

# ANNOUNCING THE 2021 CREATIVE CAPITAL AWARDS

## 42 Artists Receive Support to Develop 35 Groundbreaking Projects

**New York, NY (December 8, 2020)** — Creative Capital is pleased to announce the selection of 35 projects, the work of 42 individual artists, for the 2021 Creative Capital Awards. These projects, each of which exemplifies the risk-taking, adventurous artmaking Creative Capital seeks to sustain, will receive up to \$50,000 in project funding, supplemented by additional career development services. The full list of recipients is below.

The 35 projects, by 42 individual artists, were drawn from nearly 4,000 applications and selected by an eight-member, multidisciplinary panel composed of expert curators, producers, other arts professionals, and past awardees. In a departure from traditional awards panels, Creative Capital's multi-step review process is not delineated by genre—the panelists deliberated together to select the awardees regardless of field.

“We are thrilled to honor these brilliant artists and the powerful, boundary-pushing work that they are creating,” said **Leslie Singer**, Creative Capital's Interim Executive Director. “We look forward to seeing these projects grow to make their mark on the world, in spite of the tremendous challenges this year has posed for so many artists.”

The projects that earned 2021 Creative Capital Awards are based in 12 different states and territories. Of the 42 artists, 76 percent identify as being persons of color, 55 percent as female, and 10 percent identify as having a disability. They range in age from their 20s through their 70s.

The Creative Capital Awards are designed not as a one-time infusion of cash, but as the beginning of a long-term partnership between Creative Capital, an artist, and a broader artistic community. Creative Capital supports these projects in the long term, offering connections to expert advice on everything from the law to finances, and to the perspectives and expertise of other artists. The goal is not just the successful development of the project, but more stable and sustainable practices, on which artists can build.

Drawing from the principles of venture capital to develop innovative work in the cultural sphere, Creative Capital seeks out bold, groundbreaking projects and provides the artists behind them with the tools they need to realize their visions and build sustainable careers. Since its founding in 1999, Creative Capital has supported 783 artists with more than \$50 million in funding; professional development opportunities; expert consulting; artist retreats and gatherings; and more, with the aim



of fostering and developing artistic exchange and a thriving cultural commons across the United States.

Applications for the next cycle of Creative Capital Awards will open February 1, 2021.

## **2021 Panelists**

Naomi Beckwith – Manilow Senior Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Ken Chen – Writer

Ryan Dennis – Chief Curator and Artistic Director of the Center for Art & Public Exchange (CAPE) at the Mississippi Museum of Art

Karen Farber – Vice President for External Affairs, Buffalo Bayou Partnership

Jennifer Lange – Curator of the Film/Video Studio Program, Wexner Center for the Arts

George Lugg – Consulting Producer, CalArts Center for New Performance

Ali Momeni – Senior Principal Scientist, AI and Robotics, Shield AI; 2013 Creative Capital Awardee

Lucy Mukerjee – Senior Programmer, Tribeca Film Festival; Co-Founder of the Programmers of Colour Collective

## **About Creative Capital**

Creative Capital supports the work of forward-thinking and adventurous artists across the country through funding, counsel, gatherings, and career development services. Its pioneering venture philanthropy approach helps artists working in all creative disciplines realize their visions and build more sustainable careers. Since 1999, Creative Capital has committed over \$50 million in project funding and advisory support to 631 projects representing 783 artists and has worked with more than 20,000 artists in over 800 creative communities across the country.

Creative Capital receives major support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Lambent Foundation, Toby Devan Lewis, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Scherman Foundation, William K. Bowes, Jr. Foundation, Stephen Reily and Emily Bingham, Margaret Silva, Paige West, and over 100 other institutional and individual donors.

For more, visit [creative-capital.org](http://creative-capital.org).

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## 2021 Creative Capital Awards

### **Suha Araj**

Brooklyn, NY

*Pickled (Khsara)*

Comedy, Narrative Film

*Pickled (Khsara)* is a comedic feature-length film set in the Palestinian diaspora about women who don't get married "in time."

### **Wafaa Bilal**

New York, NY

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

Bio Art, Sculpture

Using leading-edge molecular biological archiving processes, Wafaa Bilal saves high-resolution 3D-scans of an iconoclastically vandalized ancient sculpture inside the DNA of heirloom Iraqi wheat seeds, integrating the origins of civilization with postcultural planetary futures.

### **William D. Caballero**

Los Angeles, CA

*TheyDream*

Animation, Documentary Film

*TheyDream* is an animated documentary about the hopes and realities of the filmmaker's Puerto Rican-American family, plagued by health, financial, and social problems rooted in the systemic inequality in today's America.

### **People's Kitchen Collective**

**(Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik, Jocelyn Jackson, Saqib Keval)**

Oakland, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Mexico City, Mexico

*Earthseed*

Artistic Activism, Social Practice

In *Earthseed*, People's Kitchen Collective will gather together a cohort of grassroots activists whose work manifests survival and change, inspired by Octavia Butler's Parables series.

### **Shirley Bruno**

Brooklyn, NY

*Just Come/Been To*

Experimental Film, Narrative Film

A three-part experimental docufiction exploring intimate spaces of women, their inherited land conflicts, and buried family legacy in Haiti.

### **The Black School (Joseph Cuillier III, Shani Peters)**

New York, NY

*The Black Schoolhouse*

Social Practice, Cultural Organizing

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 Cuillier's hometown, New Orleans's 7th Ward.



### **Reid Davenport**

Oakland, CA

*I Didn't See You There*

Documentary Film

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.

### **Anne Finger**

Oakland, CA

*Wheeling in Berlin*

Literary Nonfiction

Inspired by the 20th century dandy archetype, Anne Finger writes about her travels as a wheelchair-user in *Wheeling in Berlin*, a book of personal essays mapping disability upon the geography of the city.

### **Mitchell S. Jackson**

Chicago, IL

*John of Watts*

Literary Fiction

*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.

### **Meng Jin**

San Francisco, CA

*Mothers and Girls: A Fake Memoir*

Literary Fiction

In *Mothers and Girls*, a novel or "fake memoir" narrated by the daughter of a Chinese poet and a white American translator/scholar of Chinese literature, Meng Jin interrogates the reliability of text, and conceives of and enacts authorship as performance.

### **Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski, Terence Nance**

Brooklyn, NY; Los Angeles, CA

*Kiara Daja Diamond and the 777 Satisfactions*

Graphic Novel, Animation

*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."

### **Shana M. griffin**

New Orleans, LA

*DISPLACED*

Social Practice, Multimedia

Through interactive multimedia like a digital atlas and archive, *DISPLACED* uses public history to chronicle the formation and institutionalization of racialized violence in housing policies, residential segregation, land-use planning, and urban development in New Orleans.

### **Lars Jan**

Los Angeles, CA

*ROAM*

Multimedia Performance, Augmented Reality

Using augmented reality technology on a massive scale, *ROAM* is a performance set in a sports complex that speculatively traces one branch of the Afghan side of the artist's family tree 70,000 years into the past.

### **Crystal Kayiza**

Brooklyn, NY

*The Gardeners*

Documentary Film, Experimental Film

*The Gardeners* is a feature-length film that follows the Worthy Women of Watkins Street, keepers of one of the oldest Black cemeteries in Mississippi.



### **Adam Khalil, Bayley Sweitzer**

Brooklyn, NY

*Nosferasta*

Video Art, Narrative Film

Spanning 500 years of colonial destruction, *Nosferasta* is a film that 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."

### **Marie Lorenz, Kurt Rohde, Dana Spiotta**

New York, NY; San Francisco, CA; Syracuse, NY

*Newtown Odyssey*

Opera, Sculpture

*The Newtown Odyssey* is a floating opera set on barges in New York City where performers sing aboard moveable stages, as the audience pass by in boats. The score of the opera can be experienced in phases, reshuffling the narrative, giving each audience an entirely different experience of the work.

### **Derek McPhatter**

Chicago, IL

*NightQueen Performance Suite*

Theater, Musical Theater

*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.

### **Jenny Lion**

Minneapolis, MN

*untitled (Nevada, Utah)*

Documentary Film, Video Art

*untitled (Nevada, Utah)* is a series of video installations and cinematic works which explore land-use, expansionist history, training rituals, and strategies of sustained witnessing at sites of historical resonance.

### **Sabrina Orah Mark**

Athens, GA

*Happily: Essays on Motherhood and Fairytales*

Literary Nonfiction, Digital Media

Sabrina Orah Mark expands her monthly column, *Happily*, into a collection of essays on fairy tales and motherhood, using the fairy tale to shed light on the here and now.

### **Julian Terrell Otis**

Chicago, IL

*Resolved: Critiquing Contemporary Music Through Improvised Performance*

Music Performance, Artistic Activism

Inspired by the artist's experience on the high school forensic debate team and its use of critical race theory, *Resolved* is a performance that facilitates dialogue and musical expression by convening the music and debate communities in knowledge sharing, rehearsals, and performance.



### **Will Rawls**

Brooklyn, NY

*[siccer]*

Dance, Animation

*[siccer]* is a performance challenging the widespread citation and circulation of black bodies. In the work, gesture, voice, and stop-motion animation serve as vehicles for re-interpreting and transforming notions of citation and sense.

### **Marc Anthony Richardson**

Philadelphia, PA

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

Literary Fiction, Poetry

*The Serpent Will Eat Whatever is in the Belly of the Beast* is a speculative novel that takes place during a day of rioting, after the white rapists and murderers of a Black girl are released from jail without charges, and seven Black assassins seek retaliation.

### **Sherrill Roland**

Durham, NC

*The Jumpsuit Portal*

Social Practice, Multimedia

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.

### **Tomeka Reid**

Brooklyn, NY

*Women of the AACM*

Artistic Activism, Music Performance

As the Advancement of Creative Musicians 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, and new visual art, poetry, and documentation.

### **Sandy Rodriguez**

Los Angeles, CA

*Book 13: After the Conquest – Codex Rodriguez Mondragon*

Painting, Installation

In *Book 13: After the Conquest – Codex Rodriguez Mondragon*, Sandy Rodriguez expands her interdisciplinary research recuperating Indigenous history and ethnobotany through an immersive installation.

### **Bayeté Ross Smith**

New York, NY

*Art of Justice*

Artistic Activism, Installation

*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.



### **Jules Rosskam**

Philadelphia, PA  
*Desire Lines*  
Documentary Film

Situated at the intersection of sex, gender, and desire, *Desire Lines* is an immersive feature-length essay film comprised of one-on-one interviews, erotic encounters, observational footage, performed scenarios, and a fictional narrative presenting an abbreviated history of the bathhouse.

### **Elaine McMillion Sheldon**

Knoxville, TN  
*King Coal*  
Documentary Film, Experimental Film

*King Coal* employs magical realism and documentary vignettes of Appalachians to explore how coal is imbued in the region's identity.

### **Martine Syms**

Los Angeles, CA  
*Dumb World*  
Narrative Film, Video Art

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.

### **Jessica Vaughn**

Brooklyn, NY  
*Working Procedures*  
Sculpture, Installation

Focusing on paraprofessionals, careworkers, and occupations that keep both private and state institutions running, *Working Procedures* examines the quotidian

### **Legacy Russell**

New York, NY  
*BLACK MEME*  
Literary Nonfiction, Digital Media

*BLACK MEME* identifies points across history that have paved the way for the construct and material of the "meme," exploring the impact of Blackness, Black life, and Black social death on contemporary conceptions of virality borne in the age of the Internet.

### **Débora Souza Silva**

Oakland, CA  
*Black Mothers*  
Documentary Film, Artistic Activism

*Black Mothers* follows two women in a nationwide network of mothers whose African-American children were killed by police; as one mother navigates the aftermath of her son's attack by police, the other channels her grief into a fight for justice.

### **Anna Tsouhlarakis**

Boulder, CO  
*Indigenous Absurdities*  
Social Practice, Installation

In the visual art project *Indigenous Absurdities*, Anna Tsouhlarakis collects and deconstructs Indigenous jokes and comical stories as part of an investigation in reforming an understanding of Native American identity.

### **Jordan Weber**

Des Moines, IA  
*4MX Greenhouse*  
Artistic Activism, Architecture and Design

*4MX Greenhouse* is a structural artwork supporting holistic community health, built on the site where Malcolm X was born, and empowering participants to



systems that dictate our understanding of labor, space, and inclusion.

build resilience into their communities through direct action.

**Simone White**

Brooklyn, NY

*or, on being the other woman*

Poetry, Multimedia Performance

In *or, on being the other woman*, Simone White uses performance and writing to bring post-Marxist materialism into conversation with Black studies, asking, what is a Black woman who works to live?