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THE ROBERT W. DEUTSCH FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE 2021 RUBYS ARTIST GRANTEES

Baltimore, November 9, 2021 – The Robert W. Deutsch Foundation is pleased to announce the 14 projects that were selected for 2021 Rubys Artist Grants. The artist-awardees represent a wide breadth of messages, materials and modalities that highlight the critical need to support our art- and culture-makers in both robust and challenging times. As the Baltimore region continues to respond to the global pandemic, the quality of the applications received demonstrates the impressive resilience of the local artist community; as artists develop new work and infuse the region with creativity and innovation.

Since its launch in 2013, the Rubys have become a highly valued opportunity for Baltimore area creatives and has supported 144 artists and their projects.

The 2021 Rubys Artist Grantees are:



Hannah Brancato & Sanahara Ama Chandra: to support *Move Slowly: Dreamseeds*, an installation of textiles, sound, and interactive components that will invite current and budding activists in Baltimore to develop visions for the future.

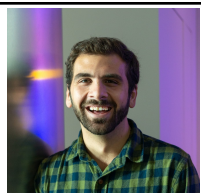
Photo Credit: Aisha Butler Photography



Troy Burton: to support *U Thought I Was Him*, a full stage play performed by an all male cast, that speaks to the issues Black men in America, and specifically in Baltimore, face today.



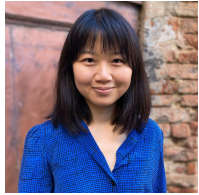
Susan Muaddi Darraj: to support *Escorting the Body*, a collection of short stories focused on the impact of immigration and colonial trauma on women in the Palestinian American community.



Dave Eassa: to support *People and Places You Don't Know How to Know Yet*, a body of work that combines, painting, and installation, exploring the artist's cultural roots and heritage from the Middle East.



Tafisha Edwards: to support *Asunder*, a poetry collection that will interrogate how Black women's bodies, minds, and lives are contorted under societal pressures and violence.



Chung-Wei Huang in collaboration with Muyu Yuan Ruba: to support *Days Without End*, a video project that merges film, choreography, and dance, to tell an immigrant story of endless waiting, based on the experiences the artists had while waiting for U.S. Green Cards.



Jaimes Mayhew: to support *A Different Horizon Atlas*, a project that will create a series of five large scale atlas maps of utopic geographies imagined by groups of LGBTQAI+ people through interactive workshops.



Heather McDonald: to support *Blue Umbrella Happy: An American Psalm*, a memoir and play about a significant road trip that the artist planned to take with their father down "The Blues Highway" through the Mississippi Delta.



Nguyễn Khôi Nguyễn: to support *Bittersweet*, a graphic memoir combining writing and illustration that describes the artist's experiences living through the pandemic as a husband, son, artist, teacher, and Vietnamese-American.



Tariq Darrell O'Meally: to support *Straw Into Gold Pt 2: Songs of the Moon & Good Grief*, a dance series that will focus on gratitude to the Black women in the artist's life and the relationship between grief and praise, in collaboration with four Black female DMV-based dance artists.



Bry Reed: to support the writing of *1927*, a nonfiction narrative-based literature project that will include essays, poetry, and genealogies to create a collage of the author's family history from the coasts of West Africa to the Chesapeake Bay.



Edgar Reyes: to support *Altered Landscape*, a series of installations combining textile, audio, and video elements that uplift the artist's generational connection with plants and examines how control over land has shaped perspectives on heritage.



SHAN Wallace: to support *All Nighter*, a documentary film that explores and tells the history of the Baltimore LGBTQ nightlife scene, through interviews, audio soundbites, animation, and collections from private archives.



Savannah Wood: to support *Hard to Get and Dear Paid For*, a video, photo and text based project that traces the founding of the AFRO American Newspaper to a former plantation in Montgomery County through research, interviews, and a focus on Enoch George Howard, whose descendants founded the newspaper.

Photo Credit: Schaun Champion

"As our city continues to respond to the global pandemic, we have seen artists creating new work and using their mediums as a tool for healing, advocacy, and rebirth. We are pleased to support Baltimore's diverse and distinctive visual, performing, literary and media artists during these challenging times," says Robert W. Deutsch Foundation president Jane Brown.

The 2021 Rubys jury panels were comprised of the following professionals:

Literary Arts

- Celeste Doaks - 2017 Rubys Grantee (Literary Arts), poet, journalist, professor of creative writing (Baltimore)
- Mina Seçkin - Journal editor & writer. (Debut novel, *The Four Humors*, is forthcoming from Catapult) (NYC).
- Daphne Palasi Andreades - Teacher & writer. (Debut novel, *Brown Girls*, is forthcoming from Random House) (NYC).

Media Arts

- Betty Yu - Socially engaged multimedia artist, photographer, filmmaker, educator, and activist. (NYC)
- Lendl Tellington - 2017 Rubys Grantee (Media Arts), filmmaker, journalist, photographer, and Technical Director of the Blackstar Film Festival. (Baltimore)
- Carla Brown - 2014 Rubys Grantee (Media Arts), documentary filmmaker, media artist, 2019 awardee from IFP/HBO True Stories Initiative. (Baltimore)

Performing Arts

- Phill Branch - 2019 Rubys Grantee (Performing Arts), playwright, storyteller, and professor of Communication and Media Studies at Goucher College. (Baltimore)
- Thang Dao - Choreographer, teacher, coach, and Director and Founder of the Thang Dao Dance Company. (LA)
- Danielle Drakes - Theatre artist, director, professor of Theater at the Corcoran School of Art & Design at George Washington University. (Washington, DC)

Visual Arts

- Jackie Milad - 2019 Rubys Grantee (Visual Arts), mixed-media visual artist, educator, and curator. (Baltimore)
- Danni Shen - Curator and writer for *Hyperallergic*, *Brooklyn Rail*, and *SCREEN*, a bilingual journal on contemporary media art. (NYC)

- Larry Ossei-Mensah - Curator, writer, founder of ARTNOIR (celebrates artistry and creativity by Black and Brown artists) and co-curator of the 7th Athens Biennale in 2021. (NYC)

The selected artist-awardees 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 funding. 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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