

For Immediate Release

January 11, 2016

Contact: Steve Wilcox
602.771.6536
swilcox@azarts.gov

Arts Commission Awards Research and Development Grants to 11 Arizona Artists

Phoenix, AZ (January 11, 2016) – The Arizona Commission on the Arts, an agency of the State of Arizona, announced today the recipients of Artist Research and Development Grants for Fiscal Year 2016. This highly-competitive grant program awards funding to Arizona artists practicing in a variety of artistic disciplines in support of research and development leading to the creation of new works of art. This year, 11 of 100 applicants received an award of up to \$5,000 in funding.

In addition to the Artist Research and Development Grant, the Arts Commission also presented the **Bill Desmond Writing Award**, which offers funding in the amount of \$1,000 to excelling nonfiction writers for specific project-related costs. The recipient is selected from the pool of applicants for Artist Research and Development Grants, and a single applicant may be awarded both. The award was established by Kathleen Desmond to honor her late husband, Bill Desmond, a reporter, editor, and nonfiction writer.

2016 Artist Research and Development Grant Recipients

Adam Cooper-Terán (Tucson), Multidisciplinary Artist
Juan Freitez (Phoenix), Digital Media Artist
Annie Guthrie (Tucson), Literary Artist
Carla Keaton (Tempe), Visual Artist
Cristóbal Martínez (Mesa), Digital Media Artist
Melani “Mele” Martinez (Tucson), Performing Artist
Lisa Molomot (Tucson), Digital Media Artist
Milta Ortiz (Tucson), Performing Artist
Lois Roma-Deeley (Scottsdale), Literary Artist
M. Jenea Sanchez (Douglas), Digital Media Artist
Shawn Skabelund (Flagstaff), Visual Artist

2016 Bill Desmond Writing Award Recipient

Annie Guthrie (Tucson), Literary Artist

2016 Artist Research and Development Grant Review Panel

Grantees were selected by a diverse and distinguished panel of Arizona citizens:
Hilary Harp (Tempe), Associate Professor of Sculpture, Arizona State University
Eric Magrane (Tucson), Poet in Residence, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
Leah Marche (Phoenix), Co-founder, Black Poet Ventures
Jacob Meders (Phoenix), Instructor, Arizona State University
Yvonne Montoya (Tucson), Co-founder, Safos Dance Theater
Helen Padilla (Flagstaff), Owner, Helen Padilla Studio

The panel was chaired by **Lisa Barnes**, a Governor-appointed Commissioner of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, Master Docent at Phoenix Art Museum, and former legislative analyst for the Arizona House of Representatives.

2016 Artist Research and Development Grant Awards

Adam Cooper-Terán (Tucson). With a collective of Native American artists of the Diné (Navajo), Tohono O’Odham, Hopi and Yaqui nations, Cooper-Terán will visit Indigenous lands of the Southwest, interviewing community members and elders, as they are guided to sacred lands under threat from resource extraction, Border Patrol, and globalization. This research will inform the development of a multi-media performance piece to premiere in Tucson, Spring 2017, presented by Borderlands Theater.

Juan Freitez (Phoenix). In his first long-form documentary, *Salud Sin Papeles: Health Undocumented*, documentary filmmaker Freitez will tell the story of Phoenix Allies for Community Health, a clinic providing free healthcare to undocumented immigrants in Phoenix. Originally from Venezuela, Freitez moved to the United States to pursue a career as a filmmaker. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Electronic Media and Film from Eastern Michigan University and a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership from Siena Heights University. Upon moving to Phoenix in 2013, Freitez mentored under award-winning filmmaker Terry Bennell before founding his own production company, Community Grassroots Media, in 2014.

Annie Guthrie (Tucson). Guthrie, a poet and jeweler, will compose a book-length lyric memoir comprised of prose, interviews, photography, and poetry. The memoir will chronicle the discoveries of the author as she investigates notions of local and regional “sustainability” as a metaphor for personal and spiritual growth. Guthrie teaches Creative Writing courses at the University of Arizona Poetry Center. She published her first book of poems, *The Good Dark*, with Tupelo Press in October, 2015. She has received several awards for her writing including an Academy of American Poets Prize, an Arizona Commission on the Arts Fellowship in Poetry, and a Tucson Pima Arts Council Individual Artist Grant.

Carla Keaton (Tempe). The daughter of a Mississippi sharecropper, Keaton plans to complete 16 to 20 paintings, inspired by oral stories, old family photos and her own imagination, comparing the parallel lifestyles of sharecroppers in Hamilton, Mississippi, and Eloy, Arizona during the first half of the 20th century. Keaton received degrees in Painting and Physical Anthropology from Arizona State University. A full-time artist, Keaton’s work has been featured in art galleries across Arizona. She is a commissioned

portrait artist and has provided illustrations for two published children's books. Keaton is also a muralist whose work can be seen throughout the valley.

Cristóbal Martínez (Mesa). Martínez will direct *Radio Healer*, an Indigenous Electro-Acoustic performance of experimental music composed for and played on traditional and electronic indigenous instruments designed and constructed by the project's musicians. Martínez is a practicing and publishing digital designer, artist, and scholar in rhetoric, the learning sciences, and diversity studies. He is a member of the indigenous artist collectives Postcommodity, Burning Wagon, and Radio Healer, and a former National Science Foundation Graduate Research Assistant at Arizona State University. His work has been published, presented, exhibited, and performed throughout North America, Europe, Australia, and Africa.

Melani "Mele" Martinez (Tucson). Martinez will collaborate with fellow dancer and choreographer Fanny Ara to produce a touring flamenco project exploring the labors and joys found in balancing a life as both a mother and an artist. Raised in Tucson, Martinez began studying dance with Leticia Durazo, a prominent teacher of Mexican folklorico and Spanish classical dance, with Olivia Rojo, Tucson's first distinguished flamenco instructor, and with world-renowned artists in Sevilla, Spain. After training at the National Conservatory of Flamenco, she became an original member of Yjastros: The American Flamenco Repertory Company before cofounding the Tucson Spanish and Flamenco Festival and Tucson Flamenco Studio.

Lisa Molomot (Tucson). Molomot will direct *The Boy in the Box*, a documentary film following the work of a forensic anthropologist working in Texas to reunite families with migrants who died crossing the U.S./Mexican border. Molomot studied experimental filmmaking at the San Francisco Art Institute before moving to Los Angeles to work as a film editor. She received an M.F.A. in Film Editing from the American Film Institute in 1998 and has since worked in documentary and fiction film as a director, producer, cameraperson and editor. Her work has been seen at film festivals, including SXSW, Sundance, and the Mill Valley Film Festival, and broadcast on PBS.

Milta Ortiz (Tucson). Ortiz will adapt short stories from Patricia Preciado Martin's book, *El Milagro and Other Stories*, into a shadow puppet theatre play that will travel to parks in south and west Tucson in October, 2016. Ortiz earned an M.F.A. from Northwestern University's Writing for the Screen and Stage program and a Creative Writing B.A. from San Francisco State University. As a National New Play Network Playwright-in-Residence at Borderlands Theater, she wrote the 18th Annual *A Tucson Pastorela* and *Más* (premiered fall of 2015.) Other plays include 19th Annual *A Tucson Pastorela*, *Disengaged*, *You, Me and Tuno*, *Fleeing Blue* and *Last of the Lilac Roses*. Ortiz worked extensively as a teaching artist and is a member of sheworXX theater collaborative.

Lois Roma-Deeley (Scottsdale). Using the Arizona landscape as metaphor, theme and setting, Roma-Deeley will write a book-length series of linked narrative poems titled *Voices from the Desert: Witnesses and Outsiders*. Roma-Deeley is the author of three books of poetry and has been published in numerous anthologies and literary journals. She has won numerous awards and honors for her poetry, including the Samuel T. Coleridge Literary Prize. Roma-Deeley has taught creative writing at the graduate and

undergraduate levels for more than 25 years and was named U.S. Professor of the Year, Community College, by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

M. Jenea Sanchez (Douglas). Using photography, video, web, and book art, Sanchez will produce *The Mexican Woman's Post-Apocalyptic Survival Guide in the Southwest* – a multi-phase, multi-media work examining and celebrating the survival skills possessed by a group of contemporary Mexican women living on the U.S./Mexico border. After receiving her M.F.A. from Arizona State University in 2011, Sanchez returned to her hometown of Douglas, Arizona, where she and her husband run the organization “Artwalk on G,” a platform for creative expression that fosters an immersive, bi-national arts district in the borderlands community through artwalks, street events, and workshops. Her work has been presented at 25CPW New York, The Latino Museum of Art and History, Modified Arts, Monorchid Gallery, and ASU Museum of Anthropology.

Shawn Skabelund (Flagstaff). Using materials indigenous to the local environment, Skabelund's site-specific, place-based installation, “Composition for Forests,” will explore the annual catastrophic wildfires in the Southwest. As they move through the installation, viewers will listen to collaborative concert pianist Dr. Janice Chen-Ju Chiang play a selection of music about loss, death, and renewal of the natural world. Skabelund earned a B.F.A. from Utah State University and an M.F.A. from University of Iowa. In 2011, Skabelund became the first political/conceptual artist as an artist-in-residence in the National Park Service at Grand Canyon National Park. In December, he finished a residency at Bandelier National Monument. He also recently curated the *Fires of Change* exhibition at the Coconino Center for the Arts, which is currently on exhibit at the UofA Art Museum.

###

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 a 49-year-old agency of the State of Arizona and a leading force in the creative and professional development of Arizona’s arts sector. Through robust programs, research initiatives and strategic grantmaking, the Arts Commission catalyzes arts-based partnerships that strengthen Arizona communities through the arts.

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

To request this or any other agency publication in an alternative format, contact the Arts Commission offices at (602) 771-6502, or info@azarts.gov.

Images available upon request.