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NEWS RELEASE

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage Announces Over \$10.5 Million for Philadelphia Artists, Organizations

41 new grants fund performances, exhibitions, events, and artistic practices that explore important personal perspectives and societal issues

PHILADELPHIA (Oct. 21, 2020)—The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage (the Center) announced 41 grants today in support of the Philadelphia region’s artists and cultural organizations for exceptional programs, events, and artistic work. The 2020 awards total more than \$10.5 million, \$1.6 million of which is provided as unrestricted general operating support for the 29 project grant recipients, and \$900,000 of which goes to 12 individual artists as Pew Fellowships.

“At this moment of acute challenge precipitated by COVID-19, our grants represent a steadfast belief in the resilience of the Philadelphia region’s cultural community and the abiding importance of the arts in civic life,” said Paula Marincola, the Center’s executive director. “These grants affirm and bolster the cultural sector in continuing its essential work: nurturing creative practice and presenting innovative public programs that deeply connect us to one another as they illuminate diverse personal experiences and some of today’s most pressing issues.”

The funded projects range from operas and plays to exhibitions and community-based installations that will engage broad and varied audiences throughout the region. Many will focus on historically underrepresented perspectives, including those of Black, Latino, Native American, and other artists of color, as well as women, people with disabilities, immigrants, and cultures from around the world. Several works will highlight unique narratives and important societal issues, including historical and modern-day stories from a variety of Philadelphia’s communities, the history and progress of social justice movements, and the human impact on nature and the environment. Others will offer new interpretations of classic productions.

Programs will be designed for both in-person and digital experiences as artists and organizations continue to adapt to evolving pandemic-related public health and safety guidelines. Each project grant recipient receives an additional 20% in unrestricted funds, on top of the award, to be used at each organization’s discretion.

Following is a partial list of artists, projects, and organizations receiving awards; a full list of grantees is available at pewcenterarts.org/2020grants.

Pew Fellowships provide unrestricted awards of \$75,000 to individual artists from all disciplines. This year’s Fellows are artists working in music, performance, visual art, film, poetry, and writing. Ten of the

artists live and work in Philadelphia. The Pew Fellows-in-Residence program, now in its second year, brings two artists from outside the region to live, work, and embed themselves in the city's vibrant arts scene for a year. Among the Fellows are:

- **Jacob Cooper**, who blends classical and popular music influences in compositions that often draw from traditionally religious repertoire.
- **Jesse Harrod**, whose interdisciplinary work encompasses sculpture, painting, and stop-motion animation to represent experiences of gender, sexuality, and disability.
- **Jaamil Olawale Kosoko**, whose performance works incorporate elements of dance, music, poetry, and visual art to explore Black and queer identity.
- **Airea D. Matthews**, whose poetry challenges conventional poetic forms to consider how language can shape perceptions of the self, shared histories, and assumed notions of Blackness.
- Fellows-in-Residence **Raven Chacon**, a composer and sound artist working in Albuquerque, New Mexico and the Navajo Nation, whose compositions combine contemporary chamber music with self-made electronic and acoustic instruments; and **Rhodessa Jones**, a theater artist from San Francisco whose five-decade body of work tells the stories of women, particularly women of color and incarcerated individuals. Chacon will investigate Philadelphia's experimental music scene and Indigenous histories while creating new musical work, and Jones will hold workshops and in-progress readings as she develops a new solo performance and a book on theater creation for incarcerated women.

Project grants are awarded to cultural institutions in amounts up to \$400,000, plus an additional 20% in general operating support, bringing the maximum grant to \$480,000. This year's list includes:

- A collaboration between two historic Philadelphia museums—the **African American Museum in Philadelphia** (AAMP) and the **Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts** (PAFA)—that will commission and present the works of 30 contemporary artists to address the inequities of American art history and its curation, and the necessary steps institutions must take to create more equitable, inclusive, and accessible museum spaces. The project takes inspiration from the metaphor of the rising sun as framed by both Benjamin Franklin—who in 1787 asked whether the sun was rising or setting on the United States—and James Weldon Johnson, who wrote in his 1900 song "Lift Every Voice and Sing" about "facing the rising sun of our new day begun." PAFA will empty its museum, built in 1876, of its permanent collection to dedicate the entire space to this joint effort, while AAMP will give artists unprecedented access to its collection and will display new works throughout the museum and surrounding outdoor spaces.
- Performances and multimedia installations that spotlight the distinctive work and perspectives of artists and communities of color, including a major indoor and outdoor exhibition at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** that will explore 30 years of contemporary South Korean art; a sound-based installation by **Nathan Young** at **Pennsbury Manor** that will connect listeners to the Delaware Tribe of Indians' heritage and relationship with the environment while re-examining colonial history; a program led by **Fleisher Art Memorial** designed to share Indonesian and Venezuelan culture through a variety of events in South Philadelphia; and expansive solo exhibitions of influential Black film and media artists **Terence Nance**, organized by **BlackStar Projects**, and **Ulysses Jenkins**, presented by the **Institute of Contemporary Art**.

- Programs that address environmental issues, such as a large-scale sculptural work commissioned by the **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society** to be installed at Awbury Arboretum and complemented by a series of public events that will raise awareness of how trees can combat the effects of climate change in urban communities; a presentation by **Arcadia Exhibitions** of a contemporary opera set on an artificial beach full of swimsuit-clad singers who ponder ecological concerns; an immersive audio-based exhibition from the **Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University** that will combine storytelling and music with the scientific study of water; and a new choral work, to be performed at a Bucks County farm by **The Crossing**, that will convey family farmers' personal stories and examine the ways in which modern food production shapes the environment.
- Projects that showcase the work of women artists, such as an exhibition by **The Barnes Foundation** examining French painter **Suzanne Valadon's** underrecognized contributions to early 20th-century art; a **University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design** exhibit offering the first major exploration of architect **Minerva Parker Nichols'** contributions to Philadelphia's architectural landscape at the turn of the 20th century; and a collaboration between **Pig Iron Theatre Company** and filmmaker, writer, and director **Josephine Decker** focusing on experiences of pregnancy and motherhood.
- New interpretations of classic theater, including **Theatre Horizon's** large-scale production inspired by Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," which will draw on community stories from Norristown, Pennsylvania, and will be staged outdoors with both professional and resident actors; and **The Wilma Theater's** adaptation of "The Cherry Orchard," which will offer a modern-day view of Anton Chekhov's 1903 masterpiece through the perspective of a contemporary Russian director, **Dmitry Krymov**.
- Art and archives-based exhibitions and public programs that shed light on lesser-known histories, including public art installations informed by the **Philadelphia City Archives** that will illustrate how a Philadelphia neighborhood once known as the 7th Ward was an important center for Black culture; a community-based storytelling project that will interpret the history and ongoing impact of the institutionalization of people with disabilities, presented by the **Institute on Disabilities at Temple University**; and an exhibition at the **Free Library of Philadelphia** that will investigate Philadelphia's history of resistance and civic action through materials held in the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries.

About The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage is a multidisciplinary grantmaker and hub for knowledge-sharing, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and dedicated to fostering a vibrant cultural community in Greater Philadelphia. The Center invests in ambitious, imaginative, and catalytic work that showcases the region's cultural vitality and enhances public life, and it engages in an exchange of ideas concerning artistic and interpretive practice with a broad network of cultural practitioners and leaders. For more information, visit pewcenterarts.org.