

Bush Foundation Grants 2006 Artist Fellowships

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BUSH FOUNDATION MARKS 30 YEARS OF SUPPORTING ARTISTS 2006 ARTIST FELLOWS ANNOUNCED

St. Paul, Minnesota— Fifteen 2006 Bush Artist Fellows were named in the categories of two- and three-dimensional visual arts; traditional and folk arts; and choreography, multimedia, performance art and storytelling. The Bush Artist Fellows program will provide financial support to 11 artists from the Twin Cities metropolitan area, three from South Dakota and one from Wisconsin to continue and develop their work. For the past 30 years, the fellowships have recognized the strong visions of artists at any stage in their life's work, their potential for continued development and the contributions to communities that may come from their artistic and professional growth. The 15 fellows were selected from a field of more than 650 applicants by a panel of nationally known artists and curators. Each fellow will receive \$48,000 over a 12- to 24-month period.

A complete list of fellows and panel members, including panelist biographies, is attached to this release and can also be found on www.bushfoundation.org.

Two- and Three-Dimensional Visual Art

Among the fellows are two Twin Cities' artists who create three-dimensional works.

Ernest Arthur Bryant III, Minneapolis, combines clothing materials and other recognizable objects with paintings, lithographs and sculptures that he creates. Bryant's art deals with intellectual diversity by juxtaposing the text encoded in visual objects to initiate the creation of new perspectives and critique those in existence. Simple objects like clothing are used out of context to describe and critique world concerns. Bryant is a 2005 graduate of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Chris Larson of Saint Paul is interested in the dualities of life—love and hate, good and evil, life and death, sin and redemption. He builds large wood sculptures that resemble machines and incorporates them into films he creates. His work has its foundation in rural myths originating in America's heartland that place the fantastic in the midst of the seemingly commonplace.

Photographer **Angela Strassheim** of Minneapolis initially pursued a career in forensic photography. Instead, she now directs the camera toward the subject of family, taking an introspective look at her own upbringing in a born-again Christian family. She said her images “vacillate between what is immediately revealed on the surface and the unsettling nature of what is discovered upon further inspection.” Strassheim, whose work was recently featured in the 2006 Whitney Museum Biennial, is a 2003 MFA photography graduate of Yale University and a recent recipient of a Jerome Fellowship.

Choreography/ Multimedia/Performance Art-Storytelling

Four Minneapolis artists were awarded fellowships in this category. **Susana di Palma** has been a Spanish/flamenco dancer and choreographer since 1975. In 1984, she founded Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre through which she has choreographed traditional flamenco dance works as well as contemporary dance theater pieces that address social and political concerns and incorporate film, video, text and collaborations with other cultures, music and dance forms.

Leah Nelson is a choreographer, curator, community organizer, and educator. Raised in Zimbabwe where dance, theater and performance play a central role in community life, she will often mix mediums by creating work that involved performers from divergent genres. Aerialists, spoken word poets, beat boxers, b-boys & b-girls, jazz musicians and opera singers have found a home in her performances. From traditional to contemporary, African & American movement forms are at the core of Nelson's work.

Otto Ramstad is a dance and film/video artist with an insatiable interest in the process of creating kinesthetic visual images with movement. Ramstad co-directs with Olive Bieringa, The BodyCartography Project in which they build dance works, film/video and political actions that investigate the body's relationship to the physical, architectural, climactic, technological and social landscapes in urban/wilderness and private/public contexts. BodyCartography has created more than 130 events in the United States, Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, Japan, Europe and Russia.

Performance artist **David Mann** writes and performs solo shows that portray characters based on the stories of real people. A professional director, actor and playwright, he has performed at several area theaters and at the Great River Shakespeare Festival. He also created the Schools on Stage artist residency program for the Guthrie Theater's education department. His Fringe Festival hit, *Corleone*, is part of the 2006-07 season for Stages Repertory Theatre in Houston, Tex. His solo show, *Revelations of Mann*, tours the Midwest.

Ashland, Wisc., artist, **Christopher Lutter-Gardella** is a theater designer, inventor, performer and director who creates masks, puppets, costumes, sets and theater implements. He has facilitated community theater projects and performed with his contraptions throughout the northern Wisconsin region and as far away as New York City and Ajo, Ariz. Lutter-Gardella, who incorporates post-consumer, industrial and

warehouse packaging waste into his creations, is the founder of Puppet Farm Arts, which provides artistic design, construction, performance and educational services.

Traditional and Folk Arts

Four of the new fellows chosen from this category are Twin Cities-based musicians.

Bun Loeung of Saint Paul is a professional musician dedicated to continuing the traditional music of Cambodia. In his home country, Bun performed on a *tro sau*, a bowed string instrument. He has been a professional musician since the age of 14 and led a touring theater company for 25 years. In 1982, he moved to Minnesota and has introduced his traditional music to Americans through performances and programs for young people. Bun also leads a cross-cultural group called Light from Heaven.

Dick Hensold of Saint Paul plays the Northumbrian smallpipes (a quiet bagpipe from Northeast England), performing the traditional music of Scotland and Northumberland. For the past 20 years he had performed and taught throughout the United States and Great Britain and composed new works based on the traditions of the Northumbrian pipes. He also performs with Piper's Crow and several other traditional music groups.

Paddy O'Brien of Saint Paul was born and raised in Ireland. He has been a serious player and collector of Irish traditional music for the past 45 years. During that span he has amassed a repertoire of more than 3,000 Irish dance melodies, including many rare and unusual tunes. In 1995, he recorded 500 reels and jigs from his collection in the *Paddy O'Brien Tune Collection*. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the All-Ireland Senior Accordion Championship and the *Oireachtas*, a national honor bestowed by Ireland's Gaelic League.

Nirmala Rajasekar of Plymouth is a performer, composer and teacher of the music of South India, known as Carnatic music. She is an artist with more than 25 years of solo concert experience—a vocalist who performs on the *Veena*, an ancient seven-stringed instrument. In addition to performing traditional Carnatic music, she also has collaborated with other art forms including jazz, poetry, Western classical music, Indonesian Gamelan music and several dance forms. She was recently honored with a distinguished award by an India-based organization; in Dec. 2006, she will perform with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Three Native American South Dakota artists working in the visual arts also were named in the Traditional and Folk Art Category. **Viola Colombe** of Mission, S.D., was born at the Klamath Indian Agency in Oregon and is an enrolled member of the Modoc Tribe in Oklahoma. Her home for the last 40 years has been on the Rosebud Sioux (Sicangu Lakota) Reservation in south-central South Dakota. Colombe creates star quilts that reflect the Modoc, Klamath and Lakota traditions but that are also unique to her own impulses.

Kevin Pourier of Scenic, S.D., is Oglala Lakota. He uses the buffalo horn in his work by carving and inlaying designs made of crushed stones and shells in the Northern

Plains style. His main focus is buffalo horn spoons. The designs and subject matter he carves center on the human condition of Native people. Pourier's creations are in several collections, including those of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, and his work is currently featured in the touring group exhibit of New York's Museum of Art and Design, "Changing Hands II: Art Without Reservation."

Another Oglala Lakota artist, **Dwayne Wilcox** of Rapid City, S.D., uses art to document contemporary Lakota life through the tradition of ledger drawings. A self-taught artist, he has researched Lakota ledger drawings at the Smithsonian Institute. Wilcox's work has been featured at the Santa Fe Indian Market, the Heard Museum in Phoenix and, for the past ten years, at the Northern Plains Tribal Art Market, where he has received numerous awards. Currently his work is featured in a group show, *Impacted Nations*, which is traveling for two years throughout the United States.

The new artist fellows were selected by national preliminary and final panels of working artists, educators and curators of arts organizations from outside the Foundation's region. The final selection panelists included:

- Hal Cannon, founding director of the Western Folklife Center, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- James Bau Graves, ethnomusicologist, executive director of the Jefferson Center, Roanoke, Va.
- Mary Jane Jacob, independent curator, professor and chair, department of sculpture, School of The Art Institute of Chicago, Ill.
- Jorge Merced, associate artistic director, Pregones Theater, Bronx, N.Y.
- Bently Spang, performance and visual artist, Billings, Mont.

Begun in 1976, the Bush Artist Fellows Program selects up to 15 fellows each year from artists living in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and parts of northwestern Wisconsin. The program provides grants to artists who may apply in eight categories which rotate on a two-year cycle, including visual arts (two and three dimensional), choreography/multimedia/performance art-storytelling, traditional and folk arts, literature, music composition, script works and film/video.

The Bush Foundation supports artists whose work reflects the region's diverse geographic, racial and aesthetic communities; the Bush Artists Fellows Program is one of few such programs in the country. Artists may be at any stage in their life's work and may use the fellowship in a variety of ways—to explore new directions, continue work already in progress and accomplish work without financial worries. For more information about the program visit www.bushfoundation.org.

The Bush Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life in its geographic region by grantmaking that helps strengthen organizational, community and individual leadership. It was established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth. In addition to the fellowships offered for artists, physicians and leaders, the Bush Foundation makes grants to organizations in the areas of arts and humanities, ecological health, education, and health and human services.

2006 BUSH ARTIST FELLOWS

Choreography/Multimedia/Performance Art-Storytelling

Susana di Palma—Minneapolis, Minn.
Christopher Lutter-Gardella—Ashland, Wis.
David Mann—Minneapolis, Minn.
Leah Nelson—Minneapolis, Minn.
Otto Ramstad—Minneapolis, Minn.

Visual Arts: Three Dimensional

Chris Larson—St. Paul, Minn.

Visual Arts: Two Dimensional

Ernest A. Bryant, III—Minneapolis, Minn.
Angela Strassheim—Minneapolis, Minn.

Traditional and Folk Arts

Loeung Bun—St. Paul, Minn.
Viola Colombe—Mission, S. Dak.
Dick Hensold—St. Paul, Minn.
Paddy O'Brien—St. Paul, Minn.
Kevin Pourier—Scenic, S. Dak.
Nirmala Rajasekar—Plymouth, Minn.
Dwayne Wilcox—Rapid City, S. Dak.

2006 SELECTION PANEL MEMBERS

Choreography/Multimedia/Performance Art-Storytelling—Preliminary Panel

Ellen Bromberg, multidisciplinary artist, Associate Professor, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT
Jorge Merced, Associate Artistic Director, Pregones Theater, Bronx, NY
Jon Spelman, storyteller, Silver Spring, MD

Visual Arts: Three Dimensional—Preliminary Panel

Kathryn Kanjo, Executive Director, Artpace, San Antonio, TX
Jim Melchert, artist, educator, Oakland, CA
Bently Spang, performance and visual artist, Billings, MT
Karen Tsujimoto, Senior Curator of Art, Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA

Visual Arts: Two Dimensional—Preliminary Panel

Michael Ray Charles, artist, Associate Professor, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Mary Jane Jacob, independent curator, Professor and Chair, Department of Sculpture, School of The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Linda Lomahaftewa, artist, educator, Sante Fe, NM
Eileen Neff, artist, Philadelphia, PA

Traditional and Folk Arts—Preliminary Panel

Hal Cannon, Founding Director of the Western Folklife Center, Salt Lake City, UT
Rachelle H. Saltzman, Folklife Coordinator, Iowa Arts Council, Des Moines, IA
Alexandra Swaney, Director of Folklife Programs, Montana Arts Council, Helena, MT

Final Panel

Hal Cannon, Founding Director of the Western Folklife Center, Salt Lake City, UT
James Bau Graves, ethnomusicologist, Executive Director of Jefferson Center, Roanoke, VA
Mary Jane Jacob, independent curator, Professor and Chair, Department of Sculpture, School of The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Jorge Merced, Associate Artistic Director, Pregones Theater, Bronx, NY
Bently Spang, performance and visual artist, Billings, MT

2006 BUSH ARTIST FELLOWS PROGRAM—PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

ELLEN BROMBERG, a 2006 Guggenheim Fellow, has been creating dances for more than 30 years. Her work has been funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Soros Foundation, and the Arizona Commission on the Arts among others. Awards include two Bay Area Isadora Duncan Dance Awards, a Bonnie Bird North American Choreography Award, and a PEW/UCLA National Dance Media Fellowship. Her video works have been broadcast nationally on PBS, and have been screened at numerous national and international dance film festivals. She is currently on the faculty of the University of Utah's Department of Modern Dance where she is the founding director of the International Dance for the Camera Festival.

HAL CANNON is the founding director of the Western Folklife Center and its Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada. He has published a dozen books and recordings on the folk arts of the West, and has received three Wrangler Awards from the Cowboy Hall of Fame, the 1998 Will Rogers Lifetime Achievement Award, the American Folklore Society's Botkin Award, and both the Arts and Humanities Governor Awards in Utah. He currently directs Media Programs for the Center and, along with producer Taki Telonidis, completed an Emmy Award-winning TV documentary, *Why the Cowboy Sings*, that aired on PBS. The team also produces regular features for NPR's "Weekend Edition Sunday," including their regular radio series called, "What's in a Song."

MICHAEL RAY CHARLES creates graphically styled paintings that investigate racial stereotypes drawn from a history of American advertising, product packaging, billboards, radio jingles, and television commercials. Charles draws comparisons between Sambo, Mammy, and minstrel images of an earlier era and contemporary mass-media portrayals of black youths, celebrities, and athletes—images he sees as a constant in the American subconscious. Caricatures of African-American experience, such as Aunt Jemima, are represented in his work as ordinary depictions of blackness, yet are stripped of the benign aura that lends them an often unquestioned appearance of truth. Born in Louisiana, Charles received an M.F.A. from the University of Houston and teaches at the University of Texas at Austin.

JAMES BAU GRAVES, currently executive director of the Jefferson Center, in Roanoke, Virginia, is co-founder of the Center for Cultural Exchange in Maine, where he worked in close collaboration with community groups and artists to address grassroots cultural aspirations, questions of identity, and social/financial power relations. Graves has won awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wallace Foundation, the Americans for the Arts' Animating Democracy program, the Rockefeller Foundation, and many others. He has performed and recorded with several jazz and traditional music ensembles, and composed original scores for projects with dancer/director Ann Carlson. Graves holds a master's degree in ethnomusicology from Tufts University and has published essays in both the academic and popular press. His book, *Cultural Democracy*, was published in 2005 by the University of Illinois Press.

MARY JANE JACOB is adjunct professor and chair of sculpture at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. A frequent lecturer and contributor to museum catalogues and books, she received a B.F.A. in history of art from the University of Florida, Gainesville. After study in Florence, Italy, she attended the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she received an M.A. in history of art and museum studies. She is a recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio Study Center Residency, The School of the Art Institute, Roger Brown Residency, and Getty Residency Program at Bard College, New York.

KATHRYN KANJO is the executive director of Artpace San Antonio in Texas where she oversees the International Artist-in-Residence program and coordinates shows for the center's temporary exhibition space, the Hudson (Show) Room. Prior to joining Artpace, Kanjo served as curator of contemporary art at the Portland Art Museum in Oregon and associate curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego. As a curator, Kanjo has organized numerous exhibitions including one-person shows of artists John Pilson, Daniela Rossell, Nancy Rubins, and Diana Thater, among others.

LINDA LOMAHAFTEWA, *Hopi/Choctaw*, has lived the majority of her life close to her home and community in the Southwest. Over the past 35 years Lomahaftewa has received numerous awards for excellence in painting and printmaking. Her works are represented in public collections including American Indian Historical Society (San Francisco), Center for Arts of Indian America (Washington, D. C.), University of Lethbridge, Native Studies Department (Alberta, Canada), and the City of Phoenix, Native American Art Collection. Since 1976 she has served as professor of painting and drawing at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. Lomahaftewa earned her B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute.

JIM MELCHERT is a visual artist best known for his work in fired clay. He holds academic degrees in art history, painting, and decorative arts from Princeton, the University of Chicago and the University of California at Berkeley (UCB), respectively. Now professor of art emeritus at UCB, he is also a past director of the Visual Arts Program at the National Endowment for the Arts and a past director of the American Academy in Rome.

JORGE MERCED, associate artistic director of Bronx-based Pregones Theater, directs the company's Asunción Playwrights Project, a national competition and reading series for Latino writers addressing issues of sexuality and queer identity for which he was awarded a HOLA Hispanic Actors Award in 2004. Other distinctions include the ACE Hispanic Critics Award, the Bronx Council on the Arts BRIO Artist Fellowship, and the Puerto Rican Institute of New York's Distinguished Actor/Director Award. Outside of Pregones, he has performed with choreographers Eduardo Alegría, Arthur Avilés, and director Pablo Cabrera, among others. Merced is a graduate of the City College-CUNY Department of Theatre and International Theater School in Cuba.

EILEEN NEFF is a photographer, installation artist and writer based in Philadelphia. Her work explores the boundaries between the image and its object and has been exhibited widely, including at The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Institute of Contemporary Art and Vox Populi (Philadelphia), and Artists Space (New York). She is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Pew Fellowship in the Arts and a Leeway Foundation grant; she is represented by the Locks Gallery in Philadelphia.

RACHELLE H. SALTZMAN, Ph.D., folklife coordinator for the Iowa Arts Council/ Department of Cultural Affairs, has worked in the field of public folklore at private nonprofit and state agencies since 1982. The recipient of grants from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture to study place-based food in Iowa, she works with a variety of communities and individuals to provide assistance with multicultural and diversity issues, project development, event planning and implementation, presentation of traditional arts and artists, grant writing, and curriculum content. Saltzman has contributed to numerous publications including the *Journal of American Folklore*; *Anthropological Quarterly*; *Journal of Folklore Research*; *New York Folklore*; and *Southern Folklore*, *Southern Exposure*, among others.

BENTLY SPANG is a multi-disciplinary artist and videomaker who works in site-specific video installation, photography, live performance, and short films; his work deals with issues surrounding his Northern Cheyenne identity. Spang's art is in private and museum exhibits and collections in the U.S. and Europe. He was awarded a Paul Allen Foundation Grant in 2004 for a residency in conjunction with the Techno Powwow Project. In 2003 he received a Woodrow Wilson Foundation: Imagining America grant, and an Outstanding Alumni Award from Montana State University-Billings. Spang also has received artist fellowships from the Creative Capital and the Joan Mitchell Foundations.

JON SPELMAN is a performer, writer, and storyteller whose work has been seen in literally thousands of venues throughout the United States and a dozen other countries. He has been an artist in residence at The Blue Mountain Art Center in New York and at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy. Spelman has developed and performed commissions for the Kennedy Center, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Round House Theatre, the Smithsonian Institution, The Washington Storytellers Theatre, and the National Storytelling Network. In addition to performing,

Spelman also regularly offers keynote programs, school and community residencies, and projects that help communities develop their own stories.

ALEXANDRA SWANEY, director of folklife programs at the Montana Arts Council, was born and reared in Helena, Montana. After a year spent as an exchange student in Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, she attended Mills College in Oakland, California, graduating with a B.A. in history and art. She received a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Colorado after completing field work in Mexico. In Montana, she has worked as a writer-educator for a variety of nonprofit organizations and toured as a pianist-composer for a popular regional jazz quintet. She has served as translator and cultural resource person on many tours to Mexico, Peru, and Bolivia; was assistant professor of anthropology and sociology at Carroll College for two years; and has taught at the University of Great Falls.

KAREN TSUJIMOTO is senior curator of art at the Oakland Museum of California where she has been on staff since 1991. Selected exhibitions she has organized include: *Images Transformed: Pegan Brooke, Mary Campbell, Tina Hulett, Sabina Ott, Lucy Puls* (1992), *The Art of Peter Voukos* (1995/national tour), *Dorothea Lange: Archive of an Artist* (1995), *Transformation: The Art of Joan Brown* (1998), and *The Art of David Ireland: The Way Things Are* (2003/national tour). From 1986 to 1990, Tsujimoto worked as an independent curator in Northern California; from 1971 to 1985 she was on the staff of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She studied at Whittier College in California, and received her B.F.A. from the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.