

Philip Morris Companies receives award for continued art sponsorship from Whitney Museum of American Art

The selection of the tobacco corporation as first winner is testament to its long-term relationship with the museum

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The Whitney Museum of American Art has established an honorary award to be given annually “to an individual or representatives of an organisation who have made a significant contribution to the arts in America through a sustained commitment to the diversity, quality and originality of American artistic achievement”. The first winner is Philip Morris Companies Inc, cited for “nearly thirty-five years of support for the arts”.

The tobacco company is a particularly apt choice for the Whitney’s Board of Trustees. Former Philip Morris Chairman and CEO, George Weissman, has been a Whitney trustee since 1979. During his tenure the corporation opened a Whitney branch in its midtown headquarters. The award comes as the museum’s other two Manhattan off-site sponsors, IBM and The Equitable, have terminated the museum’s lease. Cartier Inc has underwritten production of the award itself, designed and produced by artist Richard Artschwager.

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