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ROBERT W. DEUTSCH FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE 2020 RUBYS ARTIST GRANTEES

Baltimore, October 27, 2020 – The Robert W. Deutsch Foundation is thrilled to announce the 15 projects that were selected for 2020 Rubys Artist Grants. The artist-grantees represent a wide breadth of materials, messages, and modalities that underscore the critical need to support our art- and culture-makers in both robust as well as dire times. The 2020 Rubys grant cycle had a delayed launch this year, as the Foundation paused to evaluate the program, now in its seventh year, to ensure that it could adequately meet artists' needs in this moment. The 2020 grant cycle launched with several key updates, including raising the request amount to \$15,000, expanding the budget to allow for personal overhead, and making the public component optional.

The 2020 Rubys cohort represents over \$175,000 dollars of support. Since its launch in 2013, the Rubys have been established as an important and respected opportunity for artists in the Baltimore region that has, to date, granted over one million dollars to support 122 projects featuring 128 artists.

The 2020 Rubys Artist Grantees are:



Kibibi Ajanku: to support *Indigo Influences*, a body of works exploring creative inheritance, patchworked plantation stitchery, and indigo dye traditions that define the intersection of fiber arts between America and West Africa.



Tina Canady: to support *Breathing Black; or How We Heal*, an interactive installation and digital storytelling project that will document the Black community's connection to joy and healing.



Angela N. Carroll: to support an art catalog which centers and highlights the overlooked movements and people of African American postwar and contemporary art.



Marc Cary: to support *People of the First Light: The Wampanoag Story*, a musical suite and accompanying short video documentary that tells the Thanksgiving story from an indigenous perspective using jazz, electronic exploration, and Go Go music.

(photo credit: Rebecca Meek)



Suzanne Coley: to support *Love Sonnets from Shakespeare to Baltimore*, a project using the text of Shakespeare's sonnets, recycled wedding dresses, quilts, and original printmaking to create finely crafted couture art books.



Joshua Clark Davis: to support the nonfiction work *Police and the Movement*, which traces the history of conflict between police officers and the civil rights movement of the 1960s.



Jalen Eutsey: to support the poetry manuscript *Morsel*, a coming-of-age tale set in the artist's hometown neighborhood of West Perrine, Miami that touches on place, race, grief, and intimacy of all kinds.

(photo credit: David Andrews)



Whitney Frazier in collaboration with Kirby Griffin: to support *The Guardians*, a visual storytelling initiative that will create portraits, large-scale banners, and a digital archive celebrating under-recognized black female leaders across Baltimore city.



Trae Harris: to support the making of the film *It's Always Sunny*, a queer, coming of age roadtrip drama that chronicles Sunflower Odin's journey across America, from Baltimore to the Badlands.



Tahir Hemphill: to support *Rap Lyrics as Criminal Evidence*, a research platform and community data project that will catalog, connect, and analyze the lyrics of 500,000 rap songs to uncover the intersections between popular culture, artificial intelligence, the abuses of criminal justice, and Blackness.

(photo credit: Tamika Galanis)



Ebony Jackson: to support the filming of *Single Muva, Man of the House*, a one-woman show that explores the dysfunctional, imbalanced act of single motherhood.



Sara Lautman: to support *Jason*, a graphic novel about a lesbian couple attempting an erotic roleplay. Out of the two actors' shaggy, discursive effort to create and embody the play for one another, a story emerges - about intergenerational queerness, familial social structures, and intimacy.



Jonna McKone: to support *Slow Drift*, a photography project that explores how former plantations in Maryland connect to land modification, biodiversity, and development in the present, shaping the environmental history and collective memory of the state.



Amy Reid: to support *Unearthing Queer Ecologies*, and audio/visual project using science and technology to reveal the imagery and sounds of queer plant life (whether deemed queer by culture or queer in DNA) that is currently beyond the scope of the human eye and ear.



Somayeh Shams: to support the novel *Tombak*, which follows an Iranian family navigating the fast-changing world of post-revolution Iran and explores how cultural identity and belonging shifts or disappears during a time of public crisis.

"The arts help people cope in dark times, and in this period of crisis and isolation, the role of the arts has become more important than ever. We are pleased to be able to provide support to Baltimore's diverse and distinctive visual, performing, literary and media artists during these challenging times. Our city benefits when arts and culture, and those who make it, are able to thrive," says Robert W. Deutsch Foundation president Jane Brown.

The 2020 Rubys jury panels were comprised of the following esteemed professionals:

Literary Arts

Elizabeth Evitts Dickenson – writer, journalist, Rubys alum (Baltimore)

Jared Jackson – coordinator of literary programs at PEN America (NYC)

Chet'la Sebree – poet, director of the Stadler Center for Poetry & Literary Arts at Bucknell University (PA)

Media Arts

Ina Archer – filmmaker, multimedia artist, media conservation and digitization specialist at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture (NYC/DC)

Kelly Gallagher – filmmaker, animator, assistant professor of film at Syracuse University (NY)

Nehad Khader – filmmaker, curator, program director at BlackStar Film Festival (Philadelphia)

Performing Arts

Tavia LaFollette – interdisciplinary theatre artist, professor at Towson University, Rubys alum (Baltimore)

R. Eric Thomas – author, playwright, senior staff writer at Elle.com (Baltimore)

Raphael Xavier – dancer, choreographer, professor at Princeton University (Philadelphia)

Visual Arts

Janice Bond – interdisciplinary artist, curator, deputy director at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (TX)

Phaan Howng – interdisciplinary artist, Rubys alum (Baltimore)

Ernel Martinez – community artist, muralist, founding member of Amber Art and Design (Philadelphia)

The selected artist-grantees will spend the next twelve months developing their creative projects. More information about the Rubys Artist Grants may be found at: <https://www.rwdfoundation.org/rubys>



The Rubys Artist Grants were established in 2013 to support the local artistic community of performing, visual, media and literary artists through meaningful, direct project support. The Rubys were inspired by Ruby Lerner, the visionary founder of Creative Capital in New York City.

The Robert W. Deutsch Foundation invests in innovative people, programs and ideas that promote arts and culture, economic and community development, and social justice, with a primary focus on the City of Baltimore. www.rwdfoundation.org

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