Foundations invest $204,800 to support region's artists

PITTSBURGH, Pa., May 7, 2015 – The Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation have awarded grants totaling $204,800 to 13 artists and organizations during the fourth funding cycle of *Investing in Professional Artists,* a program jointly sponsored by the foundations.

Applications to the program were received from 161 individuals and organizations from 22 cities and towns across six counties in southwestern Pennsylvania. A peer review process with regional and national experts from a variety of artistic disciplines considered applications and recommended grants to 10 artists and three organizations based on work quality and the potential of the proposed project to advance an artist's career. Grantees include established and emerging artists working in visual arts, multimedia, dance, music, theater and literature. A complete list of grants appears below.

"We are excited that in its fourth year, interest in the program continues to increase," said Janet Sarbaugh, senior program director for Arts and Culture at The Heinz Endowments. "We are proud of the quality of the work being produced by the region's artists."

Investing in Professional Artists is a multi-year program whose goals are to support creative development of professional artists; create career advancement and recognition opportunities for artists; encourage creative partnerships between artists and local organizations; and increase the visibility of working artists in the region's cultural life.

"The work of individual artists is the creative life-blood of any community's artistic and cultural environment," said Maxwell King, president and CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation. "Nothing adds more energy and resiliency to the culture of a community than the artistry of the individual. This program helps us ensure that we don't miss the extraordinary contributions that artists can offer."

National Panelists included John Columbus, founder and director emeritus of the Black Maria Film Festival; Sidra Bell, artistic director of Sidra Bell Dance New York; Christopher Hahn, general director of Pittsburgh Opera; Karyn Olivier, visual artist and associate professor of sculpture at Tyler School of Art; Julie Rodrigues Widholm, curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago; Ed Herendeen, founder of the Contemporary American Theater Festival in Shepherdstown, W.V.; and Gwydion Suilebhan, a Washington, D.C.-based writer and theater maker.

Regional Panelists included Yona Harvey, literary artist and assistant professor in the Writing Program at the University of Pittsburgh; Attilio "Buck" Favorini, playwright and emeritus professor at the University of Pittsburgh; Matthew Day, curator and host of the Pittsburgh Film Kitchen series at Pittsburgh Filmmakers; Akiko Kotani, visual artist; Darrell Kinsel, visual artist and co-founder of BOOM Concepts Art Gallery; Seth Beckman, dean and professor of the Mary Pappert School of Music at Duquesne University; and Staycee Pearl, founding artistic director of PearlArts Studios | STAYCEE PEARL dance project.

New applications for grants to be awarded in 2016 will be accepted later this year. More information is available at http://pittsburghfoundation.org/region_artists_program.

2015 Investing in Professional Artists Grant Recipients

Creative Development Grants:

Gab Cody ($10,000) to support the completion of "Inside Passage," a non-traditional documentary and live performance event.

Corey Escoto ($10,000) to support the development of a body of artworks that explores the use of discontinued Polaroid film.

Edda L. Fields-Black, PhD ($10,000) to support the development of "The Requiem for Rice," a creative nonfiction literary work.

Federico Garcia-De Castro, PhD ($10,000) to support the creation of professional recordings of four catalog pieces.

Brett Kashmere ($10,000) to support the production of "Ghosts of Empire," a feature-length experimental documentary.

Kenneth Love ($10,000) to support the creation of a 3D version of "The Letter Press," a documentary about the letterpress and the pressmen who operated them.

William Lychack ($10,000) to support research and revision of "Wiesara," a novel based on the author's experiences as a Buddhist monk in Burma.

William Shannon ($10,000) to support the development of "StayUp," a dance project that explores the personal movement patterns of individuals with disabilities.

Philip Thompson, PhD ($10,000) to support studio recordings of compositions performed by IonSound Project.

Alisha Wormsley ($9,800) to support the creation of new sculptural works for the "There are Black People in the Future" project.

Residencies at Arts Organizations:

Alia Musica Pittsburgh ($35,000) to support an artist residency with composer/performer Ken Ueno.

City of Asylum Pittsburgh ($35,000) to support an artist residency with French director Pascal Rambert.

Pittsburgh Filmmakers ($35,000) to support an artist residency with visual artist and director of site-specific performances, Jennifer Nagle Myers.