

GREATER BALTIMORE CULTURAL ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES 2017 RUBYS GRANTS IN LITERARY AND VISUAL ARTS

Baltimore, October 3, 2017 – The Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA) is thrilled to announce the nine artists selected for 2017 Rubys Artist Project Grants in literary arts and visual arts. This grantee cohort represents innovative artistic practices in poetry, fiction, memoir, installation, painting, puppetry, and performance. The Rubys Artist Project Grants were conceived in 2013 and initiated with start-up funding from the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation. In 2017, the Rubys is pleased to have additional support from the Aegon Transamerica Foundation.

The 2017 Rubys grantees in Literary Arts and Visual Arts are:



M. Saida Agostini (Baltimore): to support *uprisings in a state of joy*, a collection of poems that meditates on the cost of freedom and joy found in liberation as located within Afro-Guyanese, immigrant, and Black queer history.



Oletha DeVane (Ellicott City): to support an international commission in which the artist will create a mosaic in the public plaza of Camp Coq, Haiti.



Elizabeth Evitts Dickinson (Baltimore): to support work on *The Grace and the Torment*, a memoir that uses the artist's grandmother's suicide at age 48 to explore the nature of inheritance, family history, and the consequences that long-held secrets and trauma can have across generations.



Celeste Doaks (Baltimore): to support a collection of historical poems that reflect on the life of Mary Ellen Pleasant, also known as Mammy Pleasant, who is noted as an extraordinary 19th century entrepreneur and mother of the West Coast early civil rights movement.



Tiffany Lange (Baltimore): to support *The Shoestring Project*, a series of vignettes that use puppets and crafted scenes to illustrate personal responses to modern issues and locally relevant topics.



Ada Pinkston (Baltimore): to support *Landmarked*, a performative intervention and installation about historical landmarks, monuments, and their relationship to contemporary community.



Kate Reed Petty (Baltimore): to support *Practice Losing Faster*, a novel about a woman who helps evacuate her hometown after a catastrophic flood and, in the process, confronts her own submerged memories—as well as larger themes of collective guilt, grief, and climate change.



Ernest Shaw and Kenneth Morrison (Baltimore): to support an interdisciplinary project that will create portraits, poetry, and record interviews to explore the complexity of Black manhood.

"Baltimore's creatives make our city a rich, diverse, and amazing place to live and work. We started the Rubys in 2013 to support and empower all types of artists to set ambitious goals and to receive the resources necessary to bring them to life. Our city benefits as a whole when arts and culture, and those who make it, are able to succeed," says Robert W. Deutsch Foundation president Jane Brown.

The Rubys continue to invest in artists, ideas, and creative outcomes," says Jeannie Howe, executive director of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance. "GBCA is grateful to its talented and thoughtful jurors and to the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation for their vision and support of this program."

The 2017 Rubys jury panels for media arts and performing arts were comprised of the following esteemed professionals:

- Charles E. Bethea, director of collections and exhibitions, Reginald F. Lewis Museum (Baltimore)
- Teri Cross Davis, poet, poetry coordinator, Folger Shakespeare Library (D.C.)
- Amanda Jiron-Murphy, gallery director, Hamiltonian Gallery (D.C.)
- Amber Johnson, artist, activist, founder of The Justice Fleet, assistant professor of communications, St. Louis University (St. Louis)
- Nate Larson, photographer (Baltimore)
- Christine Lincoln, writer, poet, poet laureate emeritas (York, PA)
- Christopher Stackhouse, writer, artist, curator (NYC)
- Hawona Sullivan Janzen, poet, Gallery Curator and Special Projects Coordinator, University of Minnesota Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (Minneapolis)
- Dan Vera, poet, editor, author (D.C.)
- Melissa Wyse, writer, founder, Idlewild Writers Retreat (Baltimore)

The Rubys Artist Project Grants were conceived and initiated with start-up funding from the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation and are a program of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance. In 2017, the Rubys is also supported with a grant from the Aegon Transamerica Foundation.



The Rubys Artist Project Grant program was established in 2013 to support the region's gems - the local creative community of performing, visual, media and literary artists. Created with the vision and initial funding from the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation, the Rubys provide meaningful project support directly to artists. The Rubys were inspired in part by Ruby Lerner, the visionary founder of Creative Capital in New York City. <http://baltimoreculture.org/rubys>

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/

The Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA) nurtures and promotes a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable arts and cultural community essential to the region's quality of life. GBCA aims to promote the region's creative sector and significantly increase artists' and organizations' capacity to do great work. <http://baltimoreculture.org/>

Through a combination of financial grants and the volunteer commitment of our employees, the **Aegon Transamerica Foundation** supports non-profit organizations focused on the education, health and well-being of the communities where we live and work.

<https://www.transamerica.com/>

Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance
120 W. North Avenue, Suite 305
Baltimore, MD 21201
Tel. 410-230-0200 / <http://baltimoreculture.org>

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