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**Watch The 2020 WSJ. Magazine Innovator Awards: Celebrating BTS,
Jennifer Lopez, Tyler Perry and Others**
*On Wednesday night, WSJ. Magazine marked the 10th anniversary of the Innovator Awards
with a virtual gala.*

Lane Florsheim

“It’s fitting that the 10-year anniversary celebration of Innovators calls for a new spin on the magazine’s beloved franchise,” said WSJ. editor in chief Kristina O’Neill, kicking off an annual awards ceremony in which the magazine honors visionaries from various fields. In years past, the magazine held the red-carpet gala at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, but this year, due to Covid-19 constraints, the awards were presented virtually and open to everyone.

Attendees on Wednesday night watched a series of short films about eight honorees: BTS, Jennifer Lopez, Patti Smith, Tyler Perry, Titus Kaphar, Darren Walker, MASS Design Group and Michaela Coel. “I love movies and the pretend and the make-believe and the fantasy of what the world could be,” said this year’s Pop Culture Innovator, Jennifer Lopez. “And until the world is 100 percent perfect and completely fixed, I won’t ever be done.” The Colombian singer Maluma presented Lopez with her award, thanking her for paving the way for other Latin artists.

Actor Taraji P. Henson credited Hollywood multi hyphenate Tyler Perry for creating a pipeline for emerging talent as she presented him with the Entertainment Innovator award. “Given the recent re-opening of Tyler Perry Studios amid the global pandemic, and his activism in the racial-justice movement, his work in the industry and beyond feels more important than ever,” she said.

The comedian and television host James Corden presented the K-pop band BTS with the Music Innovator award—it’s the first group since the Beatles to earn three No. 1 albums on the Billboard charts in less than a year. “We are just, like, seven normal kids who love music and performance, who have a dream to give hope and love and positive energy and inspiration to people in the world,” said BTS member RM. Actor Ethan Hawke presented the Literature Innovator award to Patti Smith, noting that he’d first discovered the singer-songwriter and prizewinning memoirist as a young acting student when he came across a photo of Smith in a collection of Sam Shepard plays. In her film, Smith talks about the healing power of art during times of hardship and delivers an evocative reading of her spoken-word song “My Blakean Year.”

The artist Hank Willis Thomas, a collaborator of MASS Design Group, presented the group with the Architecture Innovator award, saying that he has been “forever impacted by the way in which

they approach the field of architecture through the lens of beauty and social justice.” MASS, a nonprofit organization, started in northern Rwanda in 2008, when its founding principals Michael Murphy and Alan Ricks saw patients waiting in the hallways of hospitals that weren’t designed for infection control and started to think about how they could design differently in order to improve airflow. In 2011, they completed the Butaro Hospital and have been working on similarly innovative projects in the near-decade since.

Phoebe Waller-Bridge, honored in 2018 as WSJ.’s Television Innovator, introduced this year’s winner in the category, Michaela Coel, the creator and star of *I May Destroy You* and *Chewing Gum*. “*I May Destroy You* left me in absolute pieces,” Waller-Bridge said of the emotionally wrenching series in which Coel portrays a woman re-examining a traumatic episode. “My work is trying to address changes that need to be made in society, and that is risky,” said Coel, “but I think that’s where I like to live as a creator.”

The musician and producer Kasseem Dean, best known as Swizz Beatz, presented the Art Innovator award to Titus Kaphar, whose work explores the limited representation of Black people in Western painting and whose multidisciplinary arts incubator, NXTHVN, breaks the mold for nonprofit organizations. Darren Walker, the president of the Ford Foundation, received this year’s Philanthropy Innovator award; introducing him, the filmmaker Ava DuVernay said, “He has stepped into a role and said, ‘I’m going to do this and make it radical.’ He’s dug into privilege and power, justice and imagination, resistance and survival... He makes me want to be braver.”

Watch the full film above and make sure to read all eight Innovators issue cover stories, which will be rolling out over the next eight days.