

For Immediate Release

December 21, 2017

Contact: Steve Wilcox
602.771.6536
swilcox@azarts.gov

Arts Commission Awards Research and Development Grants to 18 Arizona Artists

The Arizona Commission on the Arts is pleased to announce the recipients of the Artist Research and Development Grants for Fiscal Year 2018. This highly-competitive grant program awards funding to Arizona artists to aid in the development of artistic work, support the advancement of artistic research, and recognize the contributions individual artists make to Arizona's communities. This year, thanks to the state's continued additional investment in the arts for the current fiscal year, 18 applicants received an award of up to \$5,000 in funding—seven more than were awarded funding in 2016.

2018 Artist Research and Development Grant Recipients

- **Sama Alshaibi** (Tucson)
- **María Isabel Alvarez** (Chandler)
- **William Ambrose** (Flagstaff)
- **Torran Anderson** (Tucson)
- **Clarice Bales** (Tucson)
- **Christine Cassano** (Phoenix)
- **Melanie Channon** (Phoenix)
- **Marieke Davis** (Gilbert)
- **Juliana Desmond** (Tucson)
- **Charles Hedcock** (Tucson)
- **Eric Johnsen** (Tucson)
- **Lawrence Lenhart** (Flagstaff)
- **Serge J-F. Levy** (Tucson)
- **Laura Maher** (Tucson)
- **Laurie McKenna** (McNeal)
- **Angelina Ramirez** (Phoenix)
- **Erin Stalcup** (Flagstaff)
- **Suzanne Whitaker** (Phoenix)

[Click here for details on the artists and their projects](#)

This year, thanks to the state's continued additional investment in the arts for the current fiscal year, 18 applicants received an award of up to \$5,000 in funding—seven more than were awarded funding in 2016, when the Arts Commission's total budget reached a 25-year low. For the current fiscal year, FY2018, the state's budget included an additional one-time \$1.5 million allocation to the Arts Commission's grantmaking budget. This additional allocation, derived from interest accrued on the State's rainy-day fund, was also included in the FY2017 budget. As these are one-time allocations, their continuation in future state budgets is uncertain.

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.

2018 Bill Desmond Writing Award Recipient

- **Lawrence Lenhart** (Flagstaff)

2018 Artist Research and Development Grant Review Panel

Applications were reviewed by a diverse and distinguished panel of Arizona residents:

Marcus Monenerkit | Museum Administrator; Director of Community Engagement, Heard Museum

Lauren Strohacker | Media Artist; Upper School Art Faculty, Phoenix Country Day School

Kathleen Velo | Visual Artist; Photography Instructor,, Pima Community College

Nicole Walker | Literary Artist; Associate Professor of Creative Writing, Northern Arizona University

Jessica Valiente | Arts Administrator; Programs Manager, Phoenix Center for the Arts

Efrain Robles | Media Artist; Video Journalist, CBS News

After reviewing and scoring applications individually, the panelists convened for a public meeting at the Arts Commission's office in downtown Phoenix to discuss top-scoring applications and make recommendations for funding. **Ben Baer**, a Governor-appointed Commissioner of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, acted as the panel chair, overseeing the process without participating in the review.

At their quarterly board meeting on December 5, 2017, the Arts Commission's Governor-appointed board of commissioners approved the panel's recommendations for funding.

###

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 50-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.