

Bush Foundation Grants 2003 Artist Fellowships

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St. Paul, Minnesota—The 2003 Bush Artist Fellowships, a program of the Bush Foundation, were announced this week in the areas of literature, music composition, scriptworks, and film/video. Eleven artists from the Twin Cities Metro area, one from Northfield, Minnesota, and three from South Dakota received the Bush Fellowships which recognize the artists' potential and contribution to their communities, as well as grant them substantial financial support to continue and expand their work. The fifteen selected artists will each receive \$44,000 over a 12 to 18 month period.

Video and film artists selected include David Ryan of Northfield, Minnesota, who is an assistant professor at St. Olaf College. His experimental work "focuses on the border zones of conscious experience." He is currently interested in the role of sound in the context of montage. Jenny Lion, of St. Paul, is currently working on an experimental film that explores false memories, botanical diseases, banana republics, and ways to recount the past. She recently edited a book on Canadian experimental video for the University of Minnesota Press and the Walker Art Center. Liza Davich from Minnetonka has been experimenting with the documentary form. Her most recent video, Victory Square, has been shown at the Montreal Film Festival and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Film Festival where it tied for first place in the Best of Fest audience poll.

Among the St. Paul artists selected were three writers with Asian backgrounds, two Hmong and one Chinese. Mai Neng Moua writes non-fiction and is the founder and editor of Paj Ntaub Voice, a Hmong literary arts journal and editor of the first Hmong American literary anthology, Bamboo Among the Oaks. She plans to write a memoir and improve her abilities to teach writing and poetry to inner city youth. Ka Vang, a non-fiction writer and playwright is interested in magic realism narratives, where "plausible everyday events blend with fantastic ones." She is influenced by traditional Hmong storytellers

a poet whose roots are deep in Chinese poetry. She moved to the United States 17 years ago and has since experimented in her poetry with the weaving of two cultures, two languages and two poetic traditions. Wang's newest poems focus on the female body and she is planning to write a series of poems which employ visual images.

David Treuer from Minneapolis and Lee Roripaugh from Vermillion, South Dakota also received Fellowships for their writing. Treuer, the author of two books, writes fiction focusing on Native American themes and Roripaugh, a poet, explores issues surrounding her childhood growing up half Japanese in Laramie, Wyoming and other Japanese-American themes.

Four composers whose music spans the breadth of musical expression were chosen by the Bush Foundation and include Tellef Johnson from Brookings, South Dakota who incorporates unusual instruments, such as rock guitars and steel drums into his orchestral compositions; Philip Blackburn from St. Paul, who calls himself a "sound sculptor" and reclaims and incorporates everyday sounds into his compositions; Michelle Kinney, a cellist from Minneapolis who composes improvisational, new-music, "art" songs, fusing her love of poetry and music, and Minneapolis composer J.D. Steele, whose musical styles include jazz, gospel, R&B and pop. Steele was the director and performer in the musical, *Gospel at Colonus* that originated at the Walker Art Center and eventually performed on Broadway. Steele plans to use his fellowship to sponsor a musical education program for young people and to develop a new musical for the stage.

Three playwrights received fellowships this year, including Kevin Kling of Minneapolis. A playwright, storyteller, actor and radio commentator, Kling's work focuses on the Upper Midwest. Vincent Delaney, from St. Paul, centers his work on "the fusion of the personal and political." For example, his most recent plays are based on declassified FBI files. Adelaide MacKenzie Fuss, from Black Hawk, South Dakota, has received commissions from theaters in Los Angeles and New York City. She expects to write a new play during her fellowship based on scientific ideas that originated from the 20th century American immigrant, Nikola Tesla.

The 15 artists who received fellowships were among a group of 475 applicants and were selected by national panels of working artists from outside of Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Wisconsin. The final selection panel included:

- Anthony Davis, composer, Professor of Music, University of California, San Diego, California

- Erik Ehn, playwright, Theater faculty, California Institute of the Arts, Greenbrae, California
- Boo Frobels, Artistic Director, Galapagos Art Space; producer, Performance on 42nd at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Altria, New York, New York
- Yvonne Rainer, film/videomaker, choreographer, New York, New York
- Shawn Wong, fiction writer, professor of English, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Begun in 1976, the Bush Artists Fellows Program selects up to 15 fellows each year from artists living in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and parts of western Wisconsin. Grants are made in seven categories, which rotate on a two year cycle and include visual arts, two dimensional; visual arts, three dimensional; choreography/ multimedia/performance art-storytelling; literature; music composition; scriptworks; and film/video. A traditional and folk arts category will be added for the 2004 round of fellowships.

The Bush Foundation supports artists whose work reflects the region's diverse geographic, racial and aesthetic communities and is one of a 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, or accomplish work without financial worries. They can use the time to travel, learn, or reflect about their work.

The Bush Foundation is a grantmaker that improves the quality of life in its communities by supporting individuals and organizations that make a difference. It was established by 3M executive Archibald Bush in 1953. Across its grantmaking programs and in a variety of ways, the Foundation has a special interest in creating opportunities for people who may lack them. In addition to Fellowships offered for art, leadership, and physicians, the Bush Foundation makes grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and human services, and ecological health.