

Meet the 2021 Kresge Artist Fellows and Gilda Award Recipients

The creatives will be honored during a virtual ceremony this Thursday
Lauren Wethington - July 13, 2021

On July 15, Kresge Arts in Detroit will honor its 2021 Artist Fellows and Gilda Award Recipients during a virtual awards ceremony. The 20 fellows and 10 Gilda Award recipients were chosen by a panel of local and national artists from a pool of over 800 applicants.

The fellowship strives to support established artists who show a consistent track record of artistic achievement along with potential to enhance or impact the communities of metro Detroit, while the Gilda Awards recognize new, up-and-coming artists who demonstrate exceptional creative potential. Each year, Kresge Arts in Detroit, **which is funded by the Kresge Foundation and administered by the College for Creative Studies**, awards \$25,000 to each fellow and \$5,000 to each Gilda Award recipient.

Thursday's awards ceremony — which you can snag free tickets to online — kicks off at 8 p.m. and will include performances by past Kresge Artist Fellows Cherise Morris and Passalacqua, along with a moderated panel conversation between Carole Harris, 2015 fellow and 2019 panelist; Rip Rapson, president and CEO of the Kresge Foundation; and Don Tuski, president of College for Creative Studies.

The event will also include remarks from each of the 2021 fellows and award recipients. Before you tune in, learn a bit about each of them below.

2021 Kresge Fellows



Top row (left to right): Jassmine Parks, Rachel Reid, Ann Eskridge, MARS Marshall, and Darcel Deneau. Second row (left to right): B. Van Randall, Andrew "AndyT" Thompson, Emell Derra Adolphus, Zig Zag Claybourne, and Danielle Aubert. Third row (left to right): Peter Daniel

Andrew "AndyT" Thompson (visual arts)

Installation artist, educator, curator, musician, and labor activist Andrew "AndyT" Thompson attained his MFA in sculpture from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2004. A Missouri native, he now resides in southwest Detroit and lectures at the University of Michigan.

Ann Eskridge (literary arts)

As a freelance writer, Ann Eskridge channels her passion for African American history into fiction writing, playwriting, and screenwriting. Topics of her work include the Underground Railroad, all-Black towns in Oklahoma, and the first Black musical theater.

Van Randall (literary arts)

Comic books and graphic novels that feature lead characters from diverse backgrounds are writer and creator B. Van Randall's specialty. He founded Verse Comics USA in 2017, which has published eight titles to date.

Brian Day (visual arts)

A third-generation Detroit native, Brian Day began exploring Detroit through the camera lens in 2008. His work has been published in *Hour Detroit*, the *Detroit Free Press*, *Scientific American*, *Esquire*, *Smithsonian*, CNN, and other national and local outlets.

Casey Rocheteau (literary arts)

Cape Cod native Casey Rocheteau now resides in a Detroit house they won through the inaugural Write a House permanent residency program. They have released two collections of poems: *Knocked Up on Yes* in 2012 and *The Dozen* in 2016.

Danielle Aubert (literary arts)

Danielle Aubert is the author of *The Detroit Printing Co-op: The Politics of the Joy of Printing* (2019) and co-author of *Thanks for the View, Mr. Mies* (2012), which discusses life in Detroit's Lafayette Park. She currently works as an associate professor of graphic design at Wayne State University.

Darcel Deneau (visual arts)

Using glass and objects found throughout Detroit, Darcel Deneau creates images of the city that evoke feelings of transformation and growth. Last year, her work was recognized as best in show at the Anton Art Center's MI Fine Arts Competition.

Emell Derra Adolphus (literary arts)

Writer, journalist, and LGBTQ rights activist Emell Derra Adolphus has published work in *Hour Detroit*, *Blac Detroit Magazine*, and more. He is currently working on a collection of short stories titled *Five People You Meet in Detroit*.

Gisela McDaniel (visual arts)

As a diasporic indigenous Chamorro artist, Gisela McDaniel's work focuses on healing from sexual trauma — both her own, and that of women and non-binary people at large. She weaves together elements of audio, oil painting, and motion-sensor technology to create interactive pieces that “talk back” to the viewer.

Graem Whyte (visual arts)

Born and raised in metro Detroit, Graem Whyte now resides in Hamtramck and teaches foundry at the College for Creative Studies. His work utilizes a diverse set of mediums including sculpture, architecture, installation, and relational art.

Jasmine Parks (literary arts)

Jasmine Parks is a spoken word poet and slam poetry champion from Detroit and is the lead teaching artist at InsideOut Literary Arts. Her work grapples with abuse, mass incarceration, court-ordered parent-child separation, and other topics relating to the Black feminine experience.

Jeni De La O (literary arts)

Detroit-residing Afro-Cuban poet Jeni De La O has been published by *Wayne State Literary Review*, *Columbia Journal*, *Glass Poetry*, and other outlets. She co-founded the Estuary Collective, an online safe space for budding writers of color, with three other Black femme poets.

Judy Bowman (visual arts)

Judy Bowman's own coming-of-age memories from her formative years in Detroit's east side and Black Bottom neighborhoods serve as the inspiration for her collages. Her work is featured in the institutional collections of the Georgetown University Library as well as the Art Bank Program in Washington, D.C., and the Flint Institute of Art.

Mars Marshall (literary arts)

Born, raised, and based in Detroit, Mars Marshall is a writer and cultural organizer whose work explores themes of desire and longing from the perspective of a Black trans body. Their work has been featured in *Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora*, *Foglifter Journal*, *Gertrude Pass*, and others.

Peter Daniel Bernal (visual arts)

Oil paintings, polychromed ceramics, linoleum prints, and pastels are among the mediums used by Houston, Texas-born artist Peter Daniel Bernal. He has resided in Detroit since 2015, where he has completed multiple murals under the pseudonym Perez.

Rachel Reid (visual arts)

Rachel Reid is a freelance animator and College for Creative Studies graduate who collaborates with several studios and artists in the commercial animation industry. During her time as lead character animator at Gunner Animation, she worked with a team of local illustrators and designers to create professional animations for such clients as Amazon, Etsy, and Facebook.

Sabrina Nelson (visual arts)

A professional artist for over 36 years and an arts administrator at the College for Creative Studies for over 25 years, Sabrina Nelson has shown exhibitions in San Francisco, New York, Paris, and beyond. She identifies as an "artist" whose work reflects the turbulent times she lives in.

Solomon Johnson (visual arts)

In 2015, Solomon Johnson was inspired by his youngest daughter to write a children's story, which eventually blossomed into a four-part series. Johnson is currently illustrating his first children's book, *Daddy, Where Do the Animals on the Train Go?*

Tariq Luthun (literary arts)

Tariq Luthun was born in Detroit to Palestinian Muslim immigrants from Gaza and currently works as a community organizer, data consultant, and Emmy Award-winning poet. His first collection of poems, *HOW THE WATER HOLDS ME*, was named Editors' Choice by Bull City Press.

Zig Zag Claybourne (literary arts)

Zig Zag Claybourne's stories and essays on sci-fi, fandom, and life in general have been featured in *Apex*, *Galaxy's Edge*, *GigaNotosaurus*, and others. His works include *The Brothers Jetstream: Leviathan* and *Afro Puffs Are the Antennae of the Universe*.

Gilda Award Recipients

Top row (left to right): Ijania Cortez, Bakpak Durden, Rochelle Marrett, Cinnamon Triano, and Bayan the Poet. Bottom row (left to right): Neha Vedpathak, Ana Gavrilovska, Donnevan Tolbert, Jessica Frelinghuysen, and Cyrus Karimipour. // Photographs courtesy of Kresge Arts in Detroit

Bayan the Poet (spoken word)

An Algerian-American, Hamtramck-based literary artist, Bayan the Poet is the founder of Writing 4 Freedom, an organization that encourages young artists to get involved in social activism.

Ana Gavrilovska (arts criticism)

As an arts and culture writer, Hamtramck native Ana Gavrilovska combines her passions for music and literature in the form of magazine features, album liner notes, artist bios, and more.

Rochelle Marrett (fiction)

The work of Jamaican fiction writer Rochelle Marrett aims to portray the daily complexities of life as a Black immigrant.

Donnevan Tolbert (playwriting)

Donnevan Tolbert's 2017 play *This Don't Make You Cool* won first place in the Louise Heck-Rabi Scholarship Playwriting Competition.

Ijania Cortez (painting)

In her painting practice, Ijania Cortez creates contemporary, neon-hued portraits of Black men from Detroit's inner city.

Bakpak Durden (painting)

Using oil and acrylic paint, graphite, and fine art photography, Detroit native Bakpak Durden constructs hyper-realistic murals and other works of art.

Jessica Frelinghuysen (performance art)

Jessica Frelinghuysen's participatory art installations have been shown at the Mattress Factory Museum, the Broad Art Museum, and the Art Gallery of Windsor.

Cyrus Karimipour (photography)

A graduate of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Cyrus Karimipour's photographs have been exhibited in galleries across the U.S. as well as in Germany, Austria, Lithuania, and China.

Cinnamon Triano (video art)

Detroit-based documentary filmmaker Cinnamon Triano recently worked as a field producer on the Netflix docu-series *Cheer* and as an associate producer on the horror feature *We Need To Do Something*.

Neha Vedpathak (painting)

The Detroit Institute of Arts commissioned Vedpathak's work, which merges personal and political themes, for its South Asian wing in 2018.

For more information about this year's Kresge Artist Fellows and Gilda Award Recipients, visit kresgeartsindetroit.org. To register for the July 15 virtual ceremony, visit [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).

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