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NEWS RELEASE

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5 ARIZONA ARTISTS AWARDED ARTS COMMISSION PROJECT GRANTS TO CREATE NEW WORKS

PHOENIX, AZ (March 28, 2011) – In February 2011, the Arizona Commission on the Arts awarded its prestigious Artist Project Grants to artists from across Arizona, practicing in a variety of artistic disciplines. Offered annually, these grants support the professional development of Arizona artists with awards of up to \$5,500.

The Arts Commission remains committed to maintaining support for artists through grants, as it has for 20 years. This year, the Arts Commission is proud to introduce the Distinguished Merit Award. The award offers additional funding support in the amount of up to \$2,500 to one 2011 Artist Project Grant recipient. Of the 174 applications received, only 5 were funded.

The 2011 recipients are: **Sally Ball, Shannon Cain, Heather Green, Stephen Marc, Shloka Mangharam**

2011 Artist Project Grant review panelists included **Rick Noguchi**, Senior Program Officer of The James Irvine Foundation, San Francisco, CA; **Cynthia Hedstrom**, Producer/Director of Special Projects of the Wooster Group, New York, NY; and **Dr. Tey Marianna Nunn**, Director and Chief Curator of the Art Museum and Visual Arts Program at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM. **Josh Nelson**, a Governor-appointed Commissioner of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, chaired the panel.

These awards have been known to springboard recipients into the next level of their careers as artists, whose business is researching, developing, marketing and delivering their creative product. Through their work with communities, in education and in partnership with local vendors, artists stimulate local economies and improve the quality of life across Arizona.

Artist Project Grant Descriptions

Sally Ball (Scottsdale)—*What to Do With Dead Birds*. The artist will create poetry based on Linda Connor's photographs of 20th century astronomical plates. Ball's poetry will explore the juxtapositions between pre-existing samples and original composition. She is an assistant professor of English at Arizona State University and the associate director of Four Way Books.

Shannon Cain (Tucson)—*Tucson, the Novel: An Experiment in Literature and Civil Discourse*. The artist will create a novel based on serialized three-minute weekly oral testimonies. Cain is the recipient of honors like the Pushcart Prize and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She currently teaches at the Gotham Writers' Workshop.

Heather Green (Tucson)—*Vermillion Remains*. The artist will create an interdisciplinary installation documenting the disappearing biodiversity and fishing camp culture of La Cholla, Mexico. The installation will consist of thirty paintings of varying size and dimensions, fifteen glass and steel vitrines that display objects of the same era, and an oversized spool of letterpress cards that record fish specimens, fishing shacks and historical anecdotes. Green is currently an Adjunct Professor at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College.

Stephen Marc (Tempe)—*Relocating African American Heritage in the West*. The artist will explore African American heritage in the West by utilizing digital montages to interweave historical sites and related period artifacts. Marc will conduct research with the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom division, as well as local historians and organizations to gain access to, and document historic sites and structures. Marc is currently a Professor of Art at Arizona State University.

Artist Project Grant Distinguished Merit Award

Shloka Mangharam (Tucson)—*The Long Walk of Ali Gnattyhat*. The artist will produce a blended-genre book that explores the impact of violence set against the tragedy of Central American migrants crossing the Mexico-Arizona desert. Mangharam is originally from Bombay, India and received a B.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Arizona.

Artist Project Grant Panelists said of the artist: *"This applicant presents extremely high artistic quality and rose quickly to the top of the applicant pool. This project demonstrates the artist's strong and well-developed personal voice. The applicant is obviously poised to take the next steps in their career as a writer."*

Bill Desmond Writing Award

The Commission is also pleased to announce that **Nicole Walker** (Flagstaff) received the **Bill Desmond Writing Award** for the best nonfiction submission. This award was established by Kathleen Desmond to honor her husband, Bill Desmond, a reporter, editor and nonfiction writer. Artist Project Grant panelist, **Rick Noguchi**, the award judge, said of the writer: *"Very strong writing sample and intriguing artistic product that blurs fiction and non-fiction. The research phase of this project will support the work and move it to the next level."* Walker will receive \$500 toward his project, *Microclimates and Micropreemies*.

About the Arizona Commission on the Arts

One of 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies across the United States, the Arizona Commission on the Arts is an agency of the State of Arizona that supports a statewide arts network. The Arizona Commission on the Arts supports access to quality arts and arts education opportunities for all Arizona citizens; the development and retention of statewide jobs in the nonprofit arts, culture and education sectors; and increased economic impact in local communities through arts-based partnerships that develop tax and small business revenue.

We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate in and experience the arts.

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