



AMERICAN
PRAIRIE
RESERVE

Celebrating
the Indomitable
American Spirit

Maya Lin awarded 2018 *Ken Burns American Heritage Prize*

Prize presented by American Prairie Reserve to celebrate the indomitable American spirit

NEW YORK, NY – American Prairie Reserve is proud to announce that artist, designer, and environmentalist **Maya Lin** accepted the 2018 *Ken Burns American Heritage Prize* at an event held the evening of May 2 at the American Museum of Natural History.

Writer, actress, and producer Tina Fey set the stage for Ken Burns, referring to him as “America’s Storyteller,” and noting that his nominations, awards, and accolades are “but a hint of the level of regard in which he is held by educators, historians, authors, his peers in the film industry, and Americans across the nation.” Ms. Fey continued, “...his passion for his craft is exceeded only by his admiration for those who have made us what we are.”

Mr. Burns’s tribute began by sharing that the Prize “...seeks to recognize extraordinary women and men whose body of work in multiple disciplines has advanced the understanding of America from many perspectives and the capacity of Americans to accomplish extraordinary things.”

He introduced Ms. Lin noting her many acclaimed works, including her Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama, her Women’s Table sculpture at Yale University, and her iconic Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., among others. Mr. Burns commented on her current work, *What Is Missing?*, sharing that the project is “...a monumental endeavor dedicated to inspiring all of us to protect and preserve nature’s fleeting treasures.”

“Her dedication to the natural world intersects with American Prairie Reserve’s ambitious goals. As Maya and *What is Missing?* aim to illuminate species and ecosystems under threat, American Prairie Reserve’s mission is to protect one of our continent’s greatest biomes, our grasslands.” Mr. Burns says.

Ms. Lin took the stage noting that the nomination and subsequent award of the Prize as a “magical coincidence,” she said, “...I have been obsessed with the story of the grasslands for ten or fifteen years, so when I got the call, I was so honored.”

Ms. Lin continued by graciously dedicating the prize money to both her *What Is Missing?* Foundation and American Prairie Reserve. She closed her acceptance by stating, “I am proud of receiving this award from American Prairie Reserve, whose amazing visionary goal of restoring our vast American prairie is a magical dream that we all can share and make a reality.”

Named in honor of America’s most revered visual historian and documentary filmmaker, the *Ken Burns American Heritage Prize* recognizes an individual whose body of work has advanced our collective understanding of the indomitable American spirit. Nominees for the Prize, which will be awarded annually, consist of visionary artists, authors, educators, filmmakers, historians and scientists.

The Prize also serves to inspire public support for American Prairie Reserve, a modern-day embodiment of America’s optimistic and boundless approach to accomplishing the unprecedented – in this case, by creating the largest nature reserve in the continental United States, located on the Great Plains of northeastern Montana.

Ms. Lin received the honor from Mr. Burns and others during the Prize presentation event on May 2, 2018, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The evening's festivities included remarks by Tina Fey, Ken Burns, and Maya Lin, as well as American Prairie Reserve's CEO Alison Fox and Board of Directors Chair George Matelich, and *Ken Burns American Heritage Prize* National Jury Chair David Rubenstein, and Vice Chair Dawn Arnall.

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About American Prairie Reserve

[American Prairie Reserve's](#) mission is to create the largest nature reserve in the continental United States, a spectacular refuge for people and wildlife preserved forever as part of America's heritage. When complete, the Reserve will be larger than Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks combined and will support all the animals that historically called the Great Plains home, including buffalo, wolves, bears, elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, swift fox, upland birds including the greater sage grouse, birds of prey and all manner of reptiles, amphibians and insects. Already open to the public for recreation including camping, hunting, fishing and birding, the Reserve offers visitors a once-in-a-lifetime, horizon-expanding opportunity to reconnect with nature on a truly grand scale.

Learn more at americanprairie.org and kenburnsprize.com.

About Ken Burns

[Ken Burns](#) has been making documentary films for almost forty years. Since the Academy Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, Mr. Burns has gone on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including *The Civil War*; *Baseball*; *Jazz*; *The Statue of Liberty*; *Huey Long*; *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*; *Frank Lloyd Wright*; *Mark Twain*; *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson*; *The War*; *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*; *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*; *Jackie Robinson*; *Defying the Nazis: The Sharp's War*; and, most recently, *The Vietnam War*. His films have been honored with dozens of major awards, including fifteen Emmy Awards, two Grammy Awards and two Oscar nominations; and in September of 2008, at the News & Documentary Emmy Awards, Mr. Burns was honored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

About Maya Lin

[Maya Lin](#) is an artist, designer, and environmentalist who interprets the natural world through science, history, politics, and culture. From her very first work, the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, Ms. Lin has gone on to a simply remarkable career in art and in architecture while still being committed to works that have dealt with memory and history and some of the critical cultural issues of our time.

Lin has created seminal art and architectural works, such as the groundbreaking four-acre earthwork for the Storm King Art Center and the 11-acre *A Fold in the Field* for Gibbs Farm in New Zealand. Lin's architectural works include a chapel and library for the Children's Defense Fund and the master plan and primary building in Novartis' Cambridge, Massachusetts, complex, which The Boston Globe's Robert Campbell described as "A work of Art" that is "ambitious in its scope and brilliantly designed." Currently, Lin is working on the new Neilson Library at Smith College, a major outdoor art installation at Princeton University, and [What is Missing?](#), a multi-sited memorial dedicated to raising awareness about species loss and climate change.

In 2009, she was awarded the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest honor for artistic excellence. In 2016, President Barack Obama awarded Lin the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, praising her for a celebrated career in both art and architecture, and for creating a sacred place of healing in our nation's capital.