



2016 Performing Arts - 23 projects, representing 30 artists

Cornell Alston and Kaneza Schaal

New York, NY

Project Title: *KNOTS*

Performing Arts: Theater

Short description: *KNOTS* is a performance of psychological, social and political entanglements that explores the conundrums citizens face when re-entering society after incarceration.

Long description: *KNOTS* is a multi-media series of vignettes that linguistically, physically and psychologically explore the process of re-entry after prison. The vignettes draw on R.D. Laing's *Knots*, a series of ensnared dialogue exchanges between "Jack" and "Jill," and are further based on performance-research conducted through a series of workshops with people who used the arts while in prison. The performance will be expandable and contractible from a single evening theatrical event to an ongoing installation, from using full theater equipment to relying on a single plug. This intentional flexibility allows the piece to be performed in disparate venues in order to target and attract diverse audiences. In its final form, *KNOTS* will be accompanied by creative workshops for people in, and affected by, the process of post-prison re-entry.

Bio: Cornell Alston is a long-time member of Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA), a non-profit organization that uses the arts as a springboard to teach life skills to men and women both inside and outside of state correctional facilities. Alston is the community outreach coordinator for RTA. He also leads the Youth Empowerment Through the Arts Initiative, which RTA launched in Queens, NY in January 2014. Alston has been a theater artist for over 20 years. He worked as a performer and collaborator with Kaneza Schaal on *Please, Bury Me* at the Baryshnikov Arts Center and *Go/Forth* during a Performance Space 122 RAMP residency. Other highlights of his performing career include: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *12 Angry Men* and playing the title role in August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

Kaneza Schaal is a New York City-based theater artist invested in research-based processes. Most recently, this work has taken her to temples and tombs in Cairo, Luxor and Aswan, and community arts organizations in Vietnam. Schaal has worked with The Wooster Group, Elevator Repair Service, Richard Maxwell/New York City Players, Claude Wampler, Jay Scheib, Jim Findlay, New York City Opera, Lars Jan, and at venues including The Whitney Museum, BAM, The Kitchen, Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York Theater Workshop, St. Ann's Warehouse and in over 18 countries. She received a 2015 Bogliasco Fellowship. Schaal was a member of Kara Walker's 6–8 Months Space and has given talks at Wesleyan University, River-to-River Festival, and with Cornell Alston at Yale University, on prison and the arts. Schaal's new work, *Go Forth*, is a translation into performance of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* and premiered in Performance Space 122's COIL Festival.

Jeff Becker

New Orleans, LA

Project Title: *Sea of Common Catastrophe*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: Inspired by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, *Sea of Common Catastrophe* is a multi-media performance event that explores resilience amidst turbulent community change.

Long description: In 1995, knowing that a dam would soon submerge hundreds of towns and millennia of stories, Becker traveled by boat on the Yangtze River. In 2005, he watched his own city drown in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Inspired by these visions as well as by Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *The Sea Of Lost Time*, his piece, *Sea of Common Catastrophe*, is a sunken world on an epic scale with video, kinetic sculptures and expansive polyphonic singing. Unaffected by their drastically changed environment, the citizens of this undersea community live, work and sing in a floating world. Household items, childhood memories, fragments from another time drift through the space on undersea currents. *Sea of Common Catastrophe* celebrates the resilience and imagination of communities during the complex process of recovery and transformation.

Bio: Jeff Becker is a director, designer and sculptor based in New Orleans. He received his BFA from Alfred University and MFA from Ohio State University. He co-founded CRISUS, a performance group that specialized in site-specific theater, utilizing innovative kinetic sets, sculpture and film. He has continued working in this way as an ensemble member of ArtSpot Productions, creating site-responsive devised theater. In 2011, Becker completed the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Directors and Designers, which enabled him to travel to Russia, Europe and Africa to gain a global perspective on theater making. In 2014, he was a fellow at the MacDowell Artist Colony where he developed designs for his current project, *Sea of Common Catastrophe*. In 2015, he received a MAP Fund award for *Vessels* in collaboration with Rebecca Mwase. He is the founding member of Catapult, a collective theater laboratory in New Orleans dedicated to nurturing design-driven performance.

Peter Born and Okwui Okpokwasili

Brooklyn, NY

Project Title: *Poor People's TV Room*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: Drawing from historical events, *Poor People's TV Room* explores the amnesia around collective action by Nigerian women, and builds a narrative around the impact of that erasure.

Long description: *Poor People's TV Room* is a multi-disciplinary performance piece that investigates the tradition of women's collective action in Nigeria. Informed by two historic incidents, the Women's War of 1929 in Southeast Nigeria and the Bring Back Our Girls movement of 2014, the narrative plays out in an immersive dystopian environment where characters slip through the fissures of time, wandering in a bush of ghosts. In Igbo cosmology there are multiple planes, so there is the possibility of multiple spiritual deaths. Drawing on this belief and on Southeast Nigerian

dance forms, performers emerge from and withdraw into spiritual husks/time travel machines. By engaging folklore, speculative fiction, and Igbo masquerade traditions, the project asks how the memory of collective action is retained and through what bodies it is recalled.

Bios: Peter Born and Okwui Okpokwasili work collaboratively to create multidisciplinary projects that are raw, intimate experiences. Their first New York production, *Pent-Up: A Revenge Dance*, premiered at Performance Space 122 and received a 2010 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production; an immersive installation version was featured in the 2008 Prelude Festival. Their second collaboration, *Bronx Gothic*, received a 2014 Bessie Award and continues to tour nationally and internationally.

Peter Born is a director, designer and filmmaker. In addition to his work with Okpokwasili, he is currently collaborating with David Thomson on a cycle of installation/ performances revolving around a post-sexual incarnation of Venus, happening throughout 2015-16. He created the set for Nora Chipaumire's *rite/riot*, and he has created performance videos with Chipaumire, including the upcoming *El Capitan Kinglady*. He works as an art director and prop stylist for video and photo projects with clients such as *Vogue*, Estee Lauder, Barney's Co-op, Bloomingdales, Old Navy, "25" magazine, Northrup Grumman and *The Wall Street Journal*, with collaborators including Kanye West, Barnaby Roper, Santiago and Mauricio Sierra, Quentin Jones and NoStringsUS Puppet Productions. He is a former New York public high school teacher, an itinerant floral designer, corporate actor-facilitator and furniture designer. His collaborations with Okwui Okpokwasili have garnered two New York Dance Performance "Bessie" Awards.

Okwui Okpokwasili is a New York-based writer, performer and choreographer. She is currently the New York Live Arts Resident Commissioned Artist. As a performer, Okpokwasili frequently collaborates with award-winning director Ralph Lemon, appearing in *Come Home*, *Charley Patton* (for which she won a Bessie Award), *HYCS* and *Scaffold Room*. She has appeared as an actor in many productions, including Nora Chipaumire's *Miriam*; Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Young Jean Lee's *Lear*; Richard Foreman's *Maria Del Bosco*; Richard Maxwell's *Cowboys and Indians*; and *Joan Dark* (The Goodman Theater). Residencies and awards include The French American Cultural Exchange (2006–07); MANCC Choreographic Fellowship (2012); Baryshnikov Arts Center Artist-in-Residence (2013), NYLA Studio Series (2013); Under Construction at the Park Avenue Armory (2013); NYFA Fellowship in Choreography (2013); LMCC's Extended Life Program (2014); and The Foundation for Contemporary Arts' Artist Grants in Dance (2014).

Ligia Bouton, Matt Donovan and Lei Liang

San Diego, CA

Project Title: *Inheritance*

Performing Arts: Non-Traditional Opera

Short description: Anchored in the life and legacy of Sarah Winchester (heir to the gun-manufacturer fortune), *Inheritance* is a multimedia chamber opera that explores America's deeply complex relationship with violence and guns.

Long description: *Inheritance* is a chamber opera designed for a lead soprano plus three female voices and a chamber ensemble. This opera's production will be housed within a multimedia environment that examines gun culture in America through the lens of Sarah Winchester's life. According to popular belief, Winchester was an eccentric widow self-imprisoned in her labyrinth-like home and seeking refuge from the spirits of those killed by Winchester rifles. The legend surrounding her life, impossible to extract from her actual history, is indicative of America's inability to separate fact and fiction within gun-debate discourse. Although the libretto for *Inheritance* is anchored in Winchester's biography, this work explores her life and home as a metaphor for America's violent legacy and deeply complex relationship with guns.

Bios: Ligia Bouton was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and spent her childhood in London, England. She received her education at Vassar College and at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Her creative work combines sculpture with performance, digital video and photography to recreate appropriated narratives. Each project wrestles with the intersection of functionality and narrative, drawing on sources from art history, literature and science. Recent projects have been shown at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Guildhall Art Gallery in London, SITE Santa Fe, the New Mexico Museum of Art and the Philadelphia Art Alliance. Reviews of her work have appeared in *Art in America*, *Art Papers*, *The Art Newspaper*, *The Philadelphia Enquirer* and *The New York Times*. Ligia Bouton is currently Associate Professor of Art and Art History at the University of New Mexico.

Matt Donovan is the author of two collections of poetry *Ten Burnt Lakes* (forthcoming, Tupelo Press, 2017) and *Vellum* (Mariner, 2007), as well as the collection of lyric essays *A Cloud of Unusual Size and Shape: Meditations on Ruin and Redemption* (Trinity University Press, 2016). His work has appeared in numerous journals, including *AGNI*, *American Poetry Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Poetry*, *Seneca Review*, *Threepenny Review* and *Virginia Quarterly Review*. Donovan is the recipient of a Rome Prize in Literature, a Whiting Award, a Pushcart Prize, a Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Larry Levis Reading Prize, a Breadloaf Fellowship in poetry, and a Lannan Writing Residency Fellowship. Donovan received his MA from Lancaster University and his MFA from New York University. He teaches in the Creative Writing and Literature Department at Santa Fe University of Art and Design.

Heralded as "one of the most exciting voices in New Music" (*The Wire*), Lei Liang is a Chinese-born American composer whose works have been described as "hauntingly beautiful" by *The New York Times*, and as "far, far out of the ordinary, brilliantly original and inarguably gorgeous" by *The Washington Post*. A finalist for the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music, Lei Liang is winner of the 2011 Rome Prize, the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and Koussevitzky Foundation Award from the Library of Congress. He was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert for the inaugural concert of the CONTACT! new music series. Lei Liang's music is recorded on Naxos, New World, Bridge and Mode Records and published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation (New York). He serves as Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego.

Sharon Bridgforth

San Francisco, CA

Project Title: *dat Black Mermaid Man Lady*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: Serving as a catalyst for connection in a San Francisco neighborhood facing gentrification, *dat Black Mermaid Man Lady* will offer writing workshops, tarot readings and storytelling gatherings in a tiny house built for the project.

Long description: A tiny house community building soul serenade, *dat Black Mermaid Man Lady* literally creates and leaves space in neighborhoods where space is being taken away. A tiny house, built for the project, serves as a catalyst for *dat Black Mermaid Man Lady Oracle Card* readings, neighborhood parties, resource fairs, public dialogues, workshops, story circles, performances and processions. Led by a queer-bodied lesbian of African descent, this project leans into the talents, expertise and self-determination of the people it serves. Processions call forward and celebrate community, transgressively breaking open and dismantling stagnant constructs of boundaries. After the project ends, the tiny house remains—a gift from the community—for an emerging artist of color.

Bio: Sharon collaborates with actors, dancers, singers and audiences live as she composes moving soundscapes of her non-linear texts. Her piece, *The River See Theatrical Jazz Performance Installation*, received support from MAP Fund, National Performance Network Commission Fund and five presenting partners. Sharon has been a resident playwright at New Dramatists since 2009. Residencies include: International Development Exchange; allgo, a statewide queer people of color organization; the MFA Playwriting Program at Brown University, University of Iowa's MFA Playwrights Program; The Theater School at DePaul University and The Department of Performance Studies at Northwestern University. Publications include: *love conjure/blues*; Lambda Literary Award winning *the bull-jean stories*; and *Experiments in a Jazz Aesthetic: Art, Activism, Academia, and the Austin Project*, which she co-edited with Omi Jones and Lisa Lynn Moore. Sharon's *delta dandi*, is published in *solo/black/woman*, Northwestern University Press. Her *Finding Voice Course* is available virtually through Baladé Black.

Ben Thorp Brown

Brooklyn, NY

Project Title: *Freedom from Everything*

Performing Arts: Performance Art

Short description: Taking the form of an archive, a video work and performance, *Freedom from Everything* investigates the practices and economics of contemporary forms of labor, including digital labor and crowdsourcing.

Long description: As traditional jobs are increasingly replaced by systems that rely on independent contract work, crowdsourcing or other forms of uncompensated labor, a new kind of worker is emerging. *Freedom from Everything* explores the massive transformations of economy, labor and life in response to these new forms of employment. What can we expect work to look like in the future? This project will be presented in several forms, including an archive, a video and a performance.

Bio: Ben Thorp Brown is an artist living in New York. He received a BA at Williams College, an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. Recent exhibitions include *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1 (2015); *24/7 the human condition*, The Vienna Biennale (2015); *Speculative Presence*, Bischoff Projects (2014); *Chance Motives*, SculptureCenter (2014); and *Image Employment*, MoMA PS1 (2013). He was a participant in the 2014–15 LMCC Workspace Residency and a 2015 Artist-in-Residence at the Chinati Foundation.

Ann Carlson

Santa Monica, CA

Project Title: *The Symphonic Body*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: Performed by people from any workplace or institution, *The Symphonic Body* is a performance made entirely of gestures based on the motions of their workday.

Long description: *The Symphonic Body* is a performance made entirely of gestures. Ann Carlson becomes an “embedded artist” in a work place, city, organization or institution to build *The Symphonic Body*. Through a process of observation and interview, she works one-on-one with each participant to build a choreographed portrait from the gestures they use everyday. Gradually, the individual gestures are joined together to make up the moving fabric of this “orchestral” score. The movement-based “music” made in *The Symphonic Body* is a blend of unwitting, everyday gesture transformed into a kind of dance. For the final performance, participants are seated as in an orchestral arrangement, all dressed in black. Carlson conducts this 45-minute performance-work live.

Bio: Ann Carlson borrows from the disciplines of dance, performance, theater, visual and conceptual art, often dismantling conventional boundaries between artist and subject. Ann’s work takes the form of solo dance/performance, site-specific projects, ensemble theatrical works and performance/video. She often works within a series format, creating socially-engaged performance structures over a period of years that adapt and tour to multiple sites. In 1986 Carlson began a series of performances made with and performed by people gathered together by a common profession, activity or shared passion. Lawyers, security officers, nuns, fly fishermen, poker players, physicians, gardeners, a farmer and her dairy cow have all performed in works by Carlson. *The Symphonic Body* builds on this body of work; individuals come together in concert to renew and re-experience the artistry embedded in the everyday.

Mallory Catlett

New York, NY

Project Title: *M/F Future*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: Drawing on the prophetic writings of William Burroughs and Doris Lessing, *M/F Future* is a diptych of performance installations about the future and the possibilities of becoming.

Long description: *M/F FUTURE* is pair of performances: *Decoder 2017*, a concert at night, and *Dead Time of Plenty*, an afternoon in a gallery with a woman who might be a novel. Inspired by the prophetic imaginations of William Burroughs and Doris Lessing, each work is a experiment in time travel that frames the present as predicted. *Decoder 2017* is a cut-up of sound, word and image, an intergalactic battle waged by a DJ of analog tape machines. *Dead Time of Plenty*, is a sequence of dreams and durational actions performed by an old woman, a girl and a dog, set against the backdrop of a collapsing city. *M/F FUTURE* takes a tag-team approach to a burning question: what do you do when you can see it coming?

Bio: Mallory Catlett is an Obie award-winning director, dramaturg and creator of performance across disciplines, from installation to opera. This practice reflects an interest in expanding what the theater can contain. She is the director of Restless NYC, which produced *This Was The End*, Catlett's award-winning remix of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. Her work has been commissioned by HERE, PS122, Diverseworks, The Chocolate Factory; supported by the National Performance Network, NEFA, NYSCA and the MAP Fund; featured at the Ice Factory, COIL, Prelude, Prototype and BAM's Next Wave Festivals; developed at residencies at MacDowell, the Performing Garage, HERE, Mabou Mines and Yaddo; and toured internationally to Canada, France, the UK, Ireland and Australia. She is a Foundation of the Contemporary Arts 2015 Grant for Artists Awardee and an Assistant Professor at Stony Brook University.

Ellen Sebastian Chang and Amara Tabor-Smith

Oakland, CA

Project Title: *HouseFull*

Performing Arts: Dance-Theater

Short description: *HouseFull* is a site-specific dance-theater piece addressing issues facing women of color in Oakland, from gentrification to sex trafficking.

Long description: *HouseFull* is a site-specific dance-theater piece addressing issues facing women of color in Oakland, CA. Over the course of an 18-month creation process, the artistic team will gather stories and information to create a series of short episodes. The episodes, performed in various public sites throughout Oakland, will shed light on both the troubling issues of sex trafficking and the rampant displacement of long-time residents. These short episodes will inform the final evening-length performance inside a house in Oakland. The house, in this case, serves as a literal and metaphorical site for the complex realities that women experience in a patriarchal society; their stories—like many rooms in a home—continue to be unseen or hidden from view. Weaving together dance, music, visual art, spiritual rituals and personal narratives, *HouseFull* asks, what happens when we lose our mothers' homes?

Bios: Ellen Sebastian Chang is a director, writer and serves as a creative consultant for the Zellerbach Family Fund's Performing Arts Assistance Program. Ms. Sebastian Chang was cofounder and artistic director of LIFE ON THE WATER, a national and internationally known presenting and producing organization at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center from 1986 through 1995. In 2015 she collaborated with Oakland/LA artist Maya Gurantz to create "A Hole in Space (Oakland Redux)

voted “Best Underground Public Art Project”. She was the Consulting Producer for HBO’s “Whoopi Goldberg Presents Moms Mabley”. Her 1982 directorial/ writing debut “Your Place Is No Longer With Us” created in a Victorian mansion, served to the audience a meal of black-eyed peas, mustard greens and corn bread at the performance’s end. She has directed and collaborated with Gamelan Sekar Jaya, kaoticgood, Youth Speaks, Oakland Opera Theater and KITKA. She owns and operates FuseBOX Restaurant in West Oakland.

Amara Tabor-Smith describes her work as Afro futurist Conjure Art. Her creative process as a dance maker is rooted in collaboration, spiritual ritual, and questions of identity and belonging. Her movement vocabulary is inspired by improvisation, Butoh and African Diaspora dance traditions, specifically drawing from movements of the Orishas found in Afro Cuban and Afro Brazilian folkloric dance. In 2006—with the goal of inspiring dialogue—she founded Deep Waters Dance Theater, a company that focuses on social- and environmental-justice issues, race, gender, cultural identity and spirituality. In 2009, she co-founded Headmistress with Sherwood Chen, creating intimate movement histories with enduring questions around ancestral, national and transcultural connections. The work of DWDT and Headmistress has been presented in venues throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, nationally and internationally. She has worked with artists such as Ed Mock, Joanna Haigood, Anna Deveare Smith, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Faustin Linyekula, Liz Lerman, Adia Tamar Whitaker and Ronald K. Brown, as well as with Jawole Willa Jo Zollar as a former associate artistic director and dancer with Urban Bush Women for 10 years.

Jim Findlay

Brooklyn, NY

Project Title: *Electric Lucifer*

Performing Arts: Music-Theater

Short description: *Electric Lucifer* is a futuristic, music-driven theatrical work that reanimates Bruce Haack’s cult classic albums by the same name, imagining a war between heaven and hell in a 21st-century context.

Long description: *Electric Lucifer* reanimates Bruce Haack’s visionary song cycle from the 1970s, *The Electric Lucifer Part 1* and *Part 2*, as a futuristic, music-driven performance for a 21st-century audience. Haack’s songs focus on the fallout of a war in heaven that resolves with the redemption of Lucifer and his angels through “power love,” a technologically energized form of love. This project intends to render Haack’s allegory as a starkly modern cultural dilemma that impacts the audience’s own hopes and dreams for who we are now and what we might become. In a world constantly on the brink of both disaster and transcendence it asks, which side are you on?

Bio: Jim Findlay works across boundaries as a theater artist, visual artist and filmmaker. His recent work includes the productions *Vine of the Dead* (2015), *Dream of the Red Chamber, a performance for a sleeping audience* (2014) and *Botanica* (2012), which he later adapted to 3D film (produced by 3LD Art+Technology Center). In 2013, he directed and designed David Lang’s *Whisper Opera* for Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Art and Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival and it continues to tour internationally. His video installation *Meditation*, created in collaboration with Ralph Lemon, was acquired by the Walker Art Center for its permanent collection

in 2011. Findlay was a founding member of The Collapsible Giraffe in 1995, and in partnership with Radiohole, founded and helped run the Collapsible Hole from 2000–13. His work has been seen at BAM, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Arena Stage, A.R.T., and over 50 cities worldwide including Berlin, Istanbul, London, Moscow and Paris.

Robin Frohardt

Brooklyn, NY

Project Title: *The Plastic Bag Store*

Performing Arts: Puppetry

Short description: *The Plastic Bag Store* is a puppetry-based live performance and elaborate installation situated in a storefront in Manhattan.

Long description: *The Plastic Bag Store* appears to be any New York City grocery or discount store, complete with signage outside and aisles stocked with colorfully packaged products inside. However, nothing is actually for sale here except packaging itself, packaging packed inside itself, where despondent cashiers with blank stares are endlessly double, triple and quadruple-bagging these products. This vibrant installation will be the context for a narrative, woven throughout the store, performed by multiple puppeteers, and actors with original music. The darkly comedic tale explores such questions as: How will our descendants interpret, and misinterpret, our plastic refuse left intact thousands of years from now? Where does the human spirit exist and thrive in a world of disposability?

Bio: Known for her rich aesthetic and highly detailed constructions, Robin Frohardt is an award-winning puppet artist, director and filmmaker living in Brooklyn, NY. She pushes the boundaries of traditional puppet theater by combining her unique experience outside the theater—as a world traveler and adventurer—with her technical craft. After studying at the University of Washington, Frohardt moved to San Francisco where she founded the Apocalypse Puppet Theater and began working with The Cardboard Institute of Technology, an artist group that constructs large and detailed cardboard installations. Lured to New York to work with Swimming Cities, Frohardt spent several summers building and living aboard sculptural junk rafts. Her first full length piece, *The Pigeoning*, premiered with rave reviews in 2013 and continues to tour at home and abroad. Her work with cardboard continued in her popular short film *Fitzcardboardaldo* which was an official selection at several film festivals in 2013.

Sean Graney

Chicago, IL

Project Title: *A Ring Never Ends*

Performing Arts: Theater

sean@seangraney.com

Short description: *A Ring Never Ends* is a contemporary and accessible re-telling of Wagner's masterpiece, *The Ring of the Nibelung* cycle.

Long description: *A Ring Never Ends* adapts the libretto for Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*, bringing it into a contemporary landscape by employing modern verse juxtaposed by humor, emotional depth and accessibility. This is the first phase of a multi-year process leading to the creation of a durational performance. In order to create the first draft of *A Ring Never Ends*, Sean Graney will spend an estimated nine months on research and writing. Upon completion of adapting the libretto, he will then work with a composer and musicians in order to create the score. After orchestrating and arranging *A Ring Never Ends*, it will be ready for its premiere staging.

Bio: Sean Graney is a Chicago-based theater artist who concentrates on adapting and directing classic plays to create relevant theatrical pieces for contemporary society. In November 2014, after a three-year hiatus, he returned to his post as Artistic Director of The Hypocrites, the Chicago theater company he founded in 1997. Last year he was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University where he completed *All Our Tragic*, his 12-hour adaptation which combines all 32 surviving Greek Tragedies. *All Our Tragic* was presented by The Hypocrites and performed for sold-out audiences during the summer of 2014, and remounted in the summer of 2015. More recently, he adapted and directed *HMS Pinafore* to accompany his version of *The Mikado* and *Pirates of Penzance*, thus completing his Gilbert & Sullivan Trilogy.

Brian Harnetty

Columbus, OH

Project Title: *Shawnee, Ohio*

Performing Arts: Experimental Music Performance

Short description: *Shawnee, Ohio* is an experimental musical collage reflecting the sounds of a small town with historical roots in coal mining and a contemporary struggle with fracking.

Long description: Performed with sampled archives, field recordings and live musicians, *Shawnee, Ohio* critically engages ecology, energy, place and personal history to ask: What are the sounds of mining? Of fracking? Of a town fighting to survive after a century of economic decline and environmental degradation? These sounds are recorded as compositional material reflecting layers of history and memory in Appalachian Ohio. Shawnee's history includes coal, gas and clay extraction, and the formation of early labor unions. The town's downturn and partial restoration act as an ethos of the struggles and hopes of the larger region, now immersed in a controversial fracking boom. *Shawnee, Ohio* considers these histories, evokes place through sound, and listens to the present alongside traces of the past.

Bio: A composer and sound artist, Brian Harnetty's work connects sonic archives, performance, ecology and place. His pieces transform archival material—including field recordings, transcriptions, images and historic recordings—into newly re-contextualized sound collages. For the past decade he has focused on projects with sound archives, including the Berea Appalachian Sound Archives and the Sun Ra/El Saturn Collection. Harnetty's recent scholarly work is an ethnographic study of the historic, economic, cultural and environmental sounds of Appalachian Ohio, informed in part by his family's roots in the region. Harnetty received a PhD in Interdisciplinary Arts at Ohio University, an M.Mus. in music composition from the Royal Academy of Music (UK) and a B.Mus. from The Ohio State University. He has collaborated with Bonnie "Prince" Billy and Fred Lonberg-Holm,

among other distinguished musicians. His 2013 release, *The Star-Faced One*, was *MOJO Magazine's* Underground Album of the Year.

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and Carmelita Tropicana

New York, NY

Project Title: *Jacobs-Jenkins/Tropicana Project (Working Title)*

Performing Arts: Other

Short description: *The Jacobs-Jenkins/Tropicana Project* is an intergenerational hybrid performance that explores the uses and abuses of nostalgia, race and the avant-garde, and the mystery of remaining artistically viable.

Long description: A *My Dinner With Andre*-style debate with compare-and-contrast performances delivered throughout, *The Jacobs-Jenkins/Tropicana Project* touches on how art relates to history and history relates to art, updating it through the artists' personal histories and experiences. While the two artists share a number of aesthetic and thematic concerns—identity, belonging, the nature of history and storytelling—the work that they make and the context in which they make it could not be more different. Since the 80s, Carmelita has worked on the fringes of a “mainstream,” which has very little room for queer artists of color, whereas Branden, whose works have appeared at The Public Theater, has directly profited from funding structures geared towards the encouragement of “minority” voices, something virtually unheard of 25 years ago.

Bios: Carmelita Tropicana has been performing in New York's downtown arts scene since the 1980s, straddling the worlds of performance art and theater in the U.S., Latin America and Europe with her irreverent humor, subversive fantasy and bilingual puns. She received an Obie for Sustained Excellence in Performance (1999) and is a recipient of the Performance and Activism Award from the Women in Theater Program / American Theater in Higher Education (2015). Notable and recent works include: *Schwanze-Beast* (2015), a performance commissioned by Vermont Performance Lab; *Recycling Atlantis* (2014), a performance installation at 80WSE Gallery; *Post Plastica* (2012), an installation/video and performance presented at El Museo del Barrio; and the highly anthologized *Milk of Amnesia* (1994). Her publications include the book, co-edited with Holly Hughes, *Memories of the Revolution: The First Ten Years of the WOW Café* (University of Michigan Press, 2015). Tropicana has taught at numerous universities and sits on the Board of Directors at Performance Space 122 and NYFA.

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' playwright credits include *Gloria* (Vineyard Theatre), *Appropriate* (Obie Award; Outer Critics Circle Nomination; Signature Theatre), *Neighbors* (The Public Theater), *An Octoroon* (Obie Award; Soho Rep, Theatre for a New Audience) and *War* (Yale Rep). Branden is currently a Residency Five playwright at the Signature Theater. His work has been seen at Actor's Theater of Louisville, Victory Gardens Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theater, The Matrix Theater in LA, Mixed Blood Theater in Minneapolis, CompanyOne in Boston, and the HighTide Festival in the UK. He is under commission from Lincoln Center/LCT-3 and MTC. Honors include a Paula Vogel Award, a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the inaugural Tennessee Williams award. He has taught at NYU and Queens University of Charlotte and holds an MA in Performance

Studies from NYU and a BA from Princeton University. Graduate of the Lila Acheson Wallace Playwrights Program at The Juilliard School.

Joseph Keckler

Brooklyn, NY

Project Title: *Let Me Die*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: *Let Me Die* is a durational performance in which the artist enacts hundreds of deaths, extracted from tragic operas in the public domain.

Long description: Borrowing the title from “Lasciatemi morire,” the Monteverdi aria that many beginning vocal students learn, *Let Me Die* focuses on death as the center of tragic opera, as well as the conversation around this art form (“Opera is not dead”; “the audience is dying,” etc). This durational installation/performance piece ties together a multitude of fragments and extended excerpts of operatic death scenes from the public domain, performed live, one after the next, for several hours.

Bio: Joseph Keckler is a singer, writer and interdisciplinary artist whose works often involve humor, autobiography, cultural observation, and classical images and themes. His performances have been presented by SXSW, New Museum, Goethe Institut, Issue Project Room, BAM, PEN American Center, and various other institutions in the U.S. and Europe. He has been featured on BBC America and WNYC Soundcheck and his performance piece *I am an Opera* was commissioned by Dixon Place. In 2013 *The Village Voice* named him “Best Downtown Performance Artist.” The recipient of a NYFA Interdisciplinary Fellowship and Franklin Furnace grant, he has been awarded residencies at Yaddo and MacDowell and is the 2015/2016 Witt Artist in Residence at The University of Michigan Stamps School of Art & Design. He sometimes writes freelance about contemporary art for publications such as VICE and he recently made his off-Broadway debut as Chaliapin in *Preludes* at Lincoln Center Theater.

Heather Kravas

Seattle, WA

Project Title: *visions of beauty*

Performing Arts: Dance

Short description: *visions of beauty* is a choreography for nine men that investigates the ways in which gender alters and creates meaning.

Long description: *visions of beauty*—a choreography for nine men—responds to Kravas’s 2011 *The Green Surround*, a fundamentally unison work for nine women that analyzes their pursuit of perfection and the possibilities generated from its failure. The laborious vocabulary in this piece is difficult to achieve, teetering on the edge of degradation and masochism. *visions of beauty* is an identical dance except it is performed by a group of nine men with an inverted structure, both backwards and mirrored. By presenting the piece alone and alongside *The Green Surround*, the

performance will investigate the ways gender alters and creates meaning. It questions if the choreography itself is “highly feminine,” seeking to understand how gendered perceptions materialize and shift.

Bio: Heather Kravas is a choreographer and performing artist. Since 1995, she has investigated choreographic, improvisation and collaborative practices in contemporary dance to explore the limits of choreography as a form and her abilities as an artist. She is the recipient of a 2015 Doris Duke Impact Award and a 2014 New York Foundation for the Arts Award. She has received support from the MAP Foundation, the NPN, King County 4Culture, PACT/Zollverein, CCNFC Belfort, f.u.s.e.d., the Bossak/Heilbron Foundation, The Yard and the Seattle Arts Commission. In 2011, Kravas’s *The Green Surround*, a rumination on the failings and practice of perfection, was named one of *ArtForum*’s Top Ten choreographic works of the year. Kravas has collaborated and performed with many artists, significantly, DD Dorvillier, Dayna Hanson, Okkyung Lee and Antonija Livingtone. Combining recognizable traditions, pedestrian tasks and image-guided kinesthetics, she works to discover the underlying historic and social structures of dancing forms to examine the form itself.

Ahamefule J. Oluo

Seattle, WA

Project Title: *Susan*

Performing Arts: Music-Theater

Short description: Engaging race, gender and size in America, *Susan* is a long-form comedic storytelling piece and a multi-movement orchestral suite based on the life story of the artist’s mother.

Long description: When Susan Hawley was a sophomore in college, she fell in love with a doctoral student from Nigeria. They got married, had two children, and just as their dream life seemed like it was coalescing, her husband went back to Nigeria to visit his family and never contacted her again—leaving her a Midwestern white lady with two African babies. They were desperately poor; Susan began gaining weight rapidly, soon reaching 400 pounds. These were the cards she was dealt. Ahamefule J. Oluo’s theatrical work, *Susan*, tells his mother’s story as a means to tell the story of millions of women. It is a tangible crystallization of how race, class and size affect people all over the world every day. Despite all that darkness, *Susan* will be funny. It’s a collection of wry, black, but humane monologues, interspersed with live, grand-scale orchestral music.

Bio: Ahamefule J. Oluo is a Seattle-based musician, composer, writer and stand-up comic. Oluo is a founding member of and trumpet player in *The Stranger*’s Genius Award-winning jazz-punk quartet Industrial Revelation, and was featured in *City Arts Magazine*’s 2013 Future List as one of Seattle’s most promising and exciting artists. Oluo has collaborated with such diverse artists as Das Racist, Macklemore, Hey Marseilles, and Tacocat. He was a semi-finalist in NBC’s Stand Up for Diversity comedy competition, and co-produced comedian (and writing partner) Hari Kondaboluo’s debut album, *Waiting for 2042*, for Kill Rock Stars. He was the first ever artist-in-residence at Seattle’s Town Hall, and his 2014 performance of *Now I’m Fine* at On the Boards received universal acclaim and will be in the New York Under the Radar festival in January 2016.

Pegasus Warning (Guillermo E. Brown)

Los Angeles, CA

Project Title: *Bee Boy*

Performing Arts: Experimental Music Performance

Short description: Conceived as an evening-length, experimental music performance, *Bee Boy* conflates the Russian opera *The Tale of Tsar Tsultan* with bee colony collapse disorder and the human struggle for safety and freedom in the face of increasing violence.

Long description: *Bee Boy* uses Alexander Pushkin's poem turned Rimsky-Korsakov opera, *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, as a jumping off point—a story, at its core, of transformation and forgiveness. These human superpowers are parts of the keys to brainstorming solutions for the issues *Bee Boy* responds to: the survival of our ecosystems and the rights of humans to live safely and freely without being gunned down in the street. Conceived as an evening-length, experimental music performance, *Bee Boy* is slowed down and chopped up, along with new text, sounds and images, to reveal a story ripped from our lives.

Bio: Multi-disciplinary performer Guillermo E. Brown's (Pegasus Warning) albums includes *Soul at the Hands of the Machine*, *The Beat Kids' Open Rhythm System and Sound Magazine*, *Black Dreams 1.0*, *...Is Arturo Klauft*, *Handeheld*, *Shuffle Mode*, *Woof Ticket* EP and a forthcoming full length album. His one-man theater piece, *Robeson In Space*, premiered at Luna Stage. Additional work includes sound installation *Crack Unicorns* at The Studio Museum in Harlem, performance pieces *Postcolonial Bacchanale* (Harlem Stage), *Syrup* (The Kitchen) and *Shuffle Mode* (The Apollo). He is part of supergroup BiLLLL\$, collaborative trio Thiefs, Vijay Iyer & Mike Ladd's Holding It Down and KAREN. A graduate of Wesleyan University (BA) and Bard College (MFA), he was Adjunct Professor at NYU's Clive Davis Department of Recorded Music and Gallatin School, and Artist-In-Residence at Pacific Northwest College of Art. Most recently he plays drums for CBS' Late Late Show with James Corden and music director Reggie Watts.

Graham Reynolds

Austin, TX

Project Title: *Pancho Villa From a Safe Distance*

Performing Arts: Non-Traditional Opera

Short description: *Pancho Villa From a Safe Distance* is an experimental chamber opera that uses the life and death of Pancho Villa to explore the intersections and conflicts in Mexican and American culture.

Long description: *Pancho Villa From a Safe Distance* is an experimental chamber opera for two singers and six instrumentalists using a hybrid of compositional techniques, including looping and sampling in Ableton Live, overdubbed layers of vocals, and remixes by Mexican electronic artists. The piece is told from two perspectives: the opera opens with Pancho Villa's assassination and then takes place in his mind in the milliseconds as he's dying; simultaneously, a woman on an American

hotel rooftop observes the war taking place in Mexico right across the river through her opera glasses. Exploring facts from Villa's biography while also examining the myths and lies, the opera will ask what the near-archetype that is "Villa" means to Mexican culture and American culture, and where these meanings intersect and conflict.

Bio: Called "the quintessential modern composer" by the *London Independent*, Austin-based composer-bandleader Graham Reynolds creates, performs and records music for film, theater, dance, rock clubs and concert halls with collaborators ranging from Richard Linklater and Jack Black to DJ Spooky and Ballet Austin. Heard throughout the world in films, on TV, on stage, and on radio, from HBO to Showtime, Cannes Film Festival to the Kennedy Center, and BBC to NPR, he recently scored *Before Midnight* with Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy, *Bernie* featuring Jack Black, and the Hulu TV series *Up To Speed*. With Golden Arm Trio, Reynolds has toured the country and released four critically acclaimed albums. His current work-in-progress is a three part commission from Ballroom Marfa titled *The Marfa Triptych*, a portrait of West Texas that *Vogue Magazine* described as "beautiful and raucous."

Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble (Tei Blow and Sean McElroy)

Brooklyn, NY

Project Title: *The Art of Luv*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: Taking the form of public ritual-performances, *The Art of Luv* explores mythologies of romance in the Internet age.

Long description: *The Art of Luv* is a multi-part series of performance-rituals addressing the mythologies behind popular codes of romantic conduct. Plumbing popular media to deconstruct the romantic comedy genre and other contemporary romantic mythologies, ROKE will isolate, unpack and rearrange these conventions to create an exhaustive body of work, a "Lexicon of Love." These works will be created in a storefront studio that serves as a porous creative public space for research, performance, ritual and community events. Planned performances include: *Elliot*—a group meditation addressing masculinity, insecurity and longing; *Starbucks Infinity*—the group passes from Starbucks to Starbucks and revisits pivotal moments in romantic comedies; and *Two Love Stories for America*—a mash-up of *You've Got Mail* and *The Starr Report*.

Bios: Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble (ROKE), the creative partnership of artists Tei Blow and Sean McElroy, is a musical priesthood that explores the metaphysics and mythologies of love, desire and courtship at the end of the 20th century. ROKE's current project *The Art of Luv* has been shown in-progress at Under the Radar Festival's Incoming!, Gibney Dance Center, and through a PS122 RAMP Residency. In May 2015, ROKE opened The Luv Pavilion, a non-denominational polytechnical spiritual exploration hub, pop-up event center, and studio, which was open to the public and operated in an unoccupied storefront in Ridgewood, Queens. *The Art of Luv (Part 1): Elliot* will premiere in January 2016 at Under the Radar Festival. Their work has also been presented at JACK, Participant, Inc. as part of Special Effects Festival, Kate Werble Gallery, Immediate Medium's *The Future at the End of the World* at the James Farley Post Office, AUNTS and FringeArts Philadelphia. ROKE has been awarded a Franklin Furnace Fund grant (2013) and a

BAX Space Grant (2014), and are part of The Public Theater's Devised Theater Working Group and PS122's RAMP Residency program. In summer 2014, they were residents at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine.

Tei Blow is a performer and media designer based in Brooklyn, NY. Born in Japan and raised in the United States, Blow's work incorporates photography, video and sound design with a focus on technological processes and found media artifacts. He has performed and made designs for Big Dance Theater, David Neumann, The Laboratory of Dmitry Krymov, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Jodi Melnick, and Degani Shemy & Company. He makes music as Frustrator on Enemies List Recordings. His work has been featured at Dance Theater Workshop, Lincoln Center Festival, The Kitchen, The Public Theater, Baryshnikov Arts Center, The Wadsworth Atheneum and at theaters around the world. Tei received a "Bessie" Award for Outstanding Sound Design for David Neumann / Advanced Beginner Group's *I Understand Everything Better*.

Sean McElroy holds a degree in Classics from Brown University and a degree in Painting from the University of Washington. He uses sculpture, installation and performance to explore mythologies of love, power and pleasure. His work has been exhibited at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle; Koplín Del Rio Gallery in Los Angeles; and at JACK, the Public Theater and Kate Werble Gallery in New York.

James Scruggs

Jersey City, NJ

Project Title: 3/5

Performing Arts: Multimedia Performance

Short description: Employing immersive media, 3/5 explores the residual effects of the discriminatory "Three-Fifths Compromise" of 1787 and tracks racial tension between black and white men.

Long description: The tension between black and white men that continues from slavery to the present day is palpable and complex. Documentary news video of racially charged events appear totally different depending upon the viewers' race. Employing immersive media, performance and music, 3/5 explores the residual effects of the discriminatory "Three Fifths Compromise" of 1787 to track racial tensions today. For the duration of the 3/5 experience, audience members will be able to 'switch' races and will be treated as such throughout the performance. By producing tableaux and scenes that racially polarize, different races will experience the same exact event in diametrically opposed ways.

Bio: James Scruggs received a MAP Grant to create 3/5, a large scale experimental work about race. He was awarded a grant from Franklin Furnace in August of 2002. *Disposable Men*—his solo performance piece that juxtaposes images from Hollywood monster movies with the harsh reality of the historical treatment of black men in America—was produced by HERE in June 2005. In the same year, he received a NJSCA grant for artistic excellence, and the first ever NY IT Award for Outstanding Solo Performance (for *Disposable Men*). In 2013 he performed a staged reading of his solo piece *A Voluptuary Life*, a piece about aging and self worth. His play *Deepest Man* premiered

at 3LD Art and Technology Center in May 2014 with 3D holographic video elements created to plunge the audience into an underwater world. He has a BFA in Film from School of Visual Arts.

Erika Chong Shuch

Berkeley, CA

Project Title: *For You*

Performing Arts: Dance-Theater

Short description: *For You* is an audience engagement performance laboratory in which a dance-theater piece is constructed around the hopes, dreams and fears of 36 unconnected individuals selected from the San Francisco Bay Area.

Long description: *For You* is an audience engagement performance laboratory. A series of three works will be created in three separate phases. For each phase, twelve individuals are selected through a widely-cast application including questions about what keeps them up at night, self-portraits and photos of favorite objects. During individual meetings with the selected twelve, the artist hears stories, sees pictures and looks at trinkets. The shape and content of each performance is thus determined by that which speaks to the twelve's desires and concerns, and performed only for those twelve. The creative team will document the process, from initial applications and in-home interviews to select rehearsals and culminating performances. The application deliverables and documentation will be made public via an online gallery and book.

Bio: Erika Chong Shuch is a performance maker, choreographer and director whose original performance works have been supported and commissioned by Berkeley Rep's Groundfloor, YBCA, deYoung Museum, Dancers' Group, Liz Lerman's Dance Exchange/ Corcoran Gallery/DC, and in Korea: Daejeon Metropolitan Company, ChangMu Company, Mullae Art Space. Erika received the Gerbode Foundation's Choreographer's Award, Goldie Award, Falstaff Award, Helen Hayes Award (nominee) for *Conference of the Birds* at the Folger/DC. Erika was Associate Director for *Gift of Nothing* (Kennedy Center) and recently performed Ariel in *The Tempest* and Titania in *Midsummer* at Cal Shakes. Directing credits include *Eurydice* and *God's Ear* at Shotgun and *Lily's Revenge* (by Taylor Mac) at the Magic. Upcoming projects co-creating *Iron Shoes* with Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble and choreographing *The Unfortunates* (ACT). Shuch's newest and greatest daily collaboration is with her son: Wakes Jackson, age 2.

Yara Travieso

Brooklyn, NY

Project Title: *La Medea*

Performing Arts: Interdisciplinary

Short description: *La Medea* adapts Euripides' *Medea* as a Latin American variety show and will be presented simultaneously as a live performance, live-stream broadcast and film.

Long description: *La Medea* adapts Euripides' tragedy as a Latin-disco-pop variety show. Simultaneously a musical, live TV simulcast and feature film, the dark-comedy is directed,

performed, shot, edited and streamed in real time. The myth of the wild foreigner who vengefully murders her own children is reconsidered. This is not a portrait of the dangerous outsider or hysterical woman, but of our fears of her. Performers and camera operators play the characters, while studio audiences and those tuning in via broadcast act as Greek chorus. Set in a film studio, *La Medea* lays bare the behind-the-scenes, creating a high-stakes vulnerability for cast, crew and audiences alike. Music and libretto by Sam Crawford, set design by Brookhart Jonquil and cinematography by Pamela Giaroli.

Bio: Yara Travieso is a stage and film director-choreographer based in NYC. She is a 2016/17 PS122 RAMP artist, Vizcaya Museum Lost Spaces Fellow, and 2015 NALAC grantee through the Ford Foundation and the Surdna Foundation. While at the Juilliard School (dance BFA) she experimented with cinema and new forms of storytelling. Her films and productions have premiered with NYC's Lincoln Center, BRIC Arts Media House, STREB, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Juilliard and The New World Symphony Center. She has worked on productions for Opéra National de Lorraine France, Cincinnati Opera, and Birmingham Opera. Travieso has directed original short films for Hermes of Paris, Glamour and GQ, and is the recipient of an individual artist sponsorship from Kodak Films 2010. Additional supporters include LMCC, The Knight Foundation, Dance Films Association, Bessie Schonberg Foundation, Jerome Greene Fellowship, San Francisco Foundation for The Arts and Miami Dade Cultural Affairs.