

# Artist Retreat '21

Creative Capital



## **Welcome to the 2021 Creative Capital Artist Retreat!**

In the past year, the pandemic, our nation's ongoing crisis in social justice and racial justice, and our global climate emergency have profoundly transformed the cultural landscape. Our new reality has disrupted the way we experience art, and indeed, the way we live our lives. Yet, in this period of incredible upheaval, we come together with renewed strength and dedication to celebrate artists, freedom of expression, and the ideas we wish to see flourish in the world.

At Creative Capital, we are committed to supporting risk-taking artists who challenge the status quo and stand out as luminaries in their fields. This Artist Retreat is an introduction to the extraordinary people who push boundaries of form and content while asking us to nurture their radical and urgent visions for the future.

As a retreat guest, you bring your passion, curiosity, and spirit of adventure — that is essential to Creative Capital's DNA. Now is the time to dive into projects by artists working in every medium, reach out, introduce yourself, and connect with old friends and make new acquaintances. The truly exciting moments of gathering brilliant minds come from the unexpected, so go outside your comfort zone, reach beyond your expertise, and embrace the potential for discovery and collaboration across disciplines and geographies. Let us inspire each other through art!

Most importantly, we gather at this retreat to honor the collective power and beauty of our wild, artist-led community. Thank you for so generously giving your time and energy to being a part of Creative Capital!

With joy and gratitude,

Christine Kuan  
President & Executive Director

# Table of Contents

Pages 10–28

## Performing Arts & Multidisciplinary Presentations

Eisa Davis  
Will Rawls  
Samora Pinderhughes  
Martha Redbone & Aaron Whitby  
Jawwaad Taylor  
Derek McPhatter  
Cristal Chanelle Truscott  
Julian Terrell Otis  
Becca Blackwell  
Dorian Wood

Jibz Cameron & Sue Slagle  
Lars Jan  
Janice Lowe, Tyehimba Jess, Yahdon Israel  
Shontina Vernon  
Tomeka Reid  
Marie Lorenz, Dana Spiotta, Kurt Rohde  
Papel Machete  
estrellx supernova  
Nia Witherspoon

Pages 30–42

## Literary Arts & Multidisciplinary Presentations

Legacy Russell  
Marcia Douglas  
Simone White  
Marc Anthony Richardson  
Meng Jin  
Wendy S. Walters  
Mitchell S. Jackson  
Sabrina Orah Mark  
Tonya Foster  
Anne Finger  
Quintan Ana Wikswo  
Randa Jarrar  
Terence Nance & Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski

Pages 44–57

## Visual Arts & Multidisciplinary Presentations

Jen Liu  
Wafaa Bilal  
Sandy Rodriguez  
Anna Tsouhlarakis  
Chris E. Vargas  
Jessica Vaughn  
Mercedes Dorame  
Steffani Jemison  
Cannupa Hanska Luger  
Ben Thorp Brown  
Angela Washko  
Kamau Patton  
Polly Apfelbaum  
John W. Love, Jr.

Pages 59–69

## Socially-Engaged Art & Multidisciplinary Presentations

Shana M. griffin  
Bayeté Ross Smith  
The Black School  
People's Kitchen Collective  
Jordan Weber  
Jesse Krimes  
Jarrett Mellenbruch  
Amitis Motevalli  
Nathan Shafer  
Mark Nowak  
Sherrill Roland

Pages 71–84

## Moving Image & Multidisciplinary Presentations

Martine Syms  
Jake Yuzna  
Jenny Lion  
Christopher Sullivan  
Jules Roskam  
Crystal Kayiza  
William D. Caballero  
Reid Davenport  
Suha Araj  
Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi & J Mase III  
Jasmin Mara López  
Elaine McMillion Sheldon  
Diane Paragas  
Rodrigo Reyes  
Adam Khalil & Bayley Switzer



# Performing Arts & Multidisciplinary

# Eisa Davis ♥ she/her

## *The Essentialisn't*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Multimedia performance, performance art

### About the Project

*The Essentialisn't* troubles expected narratives of the diasporic black feminine and questions the artist's relationships to performance and captivity. The work utilizes an innovative combination of song, electronic sound, movement, everyday objects, and reanimated modernist figures from the Harlem Renaissance to cultivate a practice of presence and sovereignty.



**Eisa Davis** is a performer, composer, and playwright who uses her work as a site to contemplate notions of private, social, and ecological being. A recipient of the Herb Alpert Award and an Obie winner for Sustained Excellence in Performance, Davis was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for her play *Bulrushes*, and wrote and starred in the stage memoir *Angela's Mixtape*. She is also the author of *||: Girls ||: Chance ||: Music ||: Mushroom, Ramp, Warriors Don't Cry, Paper Armor*, and *The History of Light*. Collaborations include AFROFEMONONOMY // WORK THE ROOTS, the text for Cirque du Soleil's first ice show, *Crystal, Hip Hop Anansi, Active*

*Ingredients*, a musical adaptation of Walter Mosley's *Devil In A Blue Dress*, and Spike Lee's Netflix series *She's Gotta Have It. Something Else*, an album of acoustic soul, and *Tinctures*, an electronica EP, are collections of her original music. Davis' film, television, and stage work includes Carrie Mae Weems' *Grace Notes/Past Tense*, *Mare of Easttown*, *Pose*, *Betty*, *The Looming Tower*, *House of Cards*, *The Wire*, *The Secret Life of Bees* musical, and *Passing Strange*. She has received fellowships and residencies from Cave Canem, New Dramatists, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Yaddo, MacDowell, and Sundance.

🔗 [eisadavis.com](http://eisadavis.com)  
📷 [eisadavis](https://www.instagram.com/eisadavis)



Eisa Davis performs in 2019. Photo: Kaelan Burkett.

# [siccer]

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Animation, dance

## About the Project

The Latin adverb *sic* is used in brackets to identify an intentional “error” when quoting someone, emphasizing the “wrongness” of someone’s speech in a standard English narrative. For Will Rawls, *[sic]* is a useful metaphor for how the language and gestures of black bodies are captured, quoted or misquoted, and circulated to appear strange in various media. Through stop-motion animation and a live performance, *[siccer]* challenges the limits of citation while exploring the meaningful strangeness found at the edges of sense.



**Will Rawls** is a New York-based choreographer, dancer, and writer with an approach that draws parallels between the elasticity of “form” and hybrid ideas of the self. He has received fellowships and residencies from the Guggenheim, The Alpert Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, United States Artists, the Rauschenberg Foundation, the MacDowell Colony, and several universities and museums. In 2016, Rawls co-curated *Lost and Found*—six weeks of performances at Danspace Project that addressed the intergenerational impact of HIV/AIDS on dancers, women, and people of color. He lectures widely in academic and community contexts and his writing has been published by the Hammer Museum, MoMA, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, *Dancing While Black Journal*, and *Artforum*.

📷 [willjrawls](#)



Performance still of dancer jess pretty in *[siccer]* by Will Rawls.

# Samora Pinderhuges ♥ he/him

## *The Healing Project*

■ 2019 Awardee 📍 New York, NY ▶ Installation, jazz performance

### About the Project

*The Healing Project* is a boundary-breaking multidisciplinary music, film, and installation project exploring the realities of incarceration, policing, violence, and detention in the United States. The central material is found in recorded collaborative exchanges which serve as the melodic and narrative underpinnings of the pieces. The rationale for this project is the urgency of the moment. *The Healing Project* uses music, film, and people's stories in their own voices to unveil the true damages of American carceral institutions, and then engages alternative ways for us to protect, heal, and support each other outside of these oppressive systems.



Still image of Samora Pinderhuges in the studio.



**Samora Pinderhuges** is a composer/pianist/vocalist known for striking intimacy and carefully crafted, radically honest lyrics alongside high-level musicianship. He is also known for his use of music to examine sociopolitical issues and fight for change. Pinderhuges has collaborated with many artists across boundary and scene including Herbie Hancock, Sara Bareilles, Daveed Diggs, Titus Kaphar, and Lalah Hathaway. He works frequently with Common on compositions for music & film, and is a featured member on the new albums *August Greene* and *Let Love* with Common, Robert Glasper, and Karriem Riggins. He has performed his compositions in venues including Carnegie Hall, MoMA, the Sundance Film Festival, and the Kennedy Center, and toured internationally with artists including Branford Marsalis, Christian Scott, Jose James, and Emily King. Pinderhuges is the first-ever Art for Justice + Soros Justice Fellow, and a recipient of Chamber Music America's 2020 Visionary Award. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School and is currently getting his PhD at Harvard University. Pinderhuges scored the award-winning documentary *Whose Streets?* and the Field of Vision film *Concussion Protocol*, as well as writing songs for films and TV shows including *Little Voice*, *The Tale*, *All About Nina*, and *Burning Sands*. He is a member of Blackout for Human Rights, the arts & social justice collective founded by Ryan Coogler and Ava DuVernay, and was musical director for their #MLKNow and #JusticeForFlint events.

🔗 [samorapinderhuges.com](http://samorapinderhuges.com)

🔗 [itsaprocess.com](http://itsaprocess.com)

📸 [samorapinderhuges](https://www.instagram.com/samorapinderhuges)

# Martha Redbone ♡ she/her & Aaron Whitby ♡ he/him *Black Mountain Women*

■ 2019 Awardees ► Musical theater

## About the Project

*Black Mountain Women* is a devised, interdisciplinary theater work about a woman who returns for a funeral on Black Mountain, Appalachia—coalmining country and the main character's ancestral homeland where her family has dwelled for centuries. The family is in imminent danger of permanent displacement due to strip-mining and mountaintop removal threatening their environment, echoing previous generations who were forced onto the Trail of Tears. As crisis threatens the family, *Black Mountain Women* moves between present day and dreams, a magical world where the ancestors and the tree spirits merge with the living, unearthing stories that change the lives of them all.



Harlan County family. Picture courtesy: Martha Redbone



## Martha Redbone

Brooklyn, NY

Martha Redbone is a celebrated songstress, known for a tasty gumbo of roots music, created and performed with Aaron Whitby, embodying the folk and mountain blues sounds of her childhood in the Appalachian hills of Kentucky mixed with the eclectic grit of her teenage years in pre-gentrified Brooklyn. With the power of her gospel singing African-American father's voice and the determined spirit of her Cherokee/Shawnee/Choctaw mother, Redbone broadens all boundaries of Americana.

🔗 [martharedbone.com](http://martharedbone.com)

📷 [martharedbone](https://www.instagram.com/martharedbone)

## Aaron Whitby

London, UK

Aaron Whitby is a London-born pianist/composer/producer. Whitby is best known for his award-winning work with longtime collaborator/wife Martha Redbone, with whom he has co-written and produced her three award-winning albums *Home of the Brave*, *Skintalk* and *The Garden of Love*. Whitby is the brainchild of *Cousin From Another Planet*, a jazz/funk exploration purveying a playful approach to life and music rooted in Brooklyn but born far, far away. With tunes inspired by the animated energy and innocence of their young son, and humorous lyrics that celebrate empathy and empowerment.



# Jawwaad Taylor ♥ he/him

## *Start With Self*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Houston, TX ▶ Jazz performance, sculpture

### About the Project

*Start With Self* is a sonic stimulation and visual art piece based on scientific research on how certain frequencies stimulate endorphins in the body that lessen pain and relaxes the mind. Jawwaad Taylor's project is based on his research and experience with sonic healing as a sickle-cell anemia survivor.



Sound reflective sculpture by Jawwaad Taylor.



**Jawwaad Taylor** is a trumpeter, composer, producer, educator, and social activist. He is a founding member of the group Shape of Broad Minds, whose critically-acclaimed album, *Craft of the Lost Ark*, brought Taylor international attention. Taylor performs with jazz, free jazz, and improvisors, as well as hip hop artists, from around the world. As co-founder and producer of the band, The Young Mothers, he merges modern jazz, improvisation, hip hop, indie rock, and Afro-grooves. He collaborates regularly with and performs with MacArthur Fellow Carrie Mae Weems and other visual artists, and combines his compositions with their visual work. Taylor's list of performances includes countless national and international festivals such as the Hove Festival, Sonar Festival, Meltdown Festival, and the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival. Taylor is an alumnus at the Red Bull Music Academy, and is committed to his hometown of Houston, TX. There, he studied and participated in workshops with Pauline Oliveros, and was a member of the Deep Listening Institute and Nameless Sound. He attended Prairie View A&M University.

🔗 [jawwaad.com](http://jawwaad.com)

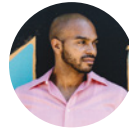
© [jawwaad999](#)

# Derek McPhatter <sup>♥ he/him</sup> *NightQueen Performance Suite*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Chicago, IL ▶ Musical theater, theater

## About the Project

*NightQueen* is an ecological, Afro-surreal performance suite that tells the story of an ensemble seeking hope in one another as their world is transformed by a global water crisis, unbridled network technologies, and resurgent fascism. Three evening-length works blend theater, music, and oral storytelling traditions to conjure a mythology reflecting the contemporary Black experience. It is an affirmation of the diversity, beauty, creativity, and resilience of Black life in opposition to the modern day forces that continue to debase Black communities.



**Derek McPhatter** is committed to new work that engages diverse communities, emphasizing narratives at the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, and technology. He is developing work with Prop Thtr and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, building on recent residencies with Chicago Dramatists, The National Black Theatre, and Djerassi. McPhatter is a founding playwright with the Fire This Time Festival, and was featured in Harlem9's 48 Hours in Harlem Festival—two Obie-award winning platforms that champion Black playwrights and theatermakers in New York City. McPhatter served as librettist, book writer and lyricist for five new music-theater works with the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

🔗 [derekleemcphatter.com](http://derekleemcphatter.com)  
📸 [dmacpnumber1](#)



Concept art for *Afro-Surreal Urban Worlds: NightQueen* by Derek McPhatter.  
Developed by Daria Borovkova and Dionna McPhatter.

# Cristal Chanelle Truscott ♥ she/her

## *Plantation Remix*

■ 2019 Awardee 📍 Chicago, IL ▶ Musical theater, social practice

### About the Project

*Plantation Remix*, a site-responsive acapella musical, will be performed at historic plantations and related sites to revisit, raze and reimagine the separatist genre of plantation tourism by rehabilitating the singular story of antebellum glory through shared histories and multiperspective narratives of both enslaved and slave-holding families and their descendants, with a central tenet that no American identity—across a multicultural range of experiences—is left uninformed by the systemic and sociocultural descendants of US Slavery.



**Cristal Chanelle Truscott**, PhD, is a playwright, director, scholar, culture worker, founder of Progress Theatre and creator of “SoulWork,” a generative method for performance and analysis, rooted in generations-old African American performance traditions. Her “NeoSpirituals,” or acapella musicals, including *PEACHES*, *MEMBUH*, and *The Burnin’*, straddle time between histories and the present to explore identities, legacies/ inheritances and sociocultural movements as a way to encourage connection, understanding and healing relevant to our times. She is a recipient of the Doris Duke Impact Artist Award, Creative Capital Award, MAP Fund, NPN Creation Fund and NEFA National Theatre Project grants and Associate Professor of Performance Studies and Graduate Acting at Northwestern University.



*The Burnin’* by Cristal Chanelle Truscott. Photo: Melisa Cardona



# Julian Terrell Otis <sup>♥ he/him</sup>

## *Resolved: Critiquing Classical Music Through Improvised Performance*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Chicago, IL ▶ Artistic activism, music performance

### About the Project

Julian Terrell Otis's memories of participating in his high school debate team are tinted by inequity, stifling opportunities the experience intended to provide for academic exploration, travel, and community. In the face of inequity, he and his peers improvised solutions to win cases. In his performance *Resolved*, Otis applies this improvisation to tackle similar inequities around contemporary music circles. Using the artist's experience on the debate team and their use of critical race theory as inspiration, the work facilitates dialogue and musical expression by convening the music and debate communities in knowledge sharing, rehearsals, and performance.



Performance still from *Intercession* by Julian Terrell Otis.  
Photo credit: Ricardo Adame.



**Julian Terrell Otis** is a vocalist dedicated to the advancement of Black music in America, spanning genres from creative music and jazz, to contemporary classical. His work explores the limitless possibilities of his instrument's expressive capacity through song, improvisation, and theater. Known for bringing fresh perspective, nuance, and “high drama” to the contemporary music world, the integration of performance “live art” elements is of particular interest to him. Otis's experiences have led him to create the male soloist role in George E. Lewis' chamber opera, *Afterword*, on both domestic and international stages. In exploring the life and work of Julius Eastman, Otis has performed his solo work, *Prelude* for the *Holy Presence of Joan of Arc*. He revived Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King* at the inaugural Bang on a Can All Star's Loud Weekend, and is devising works focusing on improvisation, electronics, and movement. *All the Pretty Flowers* is his first recording project of improvised music and poetry. Committed to community empowerment, he led an improvised jam for South Side Chicago communities called Self Care = Resistance!

➤ [julianterrellotis.com](http://julianterrellotis.com)

# Becca Blackwell ♡ they/them

## *The Body Never Lies*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Performance art, theater

### About the Project

*The Body Never Lies* is a solo, performance-based theatrical search for a vocabulary beyond language that expresses who we are. Through movement, qigong, science and some fragmented texts in various languages, Becca Blackwell uncovers a new landscape for themselves and the audience to discover identity.



**Becca Blackwell** is an NYC-based trans actor, performer and writer. Existing between genders, and preferring the pronoun “they,” Blackwell works collaboratively with playwrights and directors to expand our sense of personhood and the body through performance. Some of their

collaborations have been with Young Jean Lee, Half Straddle, Jennifer Miller’s *Circus Amok*, Richard Maxwell, Erin Markey, Sharon Hayes, Theater of the Two Headed Calf and Lisa D’Amour. Film/ TV includes: *High Maintenance*, *Ramy*, *Marriage Story*, *Shameless*, *Deadman’s Barstool*, and *Jack in the Box*. They have toured their solo shows *They*, *Themselves* and *Schmerm* and *Schmermie’s Choice* across the US. Blackwell was a recipient of the Doris Duke Impact Artist Award and the Franklin Furnace award.

➤ [beccablackwell.com](http://beccablackwell.com)  
📷 [theirishhorse](#)



Becca Blackwell performs in *They*, *Themselves* and *Schmerm*. Photo: Kevin Yatarola.

# Dorian Wood ♡ they/them

## *Canto de Todes*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Los Angeles, CA ▶ Music performance, performance art

### About the Project

Emphasizing the urgency of folk music as a vessel for social change, Dorian Wood's *Canto de Todes* is a genre-defying canon of songs arriving in the form of a printed anthology, a recorded album, and a long-duration touring spatial experience.



Multi-disciplinary artist **Dorian Wood** (pronouns: they/them) seeks to glorify both the sanctity and irreverence of intimacy. Through the use of their corpulent body and booming voice,

Wood revels in challenging the artist-audience separation, using subject matter informed by their own perspective as a non-binary brown person and an autodidact. Their work has been showcased in concert halls and performance spaces around the world, including at institutions like The Broad (Los Angeles), REDCAT (Los Angeles), Museo Nacional Del Prado (Madrid), the City Hall of Madrid and Teatro de la Ciudad Esperanza Iris (Mexico City). From 2019 to 2020, Wood completed several successful tours throughout Europe, Mexico and the U.S. with their chamber orchestra tribute to Chavela Vargas, *XAVELA LUX AETERNA*. Most recently, Wood became a 2020 Creative Capital Award recipient and an Art Matters Foundation grant recipient. Wood has released over a dozen recordings, among them the albums *BOLKA* (2007); *Brutus* (2010); *Rattle Rattle* (Atonal Industries, 2013); *Down, The Dirty Roof* (Atonal Industries, 2013), *XALÁ* (Atonal Industries, 2017) and 2020's back-to-back albums *ARDOR* and *REACTOR*.

🔗 [dorianwood.com](http://dorianwood.com)

📷 [dorianwoodmusic](https://www.instagram.com/dorianwoodmusic)



Dorian Wood performs *Nodriissx/Narcissx*.  
Photo: Marisa Caichiolo.

# Jibz Cameron ♡ she/her & Sue Slagle ♡ she/her *Titanic Depression*

■ 2020 Awardees ► Multimedia performance, performance art

## About the Project

*Titanic Depression* is a multimedia performance with live animation starring Dynasty Handbag, alter ego of artist Jibz Cameron. Using the 1997 film *Titanic* as a departure point, the work addresses issues of class, gender roles, gratuitous wealth, and the environmental impact of climate change.



### Jibz Cameron

Los Angeles, CA

Jibz Cameron is a performance and video artist living in Los Angeles, performing multimedia work as alter ego Dynasty Handbag. Over the last 15 years, Cameron has combined tragedy and comedy, at such institutions as MOCA, PS1, Joe's Pub, The Kitchen, REDCAT, The Broad Museum, The Hammer Museum, and the New Museum, among others. *The New York Times* has heralded her as "the funniest and most pitch perfect performance seen in years," and *New York Magazine* has called her "outrageously smart, grotesque and innovative." Cameron has written and produced seven evening-length performance pieces and countless short works that have been performed in clubs and venues internationally. She also has produced multiple video works and two albums of original music. She is a 2020 Creative Capital



Jibz Cameron performs as Dynasty Handbag in *Soggy Glasses*.

Awardee and a 2021 United States Artist fellow. She works as a professor of performance and comedy-related subjects as well as lecturing and teaching workshops. Her film *Weirdo Night*, is an official Sundance Film Festival 2021 submission. Cameron also produces and hosts *Weirdo Night!*, a monthly experimental comedy and performance event in Los Angeles, pandemic pending!

➤ [dynastyhandbag.com](http://dynastyhandbag.com)

@ [dynastyhandbag](https://www.instagram.com/dynastyhandbag)



### Sue Slagle

Frederick, MD

Sue Slagle, who goes by the stage name SUE-C, is a video and light artist working at the intersection of creative coding and live performance. Over the past 20 years, she has created handmade videos and live media performances, traveling extensively in Europe and the US. Her works challenge the norms of photography, video, and technology by blending them all into an organic and improvisational live performance setting. Employing a variety of digital tools to create an experimental animation "instrument," she synthesizes cinema from photographs, drawings, watercolors, handmade papers, fabrics and miniature lighting effects. She has performed at the San Francisco International Film Festival, the Oberhausen Short Film Festival, REDCAT, SFMoMA and many other national and international venues. Slagle has taught creative coding courses and workshops for Mills College, Portland Community College, California College of Art, PNCA, Stanford, UCLA and many media collectives and non-profits.

➤ [sue-c.net](http://sue-c.net)

@ [sue\\_c](https://www.instagram.com/sue_c)



# Lars Jan <sup>♥ he/him</sup> *Roam*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Los Angeles, CA ▶ Multimedia performance, augmented reality

## About the Project

*Roam* is a performance set on a sports field (or massive space) that speculatively traces one branch of the Afghan side of the artist's family tree 40,000 years into the past. Performers will lead audiences wearing AR-glasses to roam around a stadium that transforms into a river-carved valley, where bleachers are tree-covered mountains and other participants become Sapiens and Neanderthals who evolve, migrate, and branch toward the arc of the artist's complex family history in Afghanistan. Through emerging technologies and theater, *Roam* weaves themes of human migration, personal history, and ecological collapse on an epic scale.



The son of émigrés from Afghanistan and Poland, **Lars Jan** is a director, artist, writer, and activist known for visually striking, genre-bending performance and installation works exploring emerging technologies, live gatherings, and unclassifiable experience. Jan's original works have been presented by BAM Next Wave Festival (Harvey Theater), Whitney Museum, Sundance Film Festival, Under

the Radar Festival, CAP UCLA, PICA's TBA Festival, REDCAT, ICA Boston, YBCA, Wexner Center, On the Boards, Toronto Nuit Blanche, London's Burning Festival, Poland's Boska Komedia Festival, NYU Abu Dhabi, Istanbul Modern, and Sydney Festival. His landmark climate change-themed installation, *Holoscenes*, continues to tour the world. Winner of the Audemars Piguet Art Commission, Jan exhibited *Slow-Moving Luminaries*, a kinetic pavilion evoking sea-level rise during Art Basel Miami. He staged Joan Didion's essay *The White Album*, which culminated in an open-forum conversation around themes of protest. He is currently photographing vehicles used as housing in Los Angeles (commissioned by CTQ), and will premier an installation, *Lapse*, at SNF Nostos in Greece this August. He is a TED Senior Fellow and Sundance New Frontier Story Lab advisor. Jan is represented by Charlie James Gallery and on faculty at CalArts.

➤ [EarlyMorningOpera.com](http://EarlyMorningOpera.com)  
📸 [larsamerica](https://www.instagram.com/larsamerica)



Concept art for *Roam* by Lars Jan.

# Janice Lowe, Tyehimba Jess, Yahdon Israel *Olio*

■ 2020 Awardees 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Musical theater, poetry



Yahdon Israel performs *Olio*. Photo: Audible.

## About the Project

*Olio* is a live musical production of the Pulitzer-prize winning book of poems of the same title, presenting the lives of African-American creatives from the Civil War to World War I.



### Janice A. Lowe ♥ she/her

Janice A. Lowe is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, and poet who creates solo and collaborative music-text hybrids. She is the author of *LEAVING CLE* poems of nomadic dispersal, and is composer-librettist of the chamber opera *Dusky Alice*. Her compositions for musical theater include *Lil Buddha*, text by Stephanie L. Jones, which was presented at the Eugene O'Neill Musical Theater Conference and at National Alliance for Musical Theater's Festival of New Works, *This Esther*, book and lyrics by Charles E. Drew, Jr., and *Sit-In at the Five & Dime*, words by Marjorie Duffield. Lowe arranged and performed the music of *Montague Ring* for the performance piece *Impossible Man* by Tracie Morris. She has composed music for plays including *12th & Clairmount* by Jenni Lamb, *Chiron's Homegurl Healer Howls* by Liza Jessie Peterson and *Door of No Return* by Nehassaiu DeCannes. Lowe tours and records with her band, Janice Lowe & NAMAROON. She composed and co-wrote

the multimedia piece *Desegregation Remix: Three Women Sing the Borders*, a collaboration with Lee Ann Brown. Lowe is a co-founder of The Dark Room Collective.

🔗 [janicelowe.com](http://janicelowe.com)

📧 [namaroonmuse](mailto:namaroonmuse)



### Tyehimba Jess ♥ he/him

Tyehimba Jess presents American history through an innovative and engaging mix of poetry, performance, and song. He is the author of two books of poetry, *Leadbelly* and *Olio*. *Olio* won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize, the Anisfield-Wolf

Book Award, The Midland Society Author's Award in Poetry, and received an Outstanding Contribution to Publishing Citation from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. It was also nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award, the PEN Jean Stein Book Award, and the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. *Leadbelly* was a winner of the 2004 National Poetry Series. *The Library Journal* and *Black Issues Book Review* both named it one of the "Best Poetry Books of 2005." Jess, a Cave Canem and NYU Alumni, received a 2004 Literature Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and was a 2004-2005 Winter Fellow at the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center. Jess is also a veteran of the 2000 and 2001 Green Mill Poetry Slam Team, and won a 2000-2001 Illinois Arts Council Fellowship in Poetry, the 2001 Chicago Sun-Times Poetry Award, and a 2006 Whiting Fellowship.

🔗 [tyehimbajess.net](http://tyehimbajess.net)

📧 [tyehimbajess](mailto:tyehimbajess)



### Yahdon Israel ♥ he/him

Yahdon Israel is an educator, entrepreneur, editor, writer and founder of Literaryswag, a cultural movement intersecting literature and fashion. He teaches creative writing at The New School and City College. He is the former editor-in-chief of *Brooklyn Magazine*. He has written for *Avidly*, *The New Inquiry*, *LitHub*, *Poets and Writers* and *Vanity Fair*. And he hosts the Literaryswag Book Club, a Brooklyn-based subscription service and book club that meets every last Wednesday of the month.

🔗 [Yahdonisrael.com](http://Yahdonisrael.com)

🔗 [Literaryswagbookclub.com](http://Literaryswagbookclub.com)

📧 [yahdon](mailto:yahdon)

# Shontina Vernon <sup>♥ she/her</sup>

## *Forging Ahead*

■ 2019 Awardee 📍 Atlanta, GA ▶ Narrative film, experimental film, performance

### About the Project

*Forging Ahead* is an experimental narrative feature film drawing upon a hybrid form of cinema and theatre performance to tell the story of a young woman confronting the impact and dissociative nature of incarceration on her adult life. When the process of evolving a solo show collides the central protagonist with a younger version of herself in need of rescue, this dramedy unfolds in surprising ways to illuminate the journey to voice and agency those scarred by the criminal justice system must take.



**Shontina Vernon** is a writer, filmmaker, theatre artist and musician whose multidisciplinary work explores Black female interiorities, intergenerational legacies around trauma and healing, and queer identity. Drawing from her early experiences with the criminal justice system, Vernon experiments to disrupt narratives of erasure and to challenge media representations at the intersection of race, gender, and class. Her work has been developed and presented by HBO, New York Theatre Workshop,

Hip Hop Theatre Festival, and Worldwide Words in Denmark to name a select few. Vernon is a recipient of the Robert Rauschenberg “Artist as Activist” Fellowship, an Art for Justice awardee, and a recipient of the Conductive Garboil Award for her work in the creation of the Visionary Justice StoryLab, a film production hub and collective working to challenge the limits of creative discourse beyond accepted limits to engage audiences outside of the aesthetic industrial complex. In 2018, she completed *GRRRL Justice*, an experimental short film exploring the liberatory practices of girls and queer youth of color engaged with the juvenile justice system. The film screened in over twenty cities across the nation and is now being developed under a new title into a broader series. Currently, she is in pre-production on *LAST KIND WORDS*, a feature film on 1930s Black queer Blues life. Vernon earned her MFA in Drama from the University of Washington and resides in Atlanta, GA.

🔗 [shontinavernon.com](http://shontinavernon.com)  
📷 [shontinavmuses](https://www.instagram.com/shontinavmuses)



*Forging Ahead* by Shontina Vernon.

# Tomeka Reid ♡ she/her

## *Women of the AACM*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Artistic activism, music performance

### About the Project

The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) is a group of Chicago-based avant-garde jazz musicians that began in 1965 organizing around their theory of music, known largely for their male artists. As AACM moves towards its 60th anniversary, *Women of the AACM* celebrates the contributions of its female practitioners who have been an important part of the organization and its history through interviews, scores, photographs, discographies, new works, audio files, and artistic endeavors such as visual art, poetry, and documentation.



Cellist and composer **Tomeka Reid**, described as a “new jazz power source” by *The New York Times*, is an active musician in Chicago’s bustling jazz and improvised music community. With a distinctive melodic sensibility, always rooted in a strong sense of groove, Reid has been a key member of ensembles led by legendary reedists like Anthony Braxton and Roscoe Mitchell, as well as a younger generation of visionaries including flutist Nicole Mitchell, vocalist Dee Alexander, and drummer Mike Reed. In 2013, she launched the first Chicago Jazz String Summit, a semi-annual three-day international festival of cutting-edge string players. She is a Foundation of the Arts and 3Arts Awardee, and received her doctorate in music from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. In 2019, Reid received a teaching appointment at Mills College as the Darius Milhaud chair in composition.

📷 cellisita



Image of creative flutist, composer, and educator, Nicole Mitchell. Photo: Jim Brock.



# Marie Lorenz, Dana Spiotta, Kurt Rohde

## *Newtown Odyssey*

■ 2021 Awardees ► Opera, sculpture

### About the Project

The Newtown Creek is one of the most polluted industrial sites in the US, but traveling there by boat, gliding through reflections of New York City, can be a beautiful experience. Set upon the creek, *Newtown Odyssey* presents a non-traditional opera heard amid sounds of the surrounding traffic and industry. Written more like a travel diary, the score of the opera can be experienced in phases, reshuffling the narrative, giving each audience an entirely different experience of the work. Performers sing aboard moveable and floating stages, and the audience pass by in boats, connecting them physically to the opera's themes of climate change, environmental justice, and civic responsibility.



### Marie Lorenz ♥ she/her

New York, NY

New York-based artist Marie Lorenz's work is rooted in the exploration and narrative of New York City's waterfronts. Combining psycho-geographic exploration with highly crafted, material forms, Lorenz uses boats to create an uncertain space and bring about a heightened awareness of place. In 2005, she started her *Tide and Current Taxi* project, taking people around the New York Harbor in a boat built from salvaged materials, using the tide to guide her navigation. Solo exhibitions include *Waterways*, at the Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery at Bennington College, Vermont; *Tide and Current Taxi*, at the Rib Gallery in Rotterdam; and *Graybelt*, a multimedia project funded by the Bridging Barriers research initiative, at the University of Texas in Austin. She is the recipient of many awards and residencies, including the Joseph H. Hazen Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome. Lorenz received an MFA from Yale.

🔗 [tideandcurrenttaxi.org](http://tideandcurrenttaxi.org)

📷 @lorenzmarie



Photo from *East River Ferry* by Marie Lorenz.



### Dana Spiotta ♥ she/her

Syracuse, NY

Dana Spiotta's fiction focuses on the complications of identity by interrogating how we experience the "self" and what constitutes consciousness; the tension between our interior lives and the external world; and how we are shaped by the intersection of economic, political, technological, and historical forces. Spiotta is the author of four acclaimed novels: *Innocents and Others*, which won the St. Francis College Literary Prize and a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize; *Stone Arabia*, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award; *Eat the Document*, a finalist for the National Book Award and winner of the Rosenthal Foundation Award; and *Lightning Field*. Spiotta was a Guggenheim Fellow, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow, and awarded the Rome Prize in Literature. In 2017, she received the John Updike Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Her latest novel, *Wayward*, will be published in 2021. She lives in Syracuse and teaches in the Syracuse University Creative Writing program.

🔗 [danaspiotta.com](http://danaspiotta.com)



### Kurt Rohde ♥ he/him

San Francisco, CA

Musician Kurt Rohde is a viola player, teacher, and composer who is fascinated with the codification of failure in current culture, and is always searching for ways to incorporate notions of catastrophe into the way he makes work. He is Artistic Advisor with the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, Artistic Director of the Composers Conference, a curator at the Center for New Music, teaches music composition at UC Davis, and works with emerging musicians helping them find creative paths to practice in their life. He has received the Rome Prize, the Berlin Prize, fellowships from the Radcliffe-Harvard Institute for Advanced Study and Guggenheim Foundation, as well as awards from American Academy of Arts and Letters, Barlow, Fromm, Hanson, and Koussevitzky Foundations. His album, *It wasn't a dream?*, was released on Albany Records in Winter 2020.

🔗 [kurtrohde.com](http://kurtrohde.com)

📷 @kurt-rohde

# Papel Machete *On the Eve of Abolition*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 San Juan, PR ▶ Puppetry, theater

## About the Project

*On the Eve of Abolition* is an original 60-80 minute bilingual (Spanish-English), live/recorded multimedia performance about the last day of the last prison in transnational liberated territories of what was known as the US and Mexico, after a movement of abolitionists has created the conditions to end the prison industrial complex. The story is set in 2047 and imagines abolition camps, formerly incarcerated people, families and activists outside of the prisons, and from within, prisoners organized in this final moment to end all prisons. They will use rod and table puppets, masks, shadow puppet theater, projection, and cantastoria (picture storytelling). The play is a radical imaginary sci-fi story based on current conditions in the US and Puerto Rico, grounded in and connected to ongoing struggles for prison abolition.



**Papel Machete** is a radical theater and puppetry collective that produces and performs original work throughout Puerto Rico and the US. The collective started on May 1, 2006 during the government shutdown, in response to the economic and political crisis generated by the status of Puerto Rico as a colony of the US. Since then, they have established a body of work inspired by a commonly shared aesthetic and values. Using papier mâché as a medium, Papel Machete explores a wide range of artforms and styles including toy theater, cantastorias, shadow theater, table-top puppetry, masks, performing objects and giant puppets. Papel Machete has brought theater to new audiences and venues to denounce exploitation, build solidarity, and agitate for action in the struggles of frontline communities. They are co-founders and part of the organizing committee of Titeretada, a yearly independent puppetry festival in Puerto Rico.

🔗 [papelmachete.com](http://papelmachete.com)

📷 [papelmachete](https://www.instagram.com/papelmachete)



Papel Machete at the Paro Nacional (National Strike) in San Juan, PR. Photo: Erin Sheridan

# estrellx supernova <sup>♥ they/them</sup>

## Encuentro 33: LINE/AGE, Queer Neurocognitive Architectures Hidden in Plain Site(s)

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Dance, social practice

### About the Project

*Encuentro 33* is a multiphase project created in partnership with an emergent core group of Black, Indigenous, First-Generation, Queer, Trans Artists of Color within and outside of Turtle Island, or the United States. Through this project, the group comes together to instigate a series of performance and ritual-based actions that excavate ecology, ancestry, pleasure, healing, and socially-engaged praxis through a choreographic lens. These works provide infrastructure for bringing estrellx's vision of opening La Escuela de Cariño, Corporealidad y Artes Sutiles/The School of Tenderness, Embodied Kinetics, & Alchemical Arts to fruition. La Escuela is a multidimensional shape-shifting space that takes the form of a queer club, healing center, choreographic innovation research incubator, performance venue, and farm designed by and in service to Black, Indigenous, Queer Trans, People of Culture (BIQTPOC) and allies, and will reflect the wisdom and intelligence of our plasticity, resonance, and cosmic frequencies. La Escuela centers the voices of BIQTPOC survivors, artists, activists, healers, herbalists, innovators, and creative thinkers and aims to become a main hub where they can co-create alternative realities, infrastructure, economies, and paradigms that serve our individual and collective liberation. La Escuela will divest from what no longer serves, will be intercultural, international, and interdisciplinary in scope, and will make the impossible, possible, the invisible, visible. The group will learn through stillness, slowing down, rigorous embodiment, somatics, and attending to our wounds, inner children, and wildest dreams.



Still of estrellx supernova performing *death by disco*, part 2.  
Photo: Yvonne Portra.

**estrellx supernova** is a queer AfroIndigenous cosmic energetic orchestrator, choreographer, and healer whose roots extend into Guatemala, Angola, & Portugal. supernova was born in New Jersey, on unceded Lenape territory and are now making love between Lenape and Ohlone/Muwekma/Chochenyo territories, or the SF Bay Area. supernova is interested in choreography as a process of excavation, task as meditation, psychosomatic work (working



directly with grief, joy, rage, and praise), Chinese Energetics, and getting messy by conjuring contemporary rituals within quotidian and natural landscapes. supernova explores the notion of club spaces as sites of generative dissonance and asks, "Are we celebrating or mourning or both? How do we prepare for the not yet seen?" Their practice and choreographic platform integrates ecology (as it relates to trauma, healing, the environment, perception, spirituality, BIQTPOC sovereignty); choreography (that uses club dancing, improvisatory systems, somatic, and ritual-based forms); and socially-engaged praxis (that bridges movement research to broader communities, fields, and discourses through performance). supernova frames performance and choreography as a state of transmission and channeling reciprocity, generosity, vulnerability, and love. Between 2019 - 2021, supernova was awarded a National Association of Latino Arts & Culture Artist Grant, an Impulstanz | danceWEB scholarship, a Princess Grace in Choreography Fellowship Award, and a San Francisco Arts Commission Individual Artist Grant. Currently, supernova is also diving deep into the work of Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy, Death Doulaship, and Somatic Experiencing that will become core elements of The School of Tenderness. supernova calls in more ease, lightness, clarity, openness, and receptivity into their life and project and trust that things will continue to fall into place.

🔗 [estrellx-supernova.com](https://estrellx-supernova.com)  
📷 [princesa\\_estrellx](#)

# Nia Witherspoon

## *Priestess of Twerk: A Black Femme Temple to Pleasure*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Multimedia performance, theater

### About the Project

Inspired by the “bad bitches” of hip hop, the reproductive justice movement, and the sacred sex workers that graced Egyptian temples, *Priestess of Twerk* is a Black feminist temple of pleasure that presents women, queer, and trans-folks of color with opportunities to re-encounter their sexualities through the lens of the sacred, increasing bodily autonomy, and dispelling toxic masculinity.



**Nia Ostrow Witherspoon** is a Black queer theater maker, vocalist and composer, and cultural worker investigating the metaphysics of Black liberation, desire, and diaspora.

Witherspoon is the Multimedia Writer-in-Residence at Fordham University, a Jerome New Artist Fellow, an artist in residence at HERE Arts Center, BAX/

Brooklyn Arts Exchange, and was a 2017-18 2050 Playwriting/Directing Fellow at New York Theatre Workshop. Her award-winning work has been featured by JACK, La Mama ETC, Playwright's Realm, BRIC, HERE, National Black Theatre, BAAD, Movement Research, BAX, Dixon Place, Painted Bride, 651 Arts, and elsewhere. As a performer, Witherspoon appeared in Sharon Bridgforth's *River See*, and in Cherrie Moraga's *La Semilla Caminante/The Traveling Seed*. She holds a BA from Smith College and a PhD from Stanford University in Theatre and Performance Studies, and has held tenure-track professorships at Florida State University and Arizona State University.

🔗 [niawitherspoon.com](http://niawitherspoon.com)  
📷 [niasoli](#)



Nia Witherspoon, performing as the *Priestess of Twerk*.  
Photo: Michelle Y. Thompson.

# Literary Arts & Multidisciplinary



# Legacy Russell ♡ she/her/they/them

## BLACK MEME

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Brooklyn, NY ▶ Digital media, literary nonfiction

### About the Project

*BLACK MEME* identifies points across history—beginning in the 1900s and traveling through to the 21st century—that have paved the way for the notion of the “meme” as we understand it today, setting the stage for the construct of digital virality. Throughout her research-based project, Legacy Russell defines “Black meme” through the notion of “the copying and transmission of blackness-as-memetic-material.” Citing sources across a wide gamut of archival media, the project explores the impact of Blackness, Black life, and Black social death on contemporary conceptions of virality borne in the age of the Internet.



**Legacy Russell** is a writer and curator whose ongoing academic work and research focuses on gender, performance, digital selfhood, internet idolatry, and new media ritual. Her first book, *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto* (2020, Verso Books), is a cyberfeminist call to action that positions error as an opportunity for revolution, exploring the relationship between gender, technology, and identity. She is the Associate Curator of Exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem, the recipient of the Thoma Foundation 2019 Arts Writing Award in Digital Art, and a 2020 Rauschenberg Residency Fellow.

🔗 [legacyrussell.com](https://legacyrussell.com)

📷 [ellerustle](https://www.instagram.com/ellerustle)

🐦 [LegacyRussell](https://twitter.com/LegacyRussell)



Video essay still rendered within the digital “frame” of a laptop graphic as from Legacy Russell’s 2020 video essay *BLACK MEME*.

# Marcia Douglas ♡ she/her

## *Genuine Herstory: Documythographies*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ Boulder, CO ► Literary fiction, literary nonfiction

### About the Project

*Genuine Herstory: Documythographies* is a three-volume, hybrid, and cross-genre writing project culminating with a performance installation. Exploring themes of African diasporic fugitivity and migration, this project layers fiction, poem essays, memoir, visual and material documents, and voicescapes—altering and inscribing, in an effort to excavate and rechart history.



Raised in Jamaica, writer **Marcia Douglas** reflects the Jamaican experience through a lyrical and seamless hybrid of poetry and prose. She is the author of the novels, *The Marvellous Equations of the Dread*, *Madam Fate*, and *Notes from a Writer's Book of Cures and Spells*, as well as a poetry collection, *Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom*. Douglas's work has appeared in journals and anthologies internationally. Her awards include a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a UK Poetry Book Society Recommendation. *The Marvellous Equations of the Dread* was longlisted for the 2016 Republic of Consciousness Prize and the 2017 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. She performs a one-woman show, *Natural Herstory*, and is on faculty at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she teaches creative writing and Caribbean literature.

➤ [marciadouglas.com](http://marciadouglas.com)

# Simone White ♡ she/her

## *or, on being the other woman*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Brooklyn, NY ► Multimedia performance, poetry

### About the Project

In her book and performance *or, on being the other woman*, Simone White interweaves a long poem with a theoretical essay bringing post-Marxist materialism into conversation with Black studies. Inspired by the many questions trap music raises about what “social” means for Black women, a performance embeds the writing in a sound and movement environment to ask, what is a Black woman who works to live, and what is sexual freedom?



**Simone White** is a poet, scholar, and mother whose writing is both poetry and criticism. She is the author of *House Envy of All The World, Of Being Dispersed*, and *Dear Angel of Death*, as well as two chapbooks, *Unrest* and *Dolly*. White's work has also appeared in journals and magazines including *Artforum*, *e-flux*, *BOMB*, *Frieze*, and the *New York Times Book Review*. She is Stephen M. Gorn Family Assistant Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, where she teaches creative writing and undergraduate and graduate courses in literature. She has also taught at the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa, the New School, Eugene Lang, and Bard's Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts. In 2017, she received the Whiting Award for Poetry.

↗ [simone-white.com](http://simone-white.com)



# Marc Anthony Richardson ♡ he/him

## *The Serpent Will Eat Whatever is in the Belly of the Beast*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Philadelphia, PA ► Literary fiction, poetry

### About the Project

In *The Serpent Will Eat Whatever is in the Belly of the Beast*, seven Black assassins are assigned to reciprocate violence inflicted on the Black community by taking the life of a white person, according to the day of the week that it happened. The speculative novel takes place during a day of rioting, after the white rapists and murderers of a Black girl are released from jail without charges, and the Black assassins seek retaliation. When Monday receives his assignment to kill the only white girl in his inner-city chess program, whom he taught as a child, he realizes he is platonically in love with her, and decides to save her.



**Marc Anthony Richardson** is an artist and novelist from Philadelphia, who specializes in dense, visceral prose that circles on itself and leaps from present to past, using language that is, at times, phantasmagoric. *Year of the Rat*, his debut novel, won the Ronald Sukenick Innovative Fiction Prize, and an American Book Award. Richardson was also the recipient of a PEN America grant, a Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright fellowship, and a Vermont Studio Center residency. *Messiahs*, his second novel, is due for release in Fall 2021 by Fiction Collective Two/University of Alabama Press. The book takes place in a dystopian America, where one can assume a relative's capital sentence as an act of holy reform—the proxy initiative, patterned after the Passion. Richardson's work has appeared in *Conjunctions*, *Callaloo*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Western Humanities Review*, and the anthology, *Who Will Speak for America?*, from Temple University Press. He received his MFA from Mills College, and currently teaches creative writing at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is the recipient of a 2021 Sachs Program Grant for Arts Innovation. He will be a writer-in-residence at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa.

- [marcanthonyrichardson.com](http://marcanthonyrichardson.com)
- [wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc\\_Anthony\\_Richardson](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Anthony_Richardson)
- [english.upenn.edu/people/marc-anthony-richardson](http://english.upenn.edu/people/marc-anthony-richardson)
- [sachsarts.org/grant-awards/the-serpent-will-eat-whatever-is-in-the-belly-of-the-beast/](http://sachsarts.org/grant-awards/the-serpent-will-eat-whatever-is-in-the-belly-of-the-beast/)

# Meng Jin ♡ she/her

## *Mothers and Girls:* *A Fake Memoir*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ San Francisco, CA ► Literary fiction

### About the Project

*Mothers and Girls* is a novel or “fake memoir” narrated by the daughter of a Chinese poet and a white American translator/scholar of Chinese literature. The narrator tells the story of the discovery of a fictional text, also titled *Mothers and Girls*, which interrogates the reliability of text, and conceives of and enacts authorship as performance. By playing with narrative expectations of autofiction—questioning a form that has itself arisen out of a questioning of form—Meng Jin complicates narratives of motherhood and girlhood, expands imaginaries of mental illness in non-Western contexts, and illuminates the lives of minority-written texts.



**Meng Jin** is a novelist whose stories explore the ways in which the self fractures and attempts to cohere in times of hallucinatory social, political, economic, environmental, and technological change. Jin is obsessed with form and how the novel can bend, break, and expand to realize the stories writers need to tell today. Her first novel *Little Gods*, published by Custom House, was a finalist for the NYPL Young Lions Award and *LATimes* First Fiction Prize, and longlisted for the PEN Open Book Award. *The New York Times* wrote that it “expands the future of the immigrant novel.” Jin is a Kundiman fellow, a David TK Wong Fellow, Elizabeth George Foundation Grantee, and Steinbeck Fellow. Her short prose appears in *Best American Short Stories 2020*, *Pushcart Prize XLV*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Guernica*, *Ploughshares*, *Vogue*, and elsewhere. A short fiction collection, *The Odd Women*, is forthcoming from Custom House in 2022.

↗ [mengj.in](http://mengj.in)  
@ [mengjinwrites](https://www.instagram.com/mengjinwrites)



Inspiration image for Meng Jin's novel, *Mothers and Girls*. Photo: Meng Jin.

# Wendy S. Walters ♡ she/her

## *A Dead White: An Argument Against White Paint*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ New York, NY ► Literary fiction

### About the Project

*A Dead White* is a book-length polemic against the use of white paint in both interior and exterior spaces. The argument will wind through a wide selection of works in architecture, manufacturing, art history, and consumer culture, engaging narratives related to its effect in the lived environment.



**Wendy S. Walters** is an author whose work blends poetry, nonfiction cultural commentary, and lyric essays to explore themes of race, gender, environment, and belonging in America. She is the author of a book of prose, *Multiply/Divide: On the American Real and Surreal*, named a best book of the year by *Buzzfeed*, *Flavorwire*, *Literary Hub*, *The Root*, and *The Huffington Post*. She is also the author of two books of poems, *Troy, Michigan* and *Longer I Wait, More You Love Me*. Walters has received fellowships from Mass MoCA, New York Foundation for the Arts, The Ford Foundation, MacDowell, Yaddo, The Smithsonian Institution, and Bread Loaf. She was an artist-in-residence at BRIClab in Brooklyn, where she worked on developing the book for the opera, *Golden Motors* with composer, Derek Bermel. Walters was a founding director of the public humanities inquiry *Essay in Public*, and her work has been published in *The Yale Review*, *BOMB*, *Lapham's Quarterly*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Fourth Genre*, and *Harper's* among many others.

↗ [waltersspot.com](http://waltersspot.com)

🐦 [waltersspot](https://twitter.com/waltersspot)

# Mitchell S. Jackson ♡ he/him

## *John of Watts: A Novel*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Chicago, IL ► Literary fiction

### About the Project

*John of Watts* is a novel inspired by the story of Eldridge Broussard, a youth preacher and former basketball player who started the Ecclesia Athletic Association, a group now known as a cult. Through historical fiction, Mitchell S. Jackson conducts an exploration of contemporary American culture and history by looking at the relationship between cults and the American Dream, urban revolt, sports, and the links between the Watts Riots of 1965 and the LA Riots of 1992.



Photo of Eldridge Broussard, the Watts native who founded the Ecclesia Athletic Association, the group upon which Mitchell S. Jackson's novel, *John of Watts*, is based.



**Mitchell S. Jackson** is a prose writer whose fiction is grounded in the traditions of realism and naturalism, and whose nonfiction tends to employ the personal to examine or critique the social and political. A formerly incarcerated person, Jackson is also a social justice advocate who, as part of his outreach, visits prisons and youth facilities in the United States and abroad. His debut novel *The Residue Years* published by Bloomsbury received wide critical praise, winning The Ernest J. Gaines Prize for Literary Excellence and a finalist for the Center for Fiction Flaherty-Dunn First Novel Prize, the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Fiction, and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award. Jackson is the recipient of a Whiting Award, and other honors include fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the New York Public Library's Cullman Center, the Lannan Foundation, the Ford Foundation, PEN America, TED, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the Center for Fiction. His writing has been featured in the *New Yorker*, *Harpers*, the *New York Times Book Review*, *The Paris Review*, *Time*, *Esquire*, *The Guardian*, and elsewhere. His memoir *Survival Math* published by Scribner was named book of the year in 2019 by over 12 publications, including *NPR*, *Time*, *The Paris Review*, *The Root*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Esquire*, and *Buzzfeed*. Jackson teaches creative writing at the University of Chicago.

🔗 [mitchellsjackson.com](http://mitchellsjackson.com)

📷 [mitchsjackson](https://www.instagram.com/mitchsjackson)

# Sabrina Orah Mark<sup>♥ she/her</sup>

## *Happily: Essays on Fairytales and Motherhood*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Athens, GA ► Digital media, literary nonfiction

### About the Project

In 2017, Sabrina Orah Mark visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Israel, and saw Bruno Schulz's rescued frescoes—fairy tale figures peering out from under almost 80 years of whitewash. Mark's essay project, *Happily*, considers the relationship between these cracked fairy tales and the Holocaust. In this new phase of her ongoing work, *Happily*—which began as a monthly column in *The Paris Review*—expands into a collection of writing on fairy tales and motherhood, using the fairy tale as a searchlight to shed light on the here and now. It is influenced by Mark's personal history of raising two Black sons in the South, a culture and geography far from her own upbringing in Orthodox New York City.



**Sabrina Orah Mark** is a fiction writer and prose poet who reinvents fairy tales to explore issues of motherhood, race and identity. She writes a monthly column on fairy tales and motherhood for *The*

*Paris Review* entitled *Happily*, and is the author of the poetry collections *The Babies* and *Tsim Tsum*. Her first book of fiction, *Wild Milk*, was released by Dorothy, a publishing project. Mark earned an MFA from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop and a PhD from the University of Georgia. Awards include a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Sustainable Arts Foundation Award, and a fellowship from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts. She has taught at Agnes Scott College, University of Georgia, Rutgers University, The University of Iowa, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Goldwater Hospital, and throughout the New York City and Iowa public school systems. She lives, writes, and teaches in Athens, Georgia.

↗ [sabrinaorahmark.com](http://sabrinaorahmark.com)

🐦 [OrahMark](#)

📷 [sorahmark](#)

# Tonya Foster ♡ she/her

## Monkey Talk

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ Oakland, CA ► Poetry, multimedia performance

### About the Project

Combining poetry, dialogues, fictive FBI records, and non-fiction prose, *Monkey Talk* follows a 20th century artist-philanthropist relationship that is being tracked by government surveillance and a young scholar's curiosity. Focused on the ways that artistic creations act as monitors and are also monitored, the multi-volume project tracks parallel, contesting conversations around race.



**Tonya M. Foster** is a poet, essayist and Black feminist scholar based in the Bay Area, CA. Her full-length poetry collection, *A Swarm of Bees in High Court* was published by Belladonna\* in 2015. In 2016, Foster's bilingual chapbook *La Grammaire des Os* was published by joca seria on the occasion of a three-city tour in France. Forthcoming are her poetry collection—*Thingifications* (Ugly Duckling Presse) and a chapbook—*AHotB* (Sputnik and Fizzle). She is co-editor of the essay collection *Third Mind: Teaching Creative Writing through Visual Art* (Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 2002). A poetry editor at *Fence Magazine*, and a member of the San Francisco Writers Grotto, Foster's work has appeared or is forthcoming in the Academy of American Poets *Poem-a-Day* online journal, *Entropy Magazine*, the *A-Line Journal*, *Callaloo*, *boundary2*, *TripWire*, *Poetry Project Newsletter*, *The Harvard Review*, *Best American Experimental Writing*, *Letters to the Future: Black Women/Radical Writing*, and elsewhere. She was a member of the advisory committee for the ground-breaking exhibition "Reconstructions: Architecture and Blackness in America" at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. Her essay for the exhibition's field guide, "Time, Memory, and Living in Shotgun Houses in the South of the South City of New Orleans," expands her meditations on place and emplacement. She is the 2020-2021 Lisa Goldberg fellow at the Radcliffe Institute. A recipient of awards from MacDowell, the Headlands Center for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, the San Francisco Museum of the African Diaspora, and the Ford and Mellon Foundations, among others, Dr. Foster, beginning in Fall 2021, will serve as the George and Judy Marcus Endowed Chair in Poetry at San Francisco State University.

🔗 [tonyafosterpoet.com](http://tonyafosterpoet.com)

📷 [fosterpoet](#)

🐝 [SwarmofHighBees](#)



# Anne Finger ♡ she/her

## Wheeling in Berlin

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Oakland, CA ► Literary fiction

### About the Project

Inspired by Franz Hessel's similarly titled book that pioneered the concept of the flâneur, the meandering dandy, in Weimar Berlin, Anne Finger writes about her travels as a wheelchair-user. *Wheeling in Berlin* is a book of personal essays mapping disability upon the geography of the city. Some of the essays concern historical figures, while others engage with representations of disability in art and literature. By contesting what is too often assumed to be the central truth of disability—that it is a black hole of suffering—the essays evoke joy, sensuality, and meandering idleness.



**Anne Finger** is an educator, writer of creative nonfiction and fiction, and an activist for the disabled community. Her novels include *A Woman, in Bed* published by Cinco Puntos; and *Call Me Ahab*, published by Bison Books and winner of the Prairie Schooner Award, which takes iconic disability stories and rewrites them from a disabled perspective. Two memoirs, *Elegy for a Disease: A Personal and Cultural History of Polio* published by St. Martin's Press, and *Past Due: A Story of Disability, Pregnancy and Birth* published in America by Seal Press, consider Finger's personal experience of disability, and look at how narratives of disease are formed and at the tensions and confluences between feminism and disability rights. Finger has taught both creative writing and disability studies, most recently as the Kate Welling Distinguished Scholar in Disability Studies at Miami University. She is the recipient of a 2021 Creative Capital Award, the Berlin Prize, and has held residencies at MacDowell, Djerassi, Yaddo, Centrum, and Hedgebrook.

↗ [annefinger.org](http://annefinger.org)



Image from Berlin's Disability and Mad Pride Parade taken by Anne Finger

# Quintan Ana Wikswo ♡ she/her

## *problemkinder*

■ 2013 Awardee ♡ New York, NY ► Literary nonfiction, artistic activism

### About the Project

In *problemkinder*, writer, transdisciplinary artist, and human rights fieldworker Quintan Ana Wikswo created six suites that each include a hybrid prose book, original photographs, videos and films, and solo and collaborative performance. *problemkinder* creates kinetic sites that subvert silencing, predation, repression, and genocide, and amplify resistance, rebellion, and frictions surrounding human rights atrocities. The project challenges the lethal constructed legacies surrounding white supremacy, terrorism, disability, queerness, gender, religion, indigeneity, warfare, forced migration, and reductive identity calcification. Wikswo's three decades as a human rights fieldworker merged with her artistic practice as she returned to global microsites where she personally experienced—and worked against—clandestine crimes against humanity. Her process included repairing salvaged instruments and materials manufactured via forced labor and death camps, and redeploying them as tools for visibility, voice, reparation, and liberation.



**Quintan Ana Wikswo** is a poet, writer, photographer and artist long active in the collusion and collision of transdisciplinary art and direct human rights fieldwork. Wikswo has been hailed as “heady, euphoric, singular, surprising” by *Publisher's Weekly*, “beautiful, horrifying, passionate, and bold,” by Jeff VanderMeer in *The Millions*, “Rilke’s lost female shadow,” by *Conjunctions*, and “universal and personal, comforting and jarring, ethereal and earthy,” by *Electric Literature*. Recognized for innovative hybrid constellations of work that integrate her fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry and essay with her original photography, solo and collaborative performance, audio, and video installation, Wikswo’s projects interrupt sites and trajectories of human rights infractions, hate crimes, and global and local networks of extremist far right terrorism. Her studio is located in New York, and she was raised and works in the Deep South and along the US-Mexico border, where she continues ongoing work surrounding race, gender, and queerness in human rights hotspots.

↗ [quintanwikswo.com](http://quintanwikswo.com)



*Fieldwork* by Quintan Ana Wikswo, 2019.



# Randa Jarrar ♥ she/her

## *Lunch at Quantánamo*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ Los Angeles, CA ► Literary fiction

### About the Project

Randa Jarrar's newest book is a semi-satirical, fantastical novel set in 2045 Guantanamo Bay, inspired by and updating "The Penal Colony," the short story by Franz Kafka. The book envisions a utopic queer future—one that offers its inhabitants peace, liberation, and justice.



**Randa Jarrar** is a writer, memoirist, and comedian sharing her experience as a Muslim American born of Egyptian and Palestinian parents. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Bitch*, *Buzzfeed*, *The Utne Reader*, *Salon*, *The Offing*, *Guernica*, *The Rumpus*, *The Oxford American*, *Ploughshares*, *The Sun*, and others. She is the author of the memoir, *Love Is An Ex-Country*. Her first book, the Arab American coming of age novel, *A Map of Home*, was published in seven languages and won a Hopwood Award and an Arab-American Book Award. Her book, *Him, Me, Muhammad Ali*, won an American Book Award, a PEN Oakland Award, and a Story Prize Spotlight Award. In 2010, she was named one of the most gifted writers of Arab origin under the age of 40. She is the translator of several Arabic short stories and a novel.

🔗 [randajarrar.com](http://randajarrar.com)  
📷 [randajarrar](https://www.instagram.com/randajarrar)  
🐦 [randajarrar](https://twitter.com/randajarrar)



Image for Randa Jarrar's novel, *Lunch At Quantanamo*. Photo: Gino Reyes.

# Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski ♥ she/her & Terence Nance ♥ he/him *Kiara Daja Diamond and the 777 Satisfactions*

■ 2021 Awardees ▶ Animation, graphic novel

## About the Project

*Kiara Daja Diamond and the 777 Satisfactions* is a surrealist graphic novel and animated TV series that tells the story of Kiara, a young ruler-to-be, who must master 777 “satisfactions” (amalgams of skills, knowings, senses, and subjectivities) in order to arrive at knowledge of self-family, body-spirit, and space-time. This story grapples with existential trauma by exercising mystery to solve reason, rather than relying on reason to solve The Mystery.



Image of *A Ghost Was a Body Once (Slumber Party)* by Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski.



## Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski

Brooklyn, NY

Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski is an interdisciplinary artist whose work reimagines femmes of color as protagonists of historical, spiritual, and religious narratives that make up the foundation of today's societal beliefs and culture. Whether through drawing, video, performance, or installation, DeJesus Moleski experiments with how to name the conflation of celebration and mourning when being racialized, liminal, and alive. DeJesus Moleski grew up moving from city to country to city in the American East Coast, South, and Midwest. Spending her most formative years in a constantly shifting landscape

has tethered her work to interests in multiplicity, belief systems, and bewilderment. She has an ongoing practice of tending to the in-between, and those that know the trouble and pleasure there. Employing flamboyance as an exercise in utopic fantasies for the future, her work is a dream sequence triggered by our current time. She graduated with an MFA from the Yale School of Art. DeJesus Moleski has exhibited with the Brooklyn Museum and with MoCADA. Her work has been featured in *Teen Vogue*, *New American Paintings*, *Art of Choice*, *Hyperallergic*, the *Huffington Post*, and *Momma Tried Magazine*.

🔗 [amaryllisdejesusmoleski.com](http://amaryllisdejesusmoleski.com)

📷 [wildhomegirl](#)



## Terence Nance

Los Angeles, CA

Terence Nance is a filmmaker, writer, director, actor, and musician who has been making music for a decade, scoring all of his own films and TV series and working with several groundbreaking musicians in the process. He was born in Dallas, Texas, in what was then referred to as the State-Thomas community. Nance learned personhood there. His first feature film, *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty*, premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and was released theatrically in 2013. In 2014, he was named a Guggenheim Fellow. In the summer of 2018, Nance's Peabody award-winning television series *Random Acts of Flyness*, about being young and Black in America today, debuted on HBO to great critical acclaim, and was renewed for a second season by the network. *The New York Times* hailed the show as “a striking dream vision of race” and “hypnotic, transporting and uncategorizable,” adding that “it's trying to disrupt and redisrupt your perceptions so that, finally, you can see.” Additional film work includes *Swimming in Your Skin Again* and *Univittlen*. In 2017, Nance premiered a performance piece, *18 Black Boys Ages 1-18 Who Have Arrived at the Singularity and are Thus Spiritual Machines* at Sundance. Nance is currently at work on healing, curiosity, and interdimensionality, and resides in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

🔗 [mvmtfilms.com](http://mvmtfilms.com)

📷 [terenceetc](#)

# Visual Arts & Multidisciplinary

# Jen Liu ♥ she/her

## *Pink Slime Caesar Shift*

■ 2019 Awardee 📍 Staten Island, NY ▶ Multimedia, video art

### About the Project

*Pink Slime Caesar Shift* is a project that proposes to alter the genetic material of cow cells in order to carry secret messages of labor activism for female factory workers in South China, taking the form of genetic engineering of cow cells, 3D-printer prototyped small-cast sculpture, and video/3D animation.



**Jen Liu** is a visual artist working in video, painting, biomaterial, sculpture, and performance, on topics of national identity, labor economy, and the reinterpretation of archival artifacts. Race and gender anxieties are revealed in seemingly neutral academic and industrial texts, while images, props, costumes, and animation take tropes to their extreme. Liu has presented work at The Whitney

Museum, The New Museum, and Issue Project Room in New York; Royal Academy and ICA in London; Kunsthhaus Zurich; Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Kunsthalle Wien; Aspen Museum of Art; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; the 2014 Shanghai Biennale; and the 2018 Berlinale Forum Expanded Edition, among others. She received the Guggenheim Fellowship in Film/Video, and the NYFA/NYSCA Gregory Millard Fellowship in Digital/Electronic Media. She has received multiple grants and residencies including Sommerakademie, Bern; de ateliers, Amsterdam; Para Site, Hong Kong; the Pollock-Krasner Foundation; and Pioneer Works in Brooklyn, New York. She is a full-time video faculty at Bennington College.

🔗 [jenliu.info](http://jenliu.info)

📷 [jenliu3](https://www.instagram.com/jenliu3)



*Pink Slime Caesar Shift: Gold Edition* by Jen Liu, 2019-2020, dance performance and installation



Wafaa Bilal ♥ he/him

# *In a Grain of Wheat: Cultivating Hybrid Futures in Ancient Seed DNA*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 New York, NY ▶ Bio art, sculpture



An artist's impression of binary code/digital data stored in the double helix of a DNA molecule. Credit: Shutterstock/ymgerman.

## About the Project

In 2015, ISIS destroyed the *Winged Bull of Nineveh*, or lamassu, a 2,700 year-old Mesopotamian protective monument. Using leading-edge molecular biological archiving processes, Wafaa Bilal saves high-resolution 3D-scans of the sculpture inside the DNA of heirloom Iraqi wheat seeds, integrating the origins of civilization with postcultural planetary futures. Digital assets of the artwork, including the scanned data and cellular organisms, will be accessible for researchers, scholars, curators, and students, while the data-written wheat seeds will be preserved in seed banks. Site-specific installations of encoded wheat seeds, planted and grown, will celebrate the raw power of nature working creatively with humanity across the millennia.



**Wafaa Bilal** is an Iraqi-born American artist whose practice stems from the extreme tensions between the cultural spaces he occupies—his home in the comfort zone of the US, and his heart in the conflict zone of Iraq. He is known internationally for his provocative, performative and interactive works exploring international and interpersonal politics post-conflict. The 2007 installation, *Domestic Tension*, informally titled *Shoot an Iraqi*, archived such friction head-on: occupying a “bedroom” containing a robotic paintball-gun in Chicago’s west-loop Flatfile Gallery, he invited audiences to shoot at him over the internet. *The Chicago Tribune* called it “one of the sharpest works of political art in a long time,” naming him Artist of the Year. His work is in the permanent collections of LACMA and Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Photography; international collectors include Qatar’s Arab Museum of Modern Art. Bilal is an Arts Professor at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

🔗 [wafaabilal.com](http://wafaabilal.com)

📸 [wafaabilal](https://www.instagram.com/wafaabilal)



# Sandy Rodriguez ♥ she/her

## Book 13: After the Conquest— Codex Rodriguez Mondragon

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Los Angeles, CA ► Installation, painting

### About the Project

As human rights abuses in the United States become more extreme, particularly with Latinx communities on both sides of the US-Mexico Border, Sandy Rodriguez performs interdisciplinary research on recuperating Indigenous knowledge systems like plant-use and pigment recipes. *Book 13: After the Conquest – Codex Rodriguez Mondragon* will expand this codex of research through an immersive multiroom installation, presenting field study, archival research, project development, and the production of new works to provide a space of healing and visual possibilities for current and historical traumas.



**Sandy Rodriguez** is a Los Angeles-based painter, raised on the border between California and Mexico, whose work investigates the methods and materials of painting across cultures and histories. Her *Codex Rodriguez-Mondragon* is made up of a collection of maps and paintings about the intersections of history, social memory, contemporary politics, and cultural production. The series pays homage to Indigenous artists and the history of migration between the Americas and raises awareness about immigration injustices. Rodriguez has exhibited at a number of regional institutions, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, Art + Practice, Los Angeles, and the Riverside Art Museum. Rodriguez and her work have been featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, on KCET, Spectrum News 1, and on several radio programs, including KCRW's *Press Play*, CBC's *Radio-Canada Hour le Monde*, KQED's *Statewide Report*, and KPCC's *Off Ramp*.

➤ [studiosandyrodriguez.com](https://studiosandyrodriguez.com)  
📷 [studiosandyrodriguez](https://studiosandyrodriguez.com)



*Borderlands No 2*, by Sandy Rodriguez. Photo: J6 Creative.

# Anna Tsouhlarakis <sup>♥ she/her</sup>

## *Indigenous Absurdities*

■ 2021 Awardee    📍 Boulder, CO    ▶ Installation, social practice

### About the Project

“Indian humor” is a colloquial name for Native American jokes dealing with specific tribes, families, and, once in a while, a certain person. In *Indigenous Absurdities*, Anna Tsouhlarakis investigates the layering within a comical story or joke, and how the anecdote reflects the identity of an individual or group of people. Tsouhlarakis collects Indigenous jokes and stories and deconstructs them as part of an investigation in reforming an understanding of Native American identity and expression. The project combines multi-channel video, collage, and Native American oral traditions in an installation context to present moments of hilarity that highlight the complexity of Native individuals.



*The Native Guide Project* by Anna Tsouhlarakis.



**Anna Tsouhlarakis** is interested in challenging and stretching the boundaries of aesthetic and conceptual expectations to reclaim and rewrite Native definitions of making through video, performance, sculpture, photography, and installation. Using Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies as starting points, Tsouhlarakis's work reframes the discourse around the construction of Native American identity. Tsouhlarakis is a 2021 Creative Capital Awardee and has received grants and fellowships from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the Harpo Foundation, and the Native Arts & Culture Foundation, among others. She has participated in residencies including Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Yaddo, and was the Andrew W. Mellon Artist-in-Residence at Colorado College. Tsouhlarakis is of Greek descent and an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation.

🔗 [naveeks.com](https://naveeks.com)

📷 [annatskis](https://annatskis.com)

# Chris E. Vargas ♥ he/him

## Museum of Trans Hirstory: Trans Hirstory in 99 Objects

■ 2016 Awardee ♡ Bellingham, VA ► Multimedia, sculpture

### About the Project

*Transgender Hirstory in 99 Objects*, part of the conceptual-art project Museum of Transgender Hirstory & Art, is a material exploration of objects that hold significance in narrating the history of transgender communities. A creative and critical exploration of LGBTQ archives, the project has taken the form of six gallery exhibitions over four years, and will culminate in a book that brings together and expands on the artwork and archival material presented in these shows. The project attends not only to what is found in the archive but also to what is missing. Commissioned artwork and “found” archival materials point to the unknowable aspects of the past while also work to creatively repair and critically highlight the oversights, neglect, and biases that have marred the preservation of transgender history.



**Chris E. Vargas** is a video maker and interdisciplinary artist currently based in Bellingham, WA. His work deploys humor and performance in conjunction with mainstream idioms to explore the complex

ways that queer and trans people negotiate spaces for themselves within historical and institutional memory and popular culture. From 2008–13, Vargas collaborated with Greg Youmans to make the web-based trans/cisgender sitcom *Falling In Love...with Chris and Greg*. He also co-directed with Eric Stanley the movie *Homotopia* (2006) and its feature-length sequel *Criminal Queers* (2015). He is the Executive Director of MOTH, the Museum of Transgender Hirstory & Art, a critical and conceptual arts & hirstory institution highlighting the contributions of trans art to the cultural and political landscape.

🔗 [chrisevargas.com](http://chrisevargas.com)

📷 [chrisevargas](https://www.instagram.com/chrisevargas)



*Trans Hirstories of the Bay Area* by Chris E. Vargas, 2019, at the Oakland Museum of California in the show “Queer California: Untold Stories.”

# Jessica Vaughn <sup>♥ she/her</sup> *Working Procedures*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Brooklyn, NY ► Installation, sculpture

## About the Project

*Working Procedures* examines everyday structures that dictate our understanding of labor, space, and the circulation of resources in institutions. Through sculptures, two dimensional artworks, and installation, *Working Procedures* explores aspects that are specific to Vaughn's practice, such as her work with architecture, social history, and her political interests against closed systems of representation and value.



**Jessica Vaughn** is a visual artist whose practice encompasses working with discarded and mass-produced materials to create artworks and installations that convey complex histories of place, production, and use. She received an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. Vaughn was an artist-in-residence at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine; Lower Manhattan Cultural Council-Workspace, New York; and the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York. She was a 2020 Futures Fellow at the Clark Art Institute, a recipient of the Artadia NYC Grant, the Graham Foundation Research Grant, and the Printed Matter Inc./Jerome Foundation Emerging Artist Publication series.

🔗 [jessvaughn.com](http://jessvaughn.com)

📸 [jessvaughnstudio](https://www.instagram.com/jessvaughnstudio)



*Irrational Rest* by Jessica Vaughn, 2021. Photo: Pierre Le Hors and Constance Mensh.



# Mercedes Dorame ♥ she/her

## *Eclipsing Shadows— We'aashar Moyookmok*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ Los Angeles, CA ▶ Installation, photography

### About the Project

Mercedes Dorame creates an immersive installation addressing contemporary interpretation of Native Tongva ceremony and our relationship to celestial movements, eclipses, and solstices. The installation includes the creation of a semi-enclosed, domed immersive space, recordings of Tongva music, photograms, photographs, and cast concrete sculptures.



Image of *Coyote Dance with Me* by Mercedes Dorame.



**Mercedes Dorame** uses photography and installation to explore, reimagine, and connect to her Tongva tribal culture and bring visibility to contemporary Indigenous experience. Born in Los Angeles, CA, Dorame received her MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and her undergraduate degree from UCLA. Dorame's work is in the permanent collections of the Hammer Museum, SFMoMA, the Triton Museum, the Allen Memorial Art Museum, the de Saisset Museum, The Montblanc Foundation Collection, and the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum. She is the recipient of grants from the Montblanc Art Commission, the New York Foundation for the Arts, Loop Artist Residency, the James Phelan Award for California-born visual artists, En Foco's New Works Photography Fellowship Awards program, Galería de la Raza for a solo exhibition there, the Harpo Foundation for a residency at the Vermont Studio Center, and from the Photography Department at SFAI for her MFA Studies. She is currently visiting faculty at CalArts and UCLA, and was recently honored by UCLA as part of the centennial initiative "UCLA: Our Stories Our Impact," and was part of the Hammer Museum's 2018 "Made in LA" exhibition. She has also displayed her work at the Triton Museum, the deSaisset, LACE, and Reflect Space, as well as other international venues. Her writing has been featured in *News From Native California* and her artwork has been highlighted by *PBS Newshour*, *KCET Artbound*, *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Hyperallergic*, *KQED*, *Artsy*, *ARTnews*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, among others.

🔗 [mercedesdorame.com](http://mercedesdorame.com)

📸 [mercedes.dorame](https://www.instagram.com/mercedes.dorame)



# Steffani Jemison ♥ she/her

## *In Succession*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Installation, video art

### About the Project

In 1900, *The New York Times* reported that six “tramps” formed an acrobatic pyramid, cut a hole in the ceiling, and escaped from the Middlesex County Jail in New Jersey. Working with trained and untrained actors, this body of work considers the precarious and resistant figure of the acrobat.



**Steffani Jemison** uses time-based, photographic, and discursive platforms to examine “progress” and its alternatives. Jemison’s work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

Solo exhibitions and commissions include: MASS MoCA, Jeu de Paume, CAPC Bordeaux, and the Museum of Modern Art. Group exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial 2019, the Studio Museum in Harlem, The Drawing Center, and others. Collaborative exhibitions include Western Front and

the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and solo screenings include Lincoln Center and Gene Siskel Film Center. Her work is in the public collections of the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Kadist Foundation and private collections. Jemison has completed many artist residencies and fellowships, including the Radcliffe Fellowship, the Rauschenberg Residency, the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, the Smack Mellon Artist Studio Program, the Studio Museum in Harlem, AIR, Denniston Hill, the International Studio and Curatorial Program, Project Row Houses, the Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She was a 2017 NYFA Fellow in Video/Film.

🔗 [steffanijemison.com](http://steffanijemison.com)  
📸 [steffanijemison](https://www.instagram.com/steffanijemison)



Image still from Steffani Jemison’s *In Succession*.

# Cannupa Hanska Luger <sup>♥ he/him</sup> *Future Ancestral Technologies*

■ 2020 Awardee    ♡ Glorieta, NM    ► Experimental film, multimedia performance

## About the Project

*Future Ancestral Technologies* is an Indigenous-centered approach to making art objects, video, and performance with the intent to influence global consciousness using creative storytelling to radically reimagine the future. Moving science-fiction theory into practice, this methodology conjures innovative life-based solutions that promote a thriving Indigeneity.



**Cannupa Hanska Luger** is a New Mexico based multidisciplinary artist who uses social collaboration in response to timely and site-specific issues. Raised on the Standing Rock Reservation in

North Dakota, he is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold and is of Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota and European descent. His work provokes diverse audiences to engage with Indigenous peoples and values.

Luger is a recipient of a 2021 United States Artists Fellowship Award for Craft and was named a Crist 50 Fixer for 2021. He is a 2020 Creative Capital Awardee, a 2020 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow, the recipient the 2020 A Blade Of Grass Artist Fellowship for Socially Engaged Art, and the recipient of the Center For Crafts inaugural Craft Research Fund Artist Fellowship for 2020. He is the recipient of a 2019 Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grants, a 2019 Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Honoree and the recipient of the Museum of Arts and Design's 2018 inaugural Burke Prize. Luger has exhibited internationally, and he lectures and participates in residencies and large scale projects around the globe and his work is in many public collections. Luger holds a BFA in studio arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts.

➤ [cannupahanska.com](http://cannupahanska.com)

@ [cannupahanska](https://www.instagram.com/cannupahanska)



Film still: *Muscle, Bone & Sinew* by Cannupa Hanska Luger. Cinematographer, Lucas Mullikan, 2021

# Ben Thorp Brown

## *The Arcadia Center*

♥ he/him

■ 2016 Awardee 📍 Brooklyn, NY ▶ Installation, video art

### About the Project

*The Arcadia Center* is a fictional organization that has emerged with a mission to help people further develop and practice their empathic capacity with each other and the natural world. Visitors to *The Arcadia Center* are invited to immerse themselves in a parallel world, a sanctuary for these dark times.



Installation shot of *The Arcadia Center*, exhibited at Kunsthall Gent in Belgium, 2021. Courtesy Kunsthall Gent and Michiel de Cleene.



**Ben Thorp Brown's** work considers the effects of ongoing economic, environmental, and technological change. Working with video, sculpture, and installation, his projects are often developed in dialogue with specific architectural sites and landscapes, which become settings for a fictive world. He has presented recent solo museum exhibitions of his work at the Jeu de Paume, CAPC Bordeaux, Museo Amparo, and the St. Louis Art Museum. His work has been featured in significant group exhibitions including "Empathy Revisited: Designs for More Than One" at the Istanbul Biennial, "The Supermarket of Images" at the Jeu de Paume, "Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1904-2016" at The Whitney Museum, "Greater New York 2015" at MoMA PS1, "Image Employment" at MoMA PS1, "In Practice: Chance Motives" at SculptureCenter, and in film festivals such as The New York Film Festival and Rotterdam International Film Festival. His work has been reviewed in numerous media such as *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *NPR*, *ArtForum*, *Hyperallergic*, *Art Agenda*, *Mousse Magazine*. He has received awards from Creative Capital, the Graham Foundation, the Shifting Foundation, and was an artist in residence at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. He attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, and is a graduate of Williams College and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

🔗 [benthorpbrown.com](http://benthorpbrown.com)

📸 [benthorpbrown](https://www.instagram.com/benthorpbrown)

# Angela Washko ♥ she/her

## *Mother, Player*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ Pittsburgh, PA ► Digital media, games

### About the Project

*Mother, Player* is an experimental narrative video game featuring pregnancy and early motherhood stories from artists during the global pandemic. A series of interactive vignettes written in dialogue with artist mothers, the video game presents complex stories of maternity experiences during lockdown with a focus on the distinctive challenges and poignant moments artist mothers have faced during this time. The game will additionally address the lack of multi-dimensional pregnancy and early motherhood stories in video games—something that the artist herself became sensitive to and critical of after becoming pregnant, giving birth, and taking care of a newborn during this isolated and uncertain time.



Image from *Mother, Player* by Angela Washko, 2021.



**Angela Washko** is an artist who creates new forums for discussions about feminism. Washko's practice spans interventions in mainstream media, performance art, video, and video games. She is committed to telling complex and unconventional stories about the media we consume from unusual perspectives. Since 2012, Washko has operated The Council on Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft, an ongoing intervention inside the popular online video game. A recent recipient of the Impact Award at Indiecade, the Franklin Furnace Performance Fund, and the Frank-Ratchye Fund for Art at the Frontier Grant, Washko's practice has been highlighted in *The New Yorker*, *Frieze Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *Artforum*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, and more. Her projects have been presented internationally at venues including Museum of the Moving Image, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Milan Design Triennale, and the Shenzhen Independent Animation Biennial. Washko is an Associate Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University.

➤ [angelawashko.com](http://angelawashko.com)  
🐦 [angelawashko](https://twitter.com/angelawashko)  
@ [angelawashko](https://www.instagram.com/angelawashko)  
f [facebook.com/angela.washko](https://facebook.com/angela.washko)



# Kamau Patton ♥ he/him

## Tel

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Chicago, IL ▶ Installation, poetry

### About the Project

*Tel* is a platform for performance, study, and contemplation that will question how the nature of memory has changed in relation to the encroachment of cyberspace, telematics, and transmission technologies. The project name refers to the archeological term for a mound formed by the accumulated remains left by communities occupying a site over time. *Tel* is experienced through a myriad of past iterations have been presented as transmissions, walks, conversations, engagement with archives, and a publication series.



**Kamau Patton** is an interdisciplinary artist and educator whose work examines history and culture through engagement with archives, documents, stories, and sites. Patton's projects are dialogic and take form as expanded field conversations. Patton received his MFA from Stanford University in 2007 and received a degree in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. His work was shown in 2012 as part of Pacific Standard Time and in 2013 as part of the Machine Project Field guide to LA Architecture. Patton has completed projects in soundscape studies through

support provided by the State University of New York at Buffalo, the Mellon Elemental Arts Initiative, and the Tang Teaching Museum. He presented research in 2016 at the ABF house in Stockholm, Sweden, as a part of *The Shape of Co- to- Come* symposium and exhibition. Patton participated in a series of performances as part of *Projects 107: Lone Wolf Recital Corps* at the Museum of Modern Art in August 2017. In September 2017, he installed an iteration of his ongoing project, *Tel*, at the Tang Museum. In 2019, Patton's public art commission with the Bowman Montessori School in Palo Alto, CA, was open to the public. In 2020 Patton was an artist in residence at Coaxial Arts Foundation in Los Angeles. Utilizing recordings from the Sun Ra / El Saturn Collection, Patton created "The Past & Other Dreams," a double cassette produced by the artist in collaboration with the Creative Audio Archive at ESS. A box set LP of Patton's arrangements of Terry Adkins's Lone Wolf Recital Corps Recitals, *Second Mind* and *Alto Age*, will be released in partnership with the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in 2021.

🔗 [kamaupatton.com](http://kamaupatton.com)

📷 [kamaupatton](#)



Kamau Patton performs *Tel*.



# Polly Apfelbaum <sup>♥ she/her</sup> *For the Love of Una Hale* (Cards of Identity)

■ 2019 Awardee ♦ New York, NY ► Craft, installation

## About the Project

*For the Love of Una Hale (Cards of Identity)* is an installation using ceramics, wallpaper and immersive color. The key visual influence originates from a 20th century painting of a faceless woman in the symbolic Pennsylvania German style by the artist David Ellinger, relating it to contemporary ideas surrounding craft, gender and identity.



**Polly Apfelbaum's** artistic practice fuses traditions of painting, craft, and installation. Deploying a wide variety of media—including fabric, paint, dyes, wallpaper, plasticine, and ceramics—her work has dissolved spatial, plastic, and temporal boundaries. She is best known for expansive polychromatic installations, which coalesce the radical and the beautiful, simultaneously domestic and irreverent. Her sensibility is informed by an encyclopedic knowledge of the applied arts, art history, and popular culture.

🔗 [pollyapfelbaum.com](http://pollyapfelbaum.com)

📷 [pollyapfelbaum](https://www.instagram.com/pollyapfelbaum)



Installation shot of *Face (Geometry), (Naked) Eyes* by Polly Apfelbaum, 2016.

# John W. Love, Jr. ♥ he/him

## *The Cathedral of Messes*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ Charlotte, NC ► Installation, performance art

### About the Project

*The Cathedral of Messes* is the scene of a crime: a mystic has assassinated his inner saboteur. Crystalline enshrined shoes and body parts of sculpted black salt float in a sea of video, literature, and performance in an installation dedicated to obliterating a virus known as shame.



**John W. Love, Jr.** is an interdisciplinary artist traversing literature, performance, installation, video, mysticism, and media. Gritty and fantastical, his myths inspire an enthralling navigation of sex, money,

beauty, power, desire, humor, identity, and everything we assume to be true. Crystalline worlds of salt, black earth, blurred lines and Absurdist kisses to the psyche bring forth works such as *SYMPH* (literature, performance), *Petal Boy* (installation), *Black Lily Billy and the Labia Who Knew Him* (performance), *FECUND* (interdisciplinary), *Ooo girl*, *Anchorage!*

(video), *fecund: Night* (video), *The Diaries of Neequa or She Who Would Be King* (performance), and the pop-up bathroom installation that looks HB2 squarely in the genitals, *SALT DADDY* (sound). The accession of COVID-19 has inspired an unexpected keen from Love's present interdisciplinary work, *The Cathedral of Messes*. Some mystics such as The Perpetually Pregnant Man – Exemplar of the Uncategorizable, and The Gem Collector – Anthropologist of the Ridiculous and Absurd, simply refuse to bite into despair. The virtual initiative, *The Buddha Has Teeth*, and its sumptuously irreverent CALM YO' ASS meditation series have poignantly and shamelessly elevated salacious defiance to a divine act. Love is a Guggenheim Fellow, Reemprise Fund recipient, NC Arts Council Fellow, and McColl Award recipient.

@ johnwlovejr



Image of *Neequa As Baby Girl* by John W. Love, Jr. Photo: Coopernicus Photography.

# Socially-Engaged Art & Multidisciplinary

# Shana M. griffin ♥ she/her

## DISPLACED

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 New Orleans, LA ▶ Multimedia, social practice

### About the Project

Through the employment of an interactive website, visual timeline, a digital and print atlas, and exhibition, *DISPLACED* is a multimedia public history project tracing the geographies of Black displacement, dislocation, confinement, and disposability in land-use planning, housing policy, and urban development. Beginning with the formation of New Orleans and its cartographies of violence, racial slavery, and settler colonialism, Shana M. griffin uses *DISPLACED* to illustrate historical and contemporary forms of property-led development and the property value of white social identity through policies of divestment, slum clearance, urban renewal, and the privatization of public services—narrating the spatialization of race and gender in land use planning and development, while foregrounding moments of Black refusal, protest, and spatial imaginations.



**Shana M. griffin** is a feminist activist, independent researcher, applied sociologist, artist, and mother whose work engages history and memory as sites of resistance, rupture, and protest.

Her practice is research-based and interdisciplinary,

working across the fields of sociology, geography, Black feminist thought, digital humanities, and land-use planning and within movements challenging urban displacement, carcerality, reproductive control, climate impacts, and gender-based violence. She engages in research, organizing projects, and art practices that attend to the lived experiences of the Black diaspora, centering the particular experiences of Black women most vulnerable to the violence of poverty, incarceration, polluted environments, reproductive legislation, economic exploitation, and housing discrimination. griffin is the founder of PUNCTUATE, a feminist research, art, and activist initiative foregrounding the embodied aesthetics and practices of Black feminist thought. She currently serves as the Interim Executive Director of Antenna, a multidisciplinary visual and literary arts organization. griffin is the co-founder of Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative, the first community land trust in New Orleans, and co-produced *Sooner or Later, Somebody's Gonna Fight Back*, a documentary and multimedia project on the Louisiana State Chapter of the Black Panther Party.

➤ [shanamgriffin.com](http://shanamgriffin.com)  
➤ [displacedneworleans.com](http://displacedneworleans.com)  
➤ [displacingblackness](http://displacingblackness)



An abbreviated version of the *DISPLACED* New Orleans timeline by Shana M. griffin, part of Sacred Space art installation at ExhibitBE during Prospect 3+ site in New Orleans. Photo: Zora White.

# Bayeté Ross Smith <sup>♥ he/him</sup>

## *Art of Justice*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 New York, NY ▶ Artistic activism, installation

### About the Project

Law students represent the next generation of professionals poised to directly shape the creation and implementation of public policy and law. Bayeté Ross Smith hopes to impact their perspectives and elevate thoughtfulness, empathy, and social consciousness during the formative years of their professional training. *Art of Justice* is a series of socially-engaging art installations and interventions at top tier law schools, law firms, and district attorneys' offices that address contemporary social issues, including unconscious bias, economic justice, and political accountability. The work expands the purpose of art beyond its typical confines to reach future political leaders, prosecutors, firm partners, and policymakers.



"Who Is A Threat? Who Is A Victim" from Bayeté Ross Smith's *Taking AIM* series.



**Bayeté Ross Smith** is a photographer, interdisciplinary artist, and educator who explores issues around preconceived notions of identity and how they impact our understanding and engagement in humanity's past, present, and future. He is a 2021 Creative Capital Awardee, a Presidential Leadership Scholar, a TED Resident, an Art For Justice Fund grantee and a POV/New York Times embedded mediamaker. His work is in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution, the Oakland Museum of California, the Birmingham Museum of Art, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the Brooklyn Museum. The collaborative project *Along The Way and Question Bridge: Black Males* have shown at the Sundance Film Festival, as well as the Sheffield Doc Fest in England and the L.A. Film Festival. Ross Smith has created community and public art projects with organizations such as BRIC Arts Media, The Laundromat Project, the NYC Parks Department, the Hartford YMCA, the Jerome Foundation, the California Judicial Council, and San Francisco District Attorney's Office. He assists with programming and workshops for the Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI), a hospital and school-based violence prevention organization in New York City that partners with Kings County Hospital. He is also a faculty member at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

🔗 [bayeterossmith.com](http://bayeterossmith.com)

@ [bayetekenan](https://www.instagram.com/bayetekenan)



# The Black School

## *The Black Schoolhouse*

■ 2021 Awardees ♡ New Orleans, LA ► Cultural organizing, social practice



Shani Peters &  
Joseph Cuillier III —  
*The Black  
Schoolhouse*  
Image from The  
Black School's Black  
Love Fest. Photo:  
Tiffany Smith

### About the Project

Expanding on their radical Black art programming, Joseph Cuillier III and Shani Peters turn a 21st-century schoolhouse into a community center, providing civic engagement activities for the 7th Ward of Cuillier's hometown, New Orleans, LA. The building will be a working prototype for a new Washington/Rosenwald Schools-inspired initiative—which built 5,000 schoolhouses in the Jim Crow South—placing local community at the center of the school's curriculum. *The Black Schoolhouse* will serve as a monument to the legacy of Black school building as self determination, acting as a prototype for promoting community-built Black radical learning spaces, and low-cost solutions for housing displacement.



**The Black School** is an experimental art school teaching Black and POC students and allies to become agents of change, founded by Joseph Cuillier III and Shani Peters in 2016.

Their mission is to promote and extend the legacy of art in Black radical histories by providing innovative education alternatives centered in Black love. They have held over 100 workshops on radical Black politics and public interventions that address local community needs, serving over 400 students, and also produced three Black Love Fests, collaborated with more than 40 professional artists, and partnered with over 50 organizations.

➦ [theblack.school](http://theblack.school)  
📷 [theblackschool](https://www.instagram.com/theblackschool)

### Shani Peters ♡ she/her

Shani Peters is a multidisciplinary artist and educator whose work encompasses printmaking, installation, activism histories, and community building. She works to create environments and experiences that offer respite from painful realities and opportunities for collective momentum, learning, and joy. She received an MFA from the City College of New York. Peters has presented work in the US and abroad at the New Museum, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon South Korea, the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, and the Bauhaus Dessau. Selected residencies include those hosted by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, The Laundromat Project, and Project Row Houses in Houston, TX. Her work has been supported by the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, the Rauschenberg Foundation, Rema Hort Mann Foundation, and the Joan Mitchell Foundation. Peters has previously been a faculty member at CCNY, Pratt Institute, and Parsons. She is a co-director of The Black School and Black Love Fest. She lives in New Orleans, LA.

📷 [shanipeters](https://www.instagram.com/shanipeters)

### Joseph Cuillier III ♡ he/him

Joseph Cuillier III is a designer, artist, poet, and educator, deeply dedicated to art and design's capacity to connect individuals, communities, and causes. His work centers on deconstructing histories to build counter narratives and an examination of language, space, abstraction, and Black radical pedagogies through social practice. Cuillier's installations combine fashion and architecture as disciplines with the potential to move bodies through space, in an attempt to bridge gaps between rhetoric and action, living and form. He received an MFA from Pratt Institute, and has been a faculty member at Parsons and Pratt. Cuillier's work has been exhibited, collected, and presented internationally in galleries, museums, and institutions, including the New Museum, the MoMA Library, the Bauhaus Dessau, the Bronx Museum of Art, Wallach Gallery at Columbia University, the Schafly Gallery at Pratt Institute, among others. Cuillier has been an artist-in-residence/fellow at Sweet Water Foundation courtesy of the Chicago Architecture Biennial, IdeasCity New Orleans, Antenna, New Museum, The Laundromat Project, and A Blade of Grass. Cuillier is a co-director of The Black School and Black Love Fest. He lives in New Orleans, LA.

➦ [josephcuillier.com](http://josephcuillier.com)  
📷 [josephcuillier](https://www.instagram.com/josephcuillier)

# People's Kitchen Collective *EARTH SEED*

■ 2021 Awardees 📍 Oakland, CA ▶ Artistic activism, social practice

## About the Project

In their community project *EARTH SEED*, People's Kitchen Collective asks, "What is the future of survival?" The collective gathers a multidisciplinary cohort of grassroots activists and artists to co-create an unconventional nationwide meal series and survival workshops. Rooted in Octavia Butler's theory of change outlined in her *Parables* book series, and the legacy of the survival programs of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, *EARTH SEED* is People's Kitchen Collective's next expression of radical hospitality.

**People's Kitchen Collective** is a grassroots project based in Oakland, California, that works at the intersection of art and activism with the goal to not only fill stomachs, but also nourish souls, feed minds, and fuel a movement. They believe that good food should be accessible to everyone, and that recipes are a powerful tool for telling community histories. The collaboration's creative practice reflects the diverse backgrounds of co-founders Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik, Jocelyn Jackson, and Saqib Keval. Written in their families' recipes are the maps of migrations and stories of resilience, serving as the foundation for immersive experiences that honor the shared struggles of their people. People's Kitchen Collective believes in radical hospitality as a strategy to address the urgent social issues of our time. People's Kitchen Collective believes in radical hospitality as a strategy to address the urgent social issues of our time. They are grateful to be the recent recipients of the inaugural Rainin Fellowship for Public Space to continue their work.

➔ [peopleskitchencollective.com](http://peopleskitchencollective.com)

📷 [peopleskitchencollective](https://www.instagram.com/peopleskitchencollective)



A photograph of People's Kitchen Collective project, *STREETS!* in 2018, Oakland, California. Photo: Brooke Anderson.



## Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik ♥ she/her

Oakland, CA

Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik is an artist, writer, and educator based in Oakland, Ohlone land, who uses art as a strategy to connect memory and history with the urgent social issues of our time.

Her work addressing migration has been called a "joyous political critique." Invested in research and collaborative practice, including the acclaimed project *We Are Against The Wall / Estamos Contra el Muro*, she exhibits work nationally and internationally and teaches at California College of the Arts. Bhaumik has shown the *Archive of Dreams* at the SCAD Museum in Savannah and in "Bay Area Now 8" in San Francisco at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. She is a 2018 Art Matters Fellow and recipient of the 2020 Eureka Fellowship.

➔ [sitabhaumik.com](http://sitabhaumik.com)



## Jocelyn Jackson ♥ she/her

Oakland, CA

Jocelyn Jackson, founder JUSTUS Kitchen, aims to create food experiences that inspire people to reconnect with themselves, the earth, and one another. Her passion for seasonal food, social justice, creativity, and community is rooted in a childhood spent on the Kansas plains, where her diverse, vibrant family would sing a song before sitting down at the table to share a soulful meal. She has presented on the principles of community nourishment at Court Bouillon in Southern France, and back home in Oakland for the Fusion of Food and Yoga series at Anasa Yoga. Jackson has also collaborated with people and organizations including BALLE, Bryant Terry, Impact HUB Oakland, MOAD, Kitchen Table Advisors, NUMI Tea, and Ava DuVernay's Law Enforcement Accountability Project (LEAP).

📷 [justuskitchen](https://www.instagram.com/justuskitchen)



## Saqib Keval ♥ he/him

Mexico City, Mexico/Oakland, CA

Saqib Keval is a chef and community organizer whose work is focused on imagining and supporting new food systems focused on social justice movement building, political education, and accessible community dining. He has worked most deeply on decolonization through food, and spent three years with People's Grocery, a groundbreaking food justice organization, developing and managing their social enterprise incubator program and food justice fellowship. He co-founded the award-winning Mexico City restaurant, Masala y Maiz, with his partner, Norma Listman.

📷 [saqibkeval](https://www.instagram.com/saqibkeval)

# Jordan Weber <sup>♥ he/him</sup>

## 4MX Greenhouse

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Des Moines, IA ▶ Architecture & design, artistic activism

### About the Project

*4MX Greenhouse* is a sculptural programmatic artwork supporting holistic community health and land revitalization. Built on the site of Malcolm X's Omaha home at birth—now 17 acres of native grassland embedded in a dense superfund designated North Omaha—the greenhouse mimics the shape of Malcolm X's first residential home. In collaboration with multiple community non-profit and private initiatives, it grows and distributes indigenous crops, exists as a community gathering space for art performances, hosts decompression and healing programs such as Zazen Meditation and offers urban sustainability workshops including information on how to request services from the EPA to replace highly contaminated soil.



Photo of *4MX Greenhouse* by Jordan Weber.



**Jordan Weber** is a Des Moines, Iowa based regenerative land sculptor and activist who works at the cross section of social justice and environmental racism.

Most recently, Weber was commissioned by the Walker Art Center to create an urban phytoremediation farm in North Minneapolis called *Prototype for Poetry vs Rhetoric (deep roots)* which acts as a counter tactic to industrial violence upon biodiverse lands and racially diverse communities. The project was produced in collaboration with N. Minneapolis community members during the height of the George Floyd protests in late May 2020. He is currently in residence at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation and Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Equity (CRE2) in St Louis, MO. Weber's two-year project residency centers on social and environmental justice, incarceration, and re-entry with Close The Workhouse Campaign—a collaborative project that is dedicated to the closure of the St. Louis Medium Security Jail. Awards and fellowships include the Harvard LOEB Fellowship and Harvard ArtLab Fellowship, Joan Mitchell Award for Sculptors, Creative Capital Award, A Blade of Grass fellowship NYC, and the African American Leadership Forum Award.

🔗 [jordanjweber.com](http://jordanjweber.com)

📸 [jordan\\_j\\_weber](https://www.instagram.com/jordan_j_weber)



# Jesse Krimes <sup>♥ he/him</sup>

## *Mass Incarceration Quilt Series*

■ 2020 Awardee ◆ Philadelphia, PA ► Artistic activism, multimedia

### About the Project

*The Mass Incarceration Quilt Series* focuses on rendering visible people and perspectives hidden by the criminal legal system. Using participatory art practices that traverse both prison bars and the urban/rural divide, the series will represent the national scale of incarceration through an accumulation of individuated quilt squares and larger textiles. The works will integrate old clothing collected from directly impacted people and their families, invoking the body and presence of those millions who have been “disappeared” by the criminal punishment system.

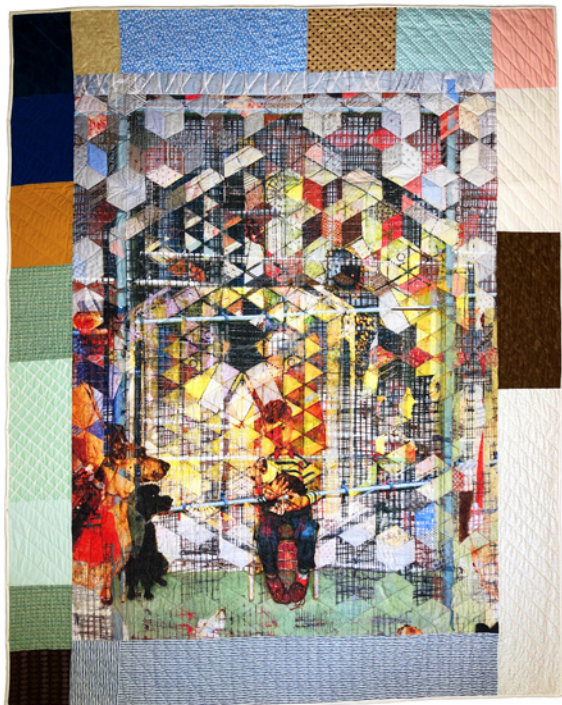


Image of *Tumbling Blocks* quilt by Jesse Krimes, part of his *Voice* project.



**Jesse Krimes** is a Philadelphia-based artist and curator whose work explores how contemporary media shapes or reinforces societal mechanisms of power and control, with a particular focus on criminal and racial justice. While serving a six-year prison sentence, he produced and smuggled out numerous bodies of work, established prison art programs, and formed artist collectives. After his release in 2014, he co-founded Right of Return USA, the first national fellowship dedicated to supporting formerly incarcerated artists. Krimes's work has been exhibited at venues including Palais de Tokyo, MoMA PS1, Philadelphia Museum of Art, International Red Cross Museum, Zimmerli Museum, and Aperture Gallery. He has received public commissions from Amnesty International, Mural Arts Philadelphia, and Eastern State Penitentiary. His curatorial practice is focused on elevating other system-impacted artists, and he also successfully led a class-action lawsuit against JPMorgan Chase for charging formerly incarcerated people predatory fees after their release from federal prison. Krimes was awarded fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Art for Justice Fund, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, Independence Foundation, Vermont Studio Center, and Captiva. His work is a part of the Agnes Gund Collection and he is represented by Malin Gallery in New York.

🔗 [jessekrimes.com](http://jessekrimes.com)

📸 [jesse\\_krimes](https://www.instagram.com/jesse_krimes)

# Jarrett Mellenbruch <sup>♥ he/him</sup>

## *Redwood Preserve*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Roeland Park, KS ▶ Ecological art, social practice

### About the Project

*The Redwood Preserve* is a land art and social enterprise project to restore the ancient Californian redwood forest obliterated by logging in the 19th and 20th centuries. The nature preserve would revive biodiversity in the region, while its trees combat climate change by pulling large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere.

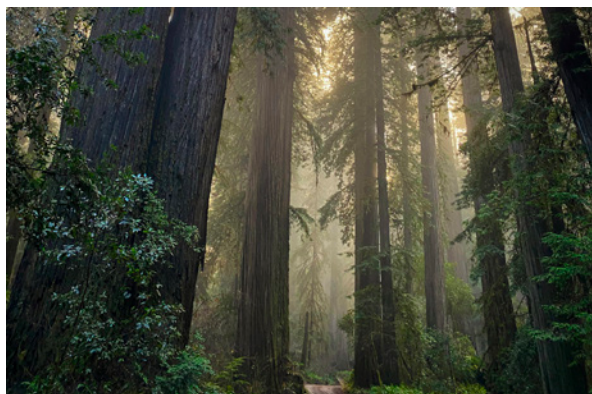


Image of *Redwood Preserve* by Jarrett Mellenbruch



As a transdisciplinary artist with a public and socially-engaged focus, **Jarrett Mellenbruch**'s creative inquiries integrate complementary disciplines into a concentrated conceptual and practical synthesis. He regularly explores ways to cross-pollinate work between fields, in particular between his lifelong passions for art and science. With public art installations such as *Float*, Mellenbruch explores the underlying themes of heterotopian spaces and social capital, while his collaborative works, including *Virtual Vector Laboratory*, embrace the benefits of working with experts from other fields toward a common goal. The long-term project *Haven* combines his family beekeeping history with public sculpture in the pursuit of a sustainable relationship with our most important pollinator. Mellenbruch is a native of Kansas City. After finishing his undergraduate studies at The Rhode Island School of Design, he lived and worked in New York City for twelve years, and later earned his MFA at the Maine College of Art in Portland. Drawn back to the Midwest by the vibrant art community and to be near family, he moved to Kansas City where he maintains a full-time art practice and teaches in the sculpture department at the Kansas City Art Institute.

➤ [jarrettmellenbruch.com](http://jarrettmellenbruch.com)  
➤ [deepecologyproject.com](http://deepecologyproject.com)



# Amitis Motevalli ♥ she/her

## *Golestan Revisited*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Los Angeles, CA ▶ Artistic activism, data visualization

### About the Project

*Golestan Revisited* is a multimedia, internationally-accessible online database created to research, reclaim, and rename roses transplanted to Europe during the Crusades from the South and West Asian and North African region (known as SWANA), to symbolize and commemorate women, girls, and femmes killed—often while captive in the wars against “terror” and/or by reactive Islamist occupations.



**Amitis Motevalli** is an artist born in Iran who explores the cultural resistance and survival of people living in poverty, conflict, and war. Through many mediums—including, sculpture, video, performance, and collaborative public art—her work juxtaposes iconography with iconoclasm. Her work intends to ask questions about violence,

occupation, and the path to decolonization, while invoking the significance of a secular grassroots struggle. In *Golestan Revisited*, Motevalli is working internationally with a broad spectrum of transnational Muslims in order to research what defines home, life, and labor in the urgency of survival. She is particularly concerned with conducting workshops with Muslims who come from places of political and religious conflict and collaborating on public art projects. Motevalli lives and works in Los Angeles, exhibiting art internationally as well as organizing to create an active and resistant cultural discourse through information exchange, either in art, pedagogy, or organizing artists and educators.

🔗 [amitismotevalli.com](http://amitismotevalli.com)

📷 [amigeddon](#)

📷 [rosesbyothernames](#)



Image of Fatin shrub rose, part of *Golestan Revisited* by Amitis Motevalli. Photo: Ami M.

# Nathan Shafer ♡ he/him

## Wintermoot

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ Anchorage, AK ► Multimedia, social practice

### About the Project

*Wintermoot* incorporates social practice, augmented reality, graphic novels, and digital humanities to form a series of interconnected epic tales of supernatural people from all over Alaska, spanning several generations. As both a mobile app and augmented graphic novel set in an alternate history Alaska, the work tells the stories of characters created in collaboration with other Alaskans, bringing together over 30 languages and cultures.



**Nathan Shafer** is a new media artist from Alaska specializing in augmented reality and digital humanities. He is one of the founding members of both the Meme-Rider Media Team, an art collective founded in 2000 designing early form internet

memes, and Manifest.AR, the first International art collective making augmented reality works. He was profiled by PBS Digital Studios as part of an online collaboration called *The Future* in 2014. Shafer's geobased AR works have been displayed on every continent. His work has been shown at Noxious Sector Projects, Bunnell Street Arts Center, Rhizome, ISEA, the Pratt Museum, Virtuale Switzerland, Out North Contemporary Art House and the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston. He also contributed chapters to the first anthology of AR-based art making, *Augmented Reality Art*, published by Springer in 2014; *Augmented Reality Games II*, published in 2019; and *Augmented Reality in Education*, forthcoming in 2020.

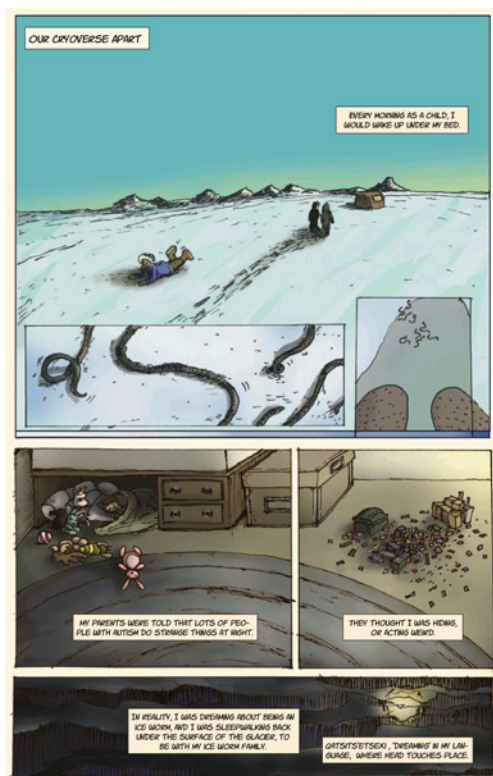


Image from *Wintermoot 3* by Nathan Shafer.

# Mark Nowak <sup>♥ he/him</sup>

## *Worker Writers School: Mobile Unit*

■ 2020 Awardee ♣ Canaan, NY & New York, NY ▶ Poetry, social practice

### About the Project

*Worker Writers School: Mobile Unit (WWSMU)* expands Mark Nowak's ongoing, twenty-year project of bringing poetry workshops directly to the working class. Like bookmobiles or food trucks, *WWSMU* visits laundromats, street corners, restaurants near construction sites, bus stops, and other locations that workers frequent to offer brief, intensive poetry writing classes.



**Mark Nowak** is a writer and founding director of Work Writers School, which links the global working class to literary practice. He is author of three poetry collections: *Revenants*, *Shut Up Shut Down*, and *Coal Mountain Elementary*. *Revenants* was a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award. *Shut Up Shut Down* became a *New York Times* Editors' Choice and a finalist for the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets. He is also the writer of one prose work, *Social Poetics*, part autobiography, part literary criticism, part political theory. Nowak has been awarded fellowships from the Guggenheim and Lannan Foundations as well as the Freedom Plow Award for Poetry & Activism from Split This Rock. As founding director of the Worker Writers School (WWS), Nowak has been designing and facilitating projects to link working class communities to literary practice and poetry workshops in North America, Central America, Europe, and Africa for the past two decades. Articles on the WWS have appeared or are forthcoming in *The New York Times*, *New Yorker*, Poetry Foundation ("Poem Talk" podcast), *Laura Flanders Show*, and elsewhere.

➤ [linktr.ee/WorkerWritersSchool](https://linktr.ee/WorkerWritersSchool)

@ [workerwritersschool](https://workerwritersschool.org)

# Sherrill Roland ♥ he/him

## *The Jumpsuit Portal*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Durham, NC ▶ Multimedia, social practice

### About the Project

The criminal justice system in the US is intentionally fragmented and often invisible to those who do not have a direct connection with it. In *The Jumpsuit Project*, Sherrill Roland wears the iconic, orange prison jumpsuit and engages people in conversation, disrupting spaces in the art world, higher education, and other places where issues around criminal justice do not normally appear. As a socially-engaged performance, the work centers around making connections both within and outside of the incarceration system through performance and a digital hub. Roland aims to build a new narrative around criminal justice, working toward lasting national policy changes by disrupting the local incarceration system.

in Studio Art from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Inspired by his experience in prison for a crime he did not commit, he founded *The Jumpsuit Project* to raise awareness around issues related to mass incarceration. Roland's socially-engaged art project has been presented at Open Engagement Chicago, Oakland City Hall, and the Michigan School of Law. He was awarded the Center for Documentary Studies Post-MFA Fellowship in the Documentary Arts at Duke University in Durham, NC, and the Rights of Return USA Fellowship. After completing the Fountainhead Residency in Miami, Florida, Roland returned to North Carolina as an artist-in-residence at the McColl Center of Art + Innovation.

🔗 [sherrillroland.com](http://sherrillroland.com)  
@ [sherrillroland](https://twitter.com/sherrillroland)  
🐦 [JumpsuitProject](https://twitter.com/JumpsuitProject)



**Sherrill Roland** is an interdisciplinary artist who creates art that challenges ideas around controversial social and political constructs, and generates a safe space to process, question, and share.

He was born in Asheville, NC, and received an MFA



Photo of Sherrill Roland engaging with a group for *The Jumpsuit Project* at Brooklyn Public Library. Photo: Gregg Richards.

# Moving Image & Multidisciplinary



# Martine Syms ♥ she/her

## *Dumb World*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Los Angeles, CA ▶ Narrative film, video art

### About the Project

Martine Syms's feature-length film, entitled *Dumb World*, explores how athleticism, race, and fame congeal around the violent ideologies embedded within the objects of technology with which we are most intimately connected.



**Martine Syms** has earned wide recognition for a practice that combines conceptual grit, humor, and social commentary. Using a combination of video, installation, and performance, often interwoven with explorations into technique and narrative, Syms examines representations of Blackness and its relationship to vernacular, feminist thought, and radical traditions. Syms's research-based practice frequently references and incorporates theoretical models concerning performed or imposed identities, the power of the gesture, and embedded assumptions concerning gender and racial inequalities.

➤ [martinesy.ms](http://martinesy.ms)



Film still from *Capricorn* by Martine Syms, 2019. Photo: Rocket Caleshu.

# Jake Yuzna ♥ they/them & he/him

## *After America*

■ 2012 Awardee ♡ Minneapolis, MN ► Narrative film

### About the Project

In 2018, director Jake Yuzna put out an open call in Minneapolis to criminal justice de-escalators to explore, through performance, the failures they saw in their work and in daily life. The result is a look at life in America through seemingly unconnected characters—a corrections officer, a Somali writer, a gay and deaf model, and others. Created through improvisation, conventional scripting, and nonfiction, the stories merge together to create a singular portrait of the pain and unrest bubbling under the surface of the American way of life. *After America* captures the anxieties facing Minneapolis and America as a whole.



**Jake Yuzna** is an artist, filmmaker, and curator from Minneapolis. Their debut feature, *OPEN*, premiered at the Berlin Film Festival where it became the first American feature to receive the Teddy

Jury Prize. Yuzna's work has been presented by the New Museum of Contemporary Art, Red Cat, British Film Institute, Strelka, as well as at the

Cannes, Berlin, Oberhausen, and London Film Festivals, among others. In addition, their films have been broadcast nationally on PBS, Arté in Europe, and worldwide on Netflix. For this work, Yuzna has received grants and awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, American Film Institute, Creative Capital, Jerome Foundation, Frameline Foundation, Creative Time, McKnight Foundation, IFP, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Yuzna founded the cinema program at the Museum of Arts and Design (NYC) and the Inclusive and Socially Conscious Filmmaking Lab at FilmNorth (Minneapolis). They have curated projects for Performa: The NYC Biennial of Performance Art, the Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, the City of Los Angeles, SCCA Center for Contemporary Art-Ljubljana, and Queerupton. They are the author of the books *THE FUN: The Social Practice of Nightlife in NYC* and *NYC Makers* as well as a regular contributor to *Artforum*.

🔗 [jakeyuzna.com](http://jakeyuzna.com)

@ [jyuzna](https://www.instagram.com/jyuzna)



Film still from *After America* by Jake Yuzna, 2020.

# Christopher Sullivan ♥ he/him

## *The Orbit of Minor Satellites*

■ 2012 Awardee ♡ Chicago, IL ► Animation, narrative film

### About the Project

*The Orbit of Minor Satellites* is an animated feature film comprised of hand-drawn, 2-D animations with painted backgrounds. It tells the story of two different worlds in which characters are interconnected by the most unlikely threads. The first environment is a psychiatrist's office where a teenage girl is in session with her therapist. The other environment is a cavernous space station on the subarctic desolation of Mimas, one of the moons of Saturn. A core idea in the film is that the pivotal moments of most people's lives take place in rooms, bedrooms, kitchens and classrooms where conversations, actions and touch shape future events.



**Christopher Sullivan** is an animator, filmmaker and performance artist whose experimental film and theater work spans 30 years. His work has been shown in festivals, theaters and museums worldwide, including the Zagreb Animation

Festival, Ann Arbor Film Festival, New York Short Film Festival, Black Maria Film + Video Festival and Pacific Film Archives. Sullivan recently completed the feature-length animated film, *Consuming Spirits*, for which he received Guggenheim and Rockefeller Media Arts Fellowships. A. O. Scott of *New York Times* called *Consuming Spirits* "entirely original... a wonder." Earlier iterations of *Consuming Spirits* were screened at the 2000 Whitney Biennial, The Museum of Modern Art, California Institute of Arts, Wisconsin Film Festival, Milwaukee Museum of Art and Gene Siskel Film Center. Since 2008 Sullivan also has created three evening-length performances, *The Outer Giants and Their Moon*, *Aggression Therapy* and *Mark The Encounter*.

🔗 [orbitkickstart.com](http://orbitkickstart.com)

🔗 [vimeo.com/chrissullivananimation](https://vimeo.com/chrissullivananimation)

📷 [chrissullivananimation](https://www.instagram.com/chrissullivananimation)



Film still from *The Orbit of Minor Satellites* by Christopher Sullivan.



# Jules Rosskam

## *Desire Lines*

♥ he/him

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Philadelphia, PA ▶ Documentary film

### About the Project

It's an open secret among transgender men: after coming out as trans, many develop an attraction for other men. *Desire Lines* is a feature-length essay film that issues a radical reframing of transmasculine sexuality. Situated at the intersection of sex, gender, and desire, the film uses one-on-one interviews, erotic encounters, observational footage, performed scenarios, and historical fiction about gay bathhouses. *Desire Lines* reveals as much about why sexual desires might change as gender presentation changes as it does about masculinity in our culture, emphasizing gender as a prism through which all other aspects of the self—such as race, class, and nationhood—are refracted. Drawing connections between the HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 pandemics, the film also seeks to illuminate the biopolitics of government indifference.



**Jules Rosskam** is a filmmaker, educator, and interdisciplinary artist interested in liminal spaces—the space between male and female, documentary and fiction, moving image and still photography.

His interdisciplinary practice works to induce a perceptual shift in our understanding of how and what bodies mean, toward an apprehension of multiplicities. He is the director of *transparent*, *against a trans narrative*, *Thick Relations*, *Something to Cry About*, *Paternal Rites*, and *Dance, Dance, Evolution*. Recent screenings include the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Fine Art Boston, the British Film Institute, Arsenal Berlin, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, and the Queens Museum of Art. Residencies include Yaddo, Marble House Project, PLAYA, ACRE, and ISSUE Project Room. Rosskam holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is currently Assistant Professor of Visual Arts at University of Maryland Baltimore County.

🔗 [julesrosskam.com](http://julesrosskam.com)  
📸 [julesrosskamfilms](https://www.instagram.com/julesrosskamfilms)



Film still from *Desire Lines* by Jules Rosskam.

# Crystal Kayiza ♡ she/her

## *The Gardeners*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Los Angeles, CA ▶ Documentary film, experimental film

### About the Project

*The Gardeners* follows the Worthy Women of Watkins Street, keepers of one of the oldest Black cemeteries in Mississippi. The feature-length film will live between this life and the next, utilizing the land as a portal into intangible dimensions, including the spirits that keep this group of elder women drawn to their work. As *The Gardeners* honors the labor of the Worthy Women, it also physically, emotionally, and spiritually invokes the souls laid to rest at Watkins Street Cemetery. Positioning Watkins as a dynamic and emotive central character within the narrative, the space becomes a conduit for an immersive exploration of collective history, aging, memory, and the burden of caring for the forgotten.



**Crystal Kayiza** was raised in Oklahoma and is now a Brooklyn-based filmmaker. As a director, her work reimagines the aesthetics used to tell stories about Black folks across generations and landscapes.

Named one of *Filmmaker Magazine's* "25 New

Faces of Independent Film," she is a recipient of the Sundance Ignite Fellowship, Jacob Burns Film Center Woman Filmmaker Fellowship, Points North Institute North Star Fellowship and Sisters in Cinema Documentary Fellowship. Her film, *Edgecombe*, was an official selection of the 2019 Sundance Film Festival where it was acquired for distribution by PBS. Her most recent film, *See You Next Time*, was an official selection of the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was released by the *New Yorker*. Her short narrative film, *Rest Stop*, was the winner of the 2020 Tribeca CHANEL Through Her Lens program grant. Kayiza received a Heartland Emmy Award in 2012 for her film *All That Remains*, which profiles Boley, Oklahoma, one of the nation's last all-black towns. She is currently in pre-production on her first non-fiction feature film, which recently received the 2021 Creative Capital Award.

🔗 [crystalkayiza.com](http://crystalkayiza.com)

📸 [@crystalkayiza](https://www.instagram.com/crystalkayiza)



Film still from *The Gardeners* by Crystal Kayiza.



# William D. Caballero

## *TheyDream*

♥ he/him

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Los Angeles, CA ▶ Animation, documentary film

### About the Project

*TheyDream* is an animated documentary about the hopes and realities of William D. Caballero's Puerto Rican-American family, plagued by health, financial, and social problems rooted in the systemic inequality in today's America. As a sequel to the filmmaker's autobiographical documentary *American Dreams Deferred*, this new work features photo-realistic 3D modeled characters inhabiting hand-built environments, highlighting the stories of real people of color, meticulously rendered in miniature. *TheyDream* creates a social dialogue highlighting the struggles of those living in poverty, as well as Puerto Rican communities living in the USA today, indicative of today's forgotten American narrative.



**William D. Caballero** is a multimedia producer, director, writer and composer who tells big stories using small figures. Working primarily in the field of filmmaking featuring miniature 3D printed protagonists, his work examines American and Latino gender/sexuality, and existential identity. His creative mantra is “empower, enlighten, and express”, and it underlies his desire to spread the gift of creativity amongst diverse people, liberating them from the oppression of mainstream tastes and values. Born in Coney Island, New York and raised in North Carolina, Caballero obtained the Bill Gates Millennium Scholarship, and returned to New York City where he graduated from Pratt Institute and New York University. His animated projects have premiered on HBO, Univision, PBS, World Channel, and have debuted at hundreds of international film festivals, including the Sundance Film Festival and Museum of Modern Art. Caballero received the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2018.

🔗 [wilcab.com](http://wilcab.com)

📸 [williamdcaballero](https://www.instagram.com/williamdcaballero)



A splitscreen image featuring two miniature 3D printed figures from the animated film, *Victor and Isolina* by William D. Caballero.

# Reid Davenport ♥ he/him

## *I Didn't See You There*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Oakland, CA ▶ Documentary

### About the Project

Spurred by a circus tent that goes up outside his Oakland apartment, a disabled filmmaker connects the ostensibly antiquated institution of the Freak Show with his own life. Shot from a camera held by director Reid Davenport or mounted to his wheelchair, the film serves as an unequivocal rebuke to the norm of disabled people being seen and not heard. *I Didn't See You There* expands on the tradition of point-of-view film toward a new aesthetic for disabled filmmakers, creating film that is disabled through the artist's own embodiment.



**Reid Davenport** makes films about disability from an overtly political perspective. He was named to DOC NYC's "40 Filmmakers Under 40" in 2020. His first feature film, *I Didn't See You There*, dives into the historical and personal baggage that arises when a circus tent goes up outside his Oakland apartment. *I Didn't See You There* received a production grant from California Humanities, Doc Society's New Perspectives Grant, and was selected to be included in the 2020 IFP Week. Davenport was also named a 2020 Points North Fellow and a 2020 Bay Area Video Coalition MediaMaker Fellow in connection to the project. He is a 2017 TED Fellow and gave a TED Talk at the annual conference in Vancouver. His film awards include the Artistic Visions Award at the 2016 Big Sky Documentary Festival (*A Cerebral Game*). Davenport is a Visiting Teaching Professor at Syracuse University. He graduated from Stanford University in 2016 with a Master of Fine Arts in Documentary Film and Video.

🔗 [throughmylens.org](http://throughmylens.org)

📸 [reidjdavenport](https://www.instagram.com/reidjdavenport)



Film still from *I Didn't See You There* by Reid Davenport.

# Suha Araj ♥ she/her *Pickled (Khsara)*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Brooklyn, NY ► Comedy, narrative film

## About the Project

*Pickled (Khsara)* is a comedic feature-length film set in the Palestinian diaspora about women who don't get married "in time." Nearing the ripe age of 30, astrophysicist Nisreen will expire if not wed. She struggles to find her own path between her old world Palestinian roots and the modern reality she lives in while her global family actively interferes. Bringing the comedy and joy of growing up in an Arab-American family, Suha Araj shows what happens when a Palestinian-American discovers that love is more important than marriage.



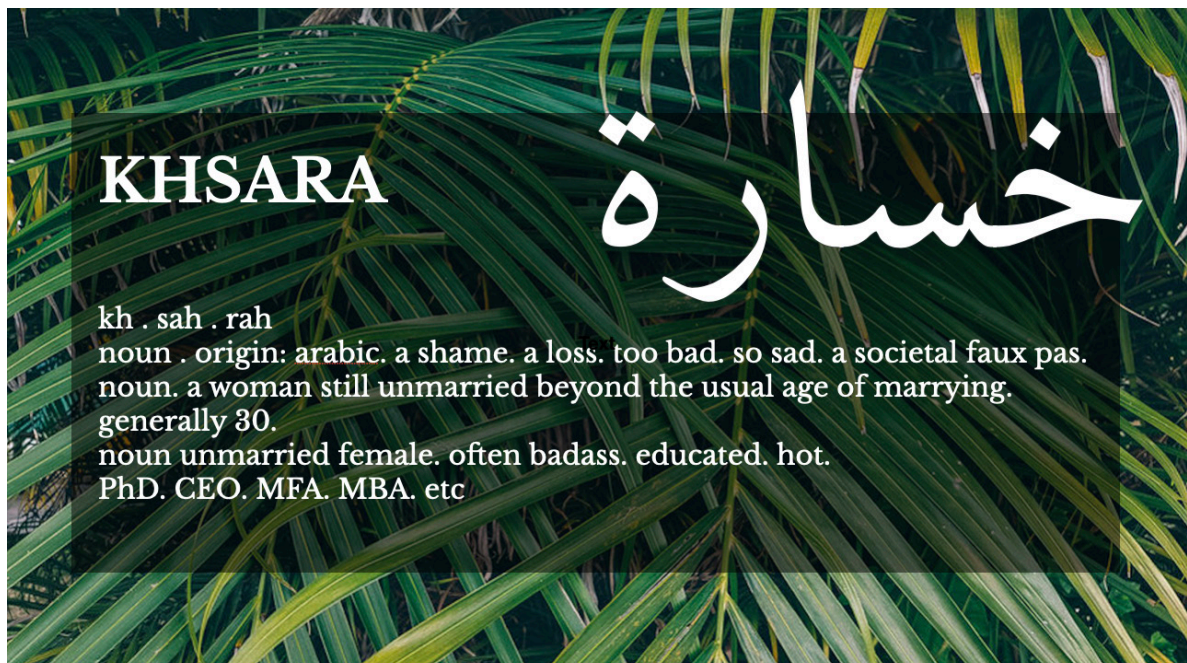
**Suha Araj** creates films that explore the displacement of immigrant communities. *The Cup Reader*, shot in Palestine, screened at the Tribeca Film Festival and was awarded The Next Great Filmmaker

Award at the Berkshire International Film Festival and Baghdad International Film Festival. Araj followed

with *Pioneer High*. She has received support for her work from the Sundance Film Festival, Torino Film Lab, Independent Filmmaker Project, Berlinale Talent Project Market, Center for Asian American Media and Cine Qua Non Lab. She is the 2018 recipient of Tribeca/Chanel Through Her Lens production funding for her new film *Rosa*. *Rosa* premiered at the Blackstar Festival in 2020 and was the recipient of the Best Short Narrative and the Lionsgate/Starz short film award and won the Best Short Narrative Award at Woodstock Film Festival. She is a 2021 Creative Capital Awardee for her feature film *Khsara (Pickled)* and a Warner Media 150 Fellow for her feature comedy/thriller, *Bowling Green Massacre*. Otherwise you can find her directing romantic comedy podcasts.

➤ [suhamaria.com](http://suhamaria.com)

📷 [suhamaria](https://www.instagram.com/suhamaria)



The definition of the word Khsara is written tongue and cheek for *Pickled (Khsara)* by Suha Araj.



# J Mase III & Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi *The Black Trans Prayer Book:* *A Documentary*

■ 2020 Awardees ► Experimental film, performance art



Cover image of *The Black Trans Prayer Book*.

## About the Project

*Black Trans Prayer Book: A Documentary* explores the lives, reflections, performances, and spiritual journey of the contributors to the *Black Trans Prayer Book*—a collaborative text, co-edited by J Mase III and Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi, that explores the healing needs of Black trans people.

➤ [theBlackTransPrayerBook.org](http://theBlackTransPrayerBook.org)



## J Mase III ♥ he/him

Seattle, WA

J Mase III is a Black trans queer poet and educator based in Seattle, by way of Philadelphia. He is the author of *And Then I Got Fired: One Transqueer's Reflections on Grief, Unemployment, and Inappropriate Jokes about Death* as well as *White Folks Be Trippin': An Ethnography Through Poetry & Prose*. He is the founder of awQward, the first ever trans and queer people of color specific talent

agency. As a performer, he has shared stages with world-renowned artists like Chuck D, MJ Rodriguez, Billy Porter and the Indigo Girls. His work and musings have been featured on MSNBC, NBC *OUT*, *Essence Live*, *Atlanta Black Star*, *GO Magazine*, *Believe Out Loud*, *Everyday Feminism*, *Black Girl Dangerous*, *Upworthy*, *The New York Times*, *Buzzfeed*, *The Root*, *The Huffington Post*, *Teen Vogue*, and more. Currently, he is the head writer for the theatrical production, *Black Bois* and Co-Director of the forthcoming documentary, the *Black Trans Prayer Book*.

➤ [jmaseiii.com](http://jmaseiii.com)

@ [jmaseiii](https://twitter.com/jmaseiii)

## Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi ♥ she/her

Washington, DC

Dubbed the Ancient Jazz Priestess of Mother Africa, Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi is a Nigerian, Cuban, Indigenous, American performance artist, author, teacher, choreographer, priestess, speech writer, playwright, writing coach, advocate, healer, a founding member of Force Collision, and a two-time Helen Hayes Award Nominee. She is the founder of The Inanna D Initiatives, which curates, produces, and cultivates events and initiatives designed to center and celebrate the work of TCNC Artists of Color. Considered one of the most prolific artists of our time, she is the first trans woman of color to be nominated for a Helen Hayes Award. In 2015, she received an Emerging Leader Award for her work with the DC Trans Community and is the GLBT History Project's 2018 recipient of the Mujeres en el Movimiento Arts Award. She has also costarred as Patra in the new web series *King Ester*.

➤ [ladydanefe.com](http://ladydanefe.com)

@ [ladydanefe](https://twitter.com/ladydanefe)

# Jasmin Mara López ♥ she/her

## *Silent Beauty*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ New Orleans, LA ► Documentary film, installation

### About the Project

*Silent Beauty* is a personal documentary about Jasmin López's family's history with child sexual abuse and a culture of silence. The work extends as an audio-visual installation that features the voices of dozens of survivors—adults and older children with parents—that have reached out to the artist to share their stories.



**Jasmin Mara López** is a journalist, audio producer and filmmaker. Born in the U.S. with familial roots in México, her childhood was affected by issues experienced on both sides of the U.S.-México border. This instilled in her a strong passion for immigrant rights, youth empowerment, and social change. In 2007, López founded Project Luz, a project that teaches youth in México to document stories within their communities. In 2015, she was awarded the Society of Professional Journalists's Excellence in Journalism Award for her documentary *Deadly Divide: Migrant Death on the Border*. In addition to receiving support from Creative Capital, López has garnered support for *Silent Beauty* from organizations like Chicken & Egg Pictures, Black Public Media, Sundance Institute, ITVS, Firelight Media and Latino Public Broadcasting.

🔗 [silentbeautyfilm.com](http://silentbeautyfilm.com)

📸 [jasminmara](https://www.instagram.com/jasminmara)



Film still from *Silent Beauty* by Jasmin Mara López. Photo: Bron Moyi.



# Elaine McMillion Sheldon ♥ she/her

## *King Coal*

■ 2021 Awardee 📍 Knoxville, TN ▶ Documentary film, experimental film

### About the Project

For the past 200 years, coal has been an inescapable presence in the daily lives of Central Appalachians. *King Coal*, Elaine McMillion Sheldon's essayistic documentary, juxtaposes the reality of coal-related identity with a magical realist tale. Interwoven with documentary vignettes featuring the stories of citizens in the coalfields, are descriptions of a lush world that help paint a picture of Appalachia's purpose amid its ongoing power struggle. A geological exploration of time, *King Coal* serves as a reminder of why change is painful.



**Elaine McMillion Sheldon** is an Appalachian-based filmmaker who explores challenges in American society and its effects on people. She is the director of *Recovery Boys* and the Academy Award-nominated, Emmy-winning *Heroin(e)*, which both explore America's opioid crisis. Her film *Tutwiler*, an intimate look at motherhood inside one of America's most notorious women's prisons, aired on PBS *America Reframed*. Sheldon's interactive documentary *Hollow* brought to life a post-industrial community online and received a Peabody Award and 3rd Prize in the World Press Photo Awards. She was named a 2021 Livingston Award Finalist, 2020 Guggenheim Fellow, 2018 USA Fellow by United States Artists, one of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film" by *Filmmaker Magazine*, and received the Breakthrough Filmmaker Award from Chicken & Egg Pictures.

🔗 [elainemcmillionsheldon.com](http://elainemcmillionsheldon.com)



Film still from Elaine McMillion Sheldon's *King Coal*.

# Diane Paragas <sup>♥ she/her</sup>

## *The Three Lives of David Wong*

■ 2020 Awardee ♡ New York, NY ► Documentary film, puppetry

### About the Project

Through a mixture of recreation puppetry, archival interviews, and verité, *The Three Lives of David Wong* documentary film tells the story of an undocumented Chinese immigrant wrongfully convicted of murder, and the group of activists who came to together to rally for his freedom.



**Diane Paragas** is a Filipina American writer/director who focuses on experiences of marginalized groups in both documentary and narrative films.

Her first documentary film *Kabayan* was released on PBS and explored the Filipino-American experience. She also produced for the Peabody Award and Emmy Award winning *Egg the Arts Show*, as well as programs for Bravo, BET, and CBS. Her most recent documentary *Brooklyn Boheme*, co-directed by Nelson George, celebrated the African-American art movement that launched the careers of Spike Lee, Chris Rock and Rosie Perez, to name

a few. The film went on to win the Black Reel award for Best Television Documentary and premiered on Showtime. Paragas wrote and directed her debut narrative feature *Yellow Rose*, which stars Eva Noblezada and Lea Salonga and tells the story of a Filipino-American girl pursuing her country music dreams under threat of deportation. The film won over 13 grand jury and audience awards during its festival run. *Yellow Rose* was acquired by Sony Pictures and became the first Filipino American film to be distributed theatrically by a major Hollywood studio. Paragas is also developing a pop music opera film entitled *Lizards* which follows the journey of a Filipina woman who has a magical lizard and becomes a guerrilla fighter in Japanese occupied Philippines during WWII. Paragas was selected for Goldhouse's A100 List honoring the most impactful Asians along with director Bong Joon Ho, Lulu Wang and Taika Waititi.



Film still from *The Three Lives of David Wong* by Diane Paragas.

# Rodrigo Reyes <sup>♥ he/him</sup> *Sansón and Me*

■ 2020 Awardee 📍 Oakland, CA ▶ Documentary film

## About the Project

Director Rodrigo Reyes works as a Spanish Court Interpreter where he befriends a client, a young undocumented Mexican named Sansón, during a gang-related murder trial. When permission is denied to film Sansón, Rodrigo and he begin using hundreds of pages of letters to craft recreations of Sansón's childhood, a process that slowly builds into a multi-layered narrative that weaves an unexpected friendship with an incisive portrait of how the failures of immigration and opportunity intersect with the criminal justice system.

**Rodrigo Reyes** has received the support of The Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE), Sundance and Tribeca Institutes, and many others. His films have been presented on America ReFramed and Netflix, and he is a recipient of the prestigious Guggenheim and Creative Capital Awards as well as the SF Indie Fest Non-Fiction Vanguard Award. His latest film, *499*, won Best Cinematography at Tribeca Film Festival, as well as the Special Jury Award at Hot Docs, the Special Jury Prize at EBS International Documentary Film Festival, and the Golden Frog for Best Docudrama at Eneerica Camerimage. In 2021, he was awarded the inaugural Rainin Fellowship, celebrating visionary artists working in the Bay Area.



➤ [rrcinema.com](http://rrcinema.com)



Film still from *Sansón and Me* by Rodrigo Reyes, 2018.

# Adam Khalil ♡ he/him & Bayley Sweitzer ♡ he/him *Nosferasta*

■ 2021 Awardee ♡ Brooklyn, NY ▶ Narrative film, video art

## About the Project

Spanning 500 years of colonial destruction, *Nosferasta* tells the story of Oba, a Rastafarian vampire, and Christopher Columbus, Oba's original biter, as they spread the colonial infection throughout the "new world." Formally a vampire film and series of installations, the stylistically impressionistic *Nosferasta* examines the guilt of being complicit in imperial conquest, while also acknowledging the difficulty of unlearning centuries of vampiric conditioning. At its core *Nosferasta* asks, how can you decolonize what's in your blood?



Film still from *Empty Metal* by Adam Khalil and Bayley Sweitzer.



**Adam Khalil**, a member of the Ojibway tribe, is a filmmaker and artist from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, whose practice attempts to subvert traditional forms of image-making through humor, relation, and transgression. Khalil is a core contributor to New Red Order and a co-founder of COUSINS Collective. Khalil's work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Sundance Film Festival, Walker Arts Center, Lincoln Center, Tate Modern, HKW, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Toronto Biennial 2019 and Whitney Biennial 2019, among other institutions. Upcoming exhibitions will be held at Gasworks in London, Spike Island in Bristol, and Artists Space in NYC. Khalil is the recipient of various fellowships and grants, including but not limited to the Film/Video Herb Alpert Award 2021, Sundance Art of Nonfiction, Jerome Artist Fellowship, Cinereach and the Gates Millennium Scholarship.

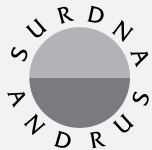
↗ [emptymetal.com](http://emptymetal.com)



**Bayley Sweitzer** is a filmmaker living and working in Brooklyn, whose practice revolves around an ongoing attempt to repurpose narrative film form in order to convey radical political possibilities. His work has been shown at Film at Lincoln Center, Walker Art Center, Tate Modern, Berlinale, Anthology Film Archives, Bozar in Brussels, Pacific Film Archive, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Other Cinema in San Francisco, and Artists Space in New York City. Sweitzer has received recent moving image commissions from the Park Avenue Armory in New York City, Gasworks in London, and Spike Island in Bristol. Sweitzer also works professionally as a focus puller and is a member of the International Cinematographers Guild, IATSE Local 600.

Thank you to our sponsors:

**Andy Warhol  
Foundation for the  
Visual Arts**



**Surdna  
Foundation**

**LAMBENT  
FOUNDATION**

**TOBY DEVAN  
LEWIS**



**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

**CREATIVE CAPITAL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



Creative Capital