books, from novels to poetry and children's books, Erdrich's poignant storytelling is informed by her Anishinabe heritage and intertwines themes of love, justice, and the ongoing fight for sovereignty for Native American communities.

"It delights me to receive this prize on behalf of Birchbark Books and Native Arts. Over the past twenty-two years that I've owned and worked with my family on this enterprise, I have marveled at the artistry that has passed through my hands," said **2022 Berresford Prize Recipient Louise Erdrich**. "My vision was that we would serve to bring awareness to Indigenous writing, further Indigenous language revitalization, and that we would support artists by selling the beautiful and creative art that Native people make, often on isolated reservations. Over the years the bookstore has also become a place for artists and writers to find a job that brings them into a community. This prize will help us to more fully realize our vision, and I thank you from my heart."



BELIEVE IN ARTISTS

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“Artists are supported in quiet, beautiful ways by the efforts of Louise Erdrich. An accomplished artist in her own right, Ms. Erdrich opened Birchbark Books 2001 with ‘a belief in the power of good writing, the beauty of handmade art, and the strength of Native culture.’ The Minneapolis-based bookstore is a place of celebration and honor for artists, whose work fills the lives of those who visit,” said **Judilee Reed, President & CEO of United States Artists.**

“Louise Erdrich nurtures the artistic community around her, not only through her own writing, which foregrounds Native thought and identity, but through Birchbark Books and Native Arts, a unique environment that centers the work of Native makers and other underrepresented groups,” noted **Ed Henry, United States Artists Board Chair.** “Through these efforts, Erdrich has created a space that fills a critical role in the city of Minneapolis and beyond, and we are proud to honor her invaluable contribution to the community.”

"For many years Louise Erdrich has invited her readers to share the memories, stories, and dreams of her Indigenous and other characters in the brightly-loving and tenderly-complex communities and worlds of her poetry, short stories, and novels," said **Natalie Diaz, United States Artists Board Member and 2014 USA Fellow in Writing.** “As one of the leading writers of our century, she has brought Indigenous pasts and futures to bear on the literary world, as well as constellated Indigenous presence into the considerations and imaginations of both the US and global community through her books. Her devotion to language and to the power of story to gather us and as a tool by which we might tend one another toward abundantly livable lives is amplified and resounded through Birchbark Books, a labor of love and communal care, a true testament to the power of Indigenous values and imagination.”

The Berresford Prize is named for Susan V. Berresford, former President of the Ford Foundation, who co-founded USA and is still an active Trustee. Introduced in 2019, the unrestricted \$50,000 prize reinforces USA’s commitment to artists by acknowledging the remarkable administrators, curators, scholars, and producers who are building platforms



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and creating conditions for artists to thrive. The award was conceived of by several USA Fellows in response to the lack of acknowledgment for those who have dedicated their careers to the betterment of artists.

The inaugural recipient in 2019 was Kristy Edmunds who was the Executive and Artistic Director of UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance at the time of the award. 2020's recipient was Linda Goode Bryant, a social activist, gallerist, filmmaker, and the Founder and President of Active Citizen Project and Project EATS. The 2021 prize was jointly awarded to Lulani Arquette, President and CEO of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (NACF), and Roberto Bedoya, Cultural Affairs Manager for the City of Oakland.

About Louise Erdrich

Louise Erdrich is the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *The Night Watchman*. Her novel, *The Round House*, won the National Book Award for fiction, and her first novel, *Love Medicine*, as well as her novel *LaRose*, won The National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction. Those novels are concerned with love, with justice, and with the ongoing fight for sovereignty for Native American people. She is Anishinabe, and a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. Erdrich lives with her family in Minnesota, and is the owner of Birchbark Books, a small independent bookstore.

About United States Artists

United States Artists is a national arts funding nonprofit that supports the country's most compelling artists and cultural practitioners. Since its founding in 2006, the organization has awarded more than 750 individuals with over \$36 million of direct support.



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