

Samples based on previous years' guidelines and materials, which are subject to change.



2023 Reference Guide Fellowship Awards

Artists can use this reference guide to see how previous Fellowship recipients put together a competitive and successful application.

Application Components

Discipline Statement (50 words or less) describes your artistic practice. It can be as simple as “I am a poet” or give a more detailed explanation of your practice.

Artist Biography (150 words or less or up to 3 minutes of video/audio) tells your story as an artist. It provides details about you and your work, such as where you were born or grew up, your training, career development, accomplishments, or other information that may not be found elsewhere in the application.

Artist Statement (350 words or less or up to 5 minutes of video/audio) is an introduction to your work or a specific body of work. It gives an overview of its concepts, ideas, and themes. It may include information about how your work developed, why you have created it, your vision, influences, and inspirations, your philosophy of art-making, and other details that introduce your work.

Artist Résumé (5 pages or less) is an overview of your professional experience, accomplishments, education, training, and other information about your artistic career. It’s much like a job résumé, except its focus is your art. The résumé must be submitted as a .pdf file.

Impact Statement (150 words or less) explains how this award will make a difference for you. What will the funding and recognition do for you, your work, and your practice? How will you use the money?

Vadon Foundation Native Artist Fellowship documentation (if applicable)

Neely Goniodysky, (she/her), 2022 Fellowship Recipient, Media, King County

Discipline Statement

2D Animator/Director Devoted to Hand-Drawn Frame by Frame Animation

Artist Biography

Her body of work includes video installation, painting, and drawing, with a concentration on animation. Some of Neely's noteworthy productions include "Conception Series Season 2" for the New York Times, "The Smiths" a Seattle University production, and "Pearl" a National Film Board of Canada production. Neely participated in the NWFF residency (2016) and the Rockland residency (2019), the Mary Olson Farm residency (2021). Her interactive video installation "Vacuum" and its storefront gallery set-up was supported by a 4Culture grant (2017). She received a GAP award from Artist Trust, and was a finalist in 2019 for the Artist Trust Innovation Award. Her visual and animation work has also been supported by numerous Canada Council and CALQ grants. Neely's films have been screened at many local and international film festivals, including Local Sightings, SIFF, NW Animation Festival in Portland, Ottawa International Animation Film Festival, Anifilm Czech Republic, Animafest Zagreb, and Encounters, Bristol.

Artist Statement

I am a perpetual outsider. After living in five vastly different cultures--Russia, Israel, Canada, UK, USA--I became acutely aware of my surroundings. My work reflects this experience of looking in from the outside. I explore the all too human experiences of loneliness and aloneness, of longing for and in relationships, of how internal conflicts collide with intrapersonal tensions.

Each of my works builds a visual language that communicates an emotional landscape. These narratives are devised to be felt first and then understood. Having trained in the traditional visual methodologies of painting, drawing, and collage, I explore the limits of these practices.

My work marries the traditions of visual art with new technologies in order to experiment with the possibilities for emotional connection to narrative. For example, in "Vacuum" I use the Microsoft Kinect video depth sensor to generate visuals responding to the audience's activity. Additionally, my piece, "Creak," employs Virtual Reality to manually animate in 3D space while wearing a VR headset. Combining elements of drawing and sculpture, this process creates three dimensional characters and backgrounds composed of gestural brush strokes. This tension between the human desire for embodied connection to the physical and the innovative possibilities of new technologies drives my artistic exploration.

Often, I play with the story structure itself. In "Long-Term Extramarital Affairs" a fragmented narrative with multiple actions happening simultaneously, reflects the multiple viewpoints, needs, and desires of this story.

Reality, and our experience of it, is often multifaceted and fragmented. The quotidian and the nightmare are two sides of a single coin. In part, this comes from the experience of crossing national and linguistic boundaries. But this is also the experience of living the disrupted reality of sleepless motherhood. I express elements of this disrupted reality in "Inhale/Exhale", a film that inverts the genre of guided meditation turning into a nightmare. This reflects and expresses the expectations of new motherhood.

My work explores how contemporary technologies impact our shared experiences and how they can express it. Through a combination of mediums I continually examine the structures that undergird existence and reinvent ways of belonging.

Impact Statement

I have been working on the production of “Long-Term Extramarital Affairs” since 2018 with plans to complete production in 2020. With the onset of Covid-19 I was obliged to shift almost entirely to parenting leaving very little time for commissioned work, let alone personal productions. This past year and a half took a real toll on my practice. It was hard enough adjusting to my “mother/ animator” role in “normal” life, but when Covid came it became infinitely harder. Every day I claw to carve out time to devote to my practice to keep my sense of identity as an artist and keep my production in motion. Receiving this award will allow me to devote more time to my production, with achieving the goal of completing the film in time for the animation festival circuit next summer.

Kamari Bright, (she/they), 2022 Fellowship for Black Artists Recipient, Multidisciplinary, King County

Discipline Statement

I am a videopoet that uses a multidisciplinary approach to employ the medium of language, including videopoetry, poetry, and installation works.

Artist Biography

I am a self-taught creator with a background in psychology. In lieu of an institutional program of artistic study, I've developed my practice by taking courses, watching tutorials, and studying other artists. I have steadily progressed in my artistic identity, beginning first as a poet, and since expanding into other extensions of the written word. This expansion led me to videopoetry and installation. Throughout my artistic journey, I have felt pressure to choose one medium to be taken seriously as a creative. However, moving fluidly through the mediums of my choice has given me the gift of community across the various sects of the art world. These communities keep my imagination unbounded as I progress in my craft. Having grown up in seven states, community has and is an important part of my life and work, as shown by my community involvement since moving to Seattle.

Artist Statement

I am a descendant of Africans kidnapped to America via the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This fact has been a great influence on my artistic practice. I regularly draw from the wealth of narratives, topics, and history within my lineage when creating. My works reflect topics of the interplay between the individual and collective self, the evolution of culture and identity, and existence within perpetual resistance. Many of my earlier works reflected my experience as a Black woman in the United States- ranging from racism, sexism, appropriation, silencing, and erasure. My artistic goal is to further the healing process for myself and others; creating those works allowed me to work through my own traumas resulting from these systems.

Those topics also inspired me to seek out my history before the US. One of the most creatively impactful trips I've taken was to Ghana, West Africa. There is a breadth of pre-enslavement history and culture in Ghana; some groups still tell the stories of "the stolen ones" who were abducted into slavery. This trip brought up questions about the families that were torn apart, the communities that were devastated, and the nations that were crippled as a result of slavery. I wondered how that type of trauma would collectively affect a people. My psychology background drew me to the hypothesis of societal depression. There is a considerable amount of research on how depression manifests individually, but what about communally?

"When You Left Me" resulted from this train of thought. It is a videopoem connecting societal depression and land stewardship. Although the belief that the land is an extension of ourselves has been held by many pre-colonial cultures, there isn't much research on the topic. This project proposes that the body of a society is the land that houses, feeds, and provides for it. And just as lack of hygiene or restlessness may present in a depressed individual- pollution or overexertion of our lands may signify a depressed society. This concept holds special significance as we all grapple with a global pandemic whose effects we've not even begun to see.

Impact Statement

This funding would be the largest amount awarded to me thus far and would mark a period in my evolution where I feel my vision, creativity, and resources are aligned. As an artist, this harmony is crucial in actualizing what I KNOW I am capable of creating. I've previously adjusted my vision to the resources I've had available because I couldn't absorb the cost of self-funding and couldn't risk any lapses in creation consistency as an emerging artist. This funding would allow me to complete my current videopoem project, including the cost of a library residency in Ghana, cultural historian consultations, and production of the videopoem. This specific project signifies a transition in my artist journey, showing growth of conceptualization, forethought, and production. It would set the stage for my next project, a videopoem series examining the role of history, environment, and imagination on personhood.

Arienne True, (any pronouns), 2022 Vadon Foundation Fellowship Award Recipient, Literary, Pierce County

Discipline Statement

I'm a poet who sometimes makes more poem-looking poems, though for the past few years, I've been focused on experimental poetry, and that's what I'm working on now.

Artist Biography

Arienne True (Choctaw, Chickasaw) is a queer poet and folk artist from Seattle. She teaches and mentors with Writers in the Schools (WITS), the Seattle Youth Poet Laureate program, and the Young Writers Cohort. Arienne has received fellowships from Jack Straw and the Hugo House and is a proud alum of Hedgebrook and of the MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts. She is currently the Seattle Repertory Theater's first Native Artist-in-Residence, where she's completing her first manuscript, exhibits, and adapting it into an immersive live installation that will be open to the public. She lives in Tacoma, Washington.

Artist Statement

I've ended up as a poet who makes experimental long-form works and more traditional individual poems that collect around the edges. Right now, I'm working on two book-length projects. One, exhibits, I'm in the home stretch of, and I'll be finishing it over the next couple of months, partly thanks to an artist residency from Seattle Repertory Theater. The other project I'm working on doesn't have a name yet, but I've been calling it the boarding school project when I talk about it. That one explores connections between current (dismal) realities for Natives and Native children (like this kid right here) and the history of Indian boarding schools, and how those cycles repeat in new manifestations of the same old oppressions. That project is structured like a fugue (from music) and I have some ideas about having half of it printed upside down to work with the two current speakers in the book, but there's still a lot to write with that one.

I started in slam poetry and was part of slam and page poetry communities for about ten years before I committed to writing book-length things. I've spent meaningful time in a lot of other arts communities, including film, theater, ritual art, dance, music, photography, and comics, and all of these have huge impacts on how I write. I've also been really influenced by working in experiential education, and that's probably part of why my poetry leanings have gotten so weird: I'm really curious about ways to create an embodied experience for a reader just using the space of the page, and sometimes that means some weird craft choices. I love it, and I get a lot of ideas from other artists in any discipline who are experimenting within their form or pushing/melding genres.

As an artist, I also want to help folks feel like they can access experimental or avant-garde work, because even though it gets billed as an elite thing, I whole-heartedly believe it's for the people, even folks who don't consider themselves artsy. I think a lot about how to guide readers through unfamiliar territory.

Impact Statement

A lot of my work is teaching poetry to middle and high school students, sometimes in public school classrooms and sometimes in dedicated youth groups with students who are already into poetry. I give my students full focus and a lot of energy when I'm teaching, and I wouldn't give anything less, but because I have a lot of chronic illness, there's not much left for me afterwards and my writing often has to take a backseat for months at a time. I'd use the funding from this fellowship to reduce my contracts (I could work about a third less) and finish my second book project, the Indian boarding school one. The recognition is also helpful since I'm in the middle of really launching my writing career outside my writing communities, so this would give me momentum both in my writing itself and in establishing myself as an artist.

Darrell McKinney Jr., (he/him) 2022 Greg & Larry Yocom Fellowship Recipient, Multidisciplinary, Pierce County

Discipline Statement

Artist designer seeking to tell stories about people, place, and history through objects and space.

Artist Biography

Darrell McKinney, a resident of Pierce county for twenty years, is a Washington-based interdisciplinary artist. He received a Master of Design from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and his BA from the University of Washington. His work has been featured in exhibitions at EXPO (Chicago) and internationally at Salone Del Mobile (Milan), Spazio Rossana Orlandi, and the Venice Architecture Biennale. He was the recipient of fellowships and awards such as the A Tale of Today Emerging Artist Fellowship for the Richard H. Driehaus Museum (2019) and the Design Council Award (2018).

His practice explores the intersections across design, art, and architecture. The work speaks to how design can be utilized to explore the complexities of politics, race, and social infrastructure through the interconnectedness of history, people, and places.

Artist Statement

My practice lies in objects and the built environment. My background in design informs my practice and the lens through which I create. The space the object resides in, the materiality of an object and process all can be understood as methods of communication. All of these contextualize the work. Specific materials and processes can be tied to a specific time and place and utilizing such becomes the subject through which the work can speak. Design, for me, is rooted in choice, exploration, and process and I employ these concepts towards exploring topics of culture, race, and place.

Objects have an intrinsic history instilled within them. That history cannot be separated from the object. Our relationship to the built environment is one experienced from birth until death. We gather objects and fill our lives with them. Those objects take on a life and history of their own. Our experiences are a collection of our influences. This collection of objects creates a moment representative of the times, culture, values, access, and wealth. I want to pull from these influences and make spaces and objects that reference a moment or speculate on where the future can lead. Deconstructing the object and recontextualizing the environment in which it sits is what I am interested in.

Currently, my work spans spatial design, object design, and social practice. I look to continue to explore the built environment and the objects that populate it, exploring issues varying in scale; a community, a building, objects that populate a home, and people.

Impact Statement

Being in the early stage of my career, I am looking to use these funds to create a foundation for a sustainable practice. With this support I can continue to build a body of work and establish a more stable studio space.

Exploration and experimentation are important to my process. The production of any object becomes costly very quickly, especially as it relates to digital fabrication, which is the main means of production for me. With proper funding, I can afford to spend that additional time experimenting with materials.

The recognition would help me to move into new spaces creating more opportunities for collaboration or secure funding to more community-based projects. Being a region often overlooked in the art community, this is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the people creating work here.

Crista Ames, (she/her), 2022 Fellowship Recipient, Visual, Kittitas County

Discipline Statement

I create sculptures of people, animals, and objects out of clay. Works are sculpted by hand from models, reference images, and my imagination. The clay sculptures are fired in a kiln multiple times with layers of oxides, pigment washes, and glaze applied to their ceramic surface

Artist Biography

Crista Ann Ames is a Resident Artist, teaching artist and Ceramics Studio Manager at Gallery One Visual Arts Center in Ellensburg, Washington. Raised on a small hobby farm, she often draws on her own experiences to explore pastoral life, animal husbandry, women's craft and fertility.

Crista received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics with a minor in Art History and Disability Studies from Washington State University. She went on to attend Utah State University for Post Baccalaureate studies in Ceramics. While receiving her Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Montana she began studying dance and movement to help inform the way she sculpts the figure.

Artist Statement

As a sculptor who works primarily in ceramics, textiles, and wood I find that the integration of both permanent and impermanent materials conveys my interest in approaches to memory, loss and transformation. Just as the act of remembering transforms an experience into something different, time degrades some elements and leaves others to endure. Through the layering of mythology, iconography and personal narrative, my work explores how our own animal nature relates to the ways we establish and sustain personal relationships. I draw on my own experiences to explore pastoral life, animal husbandry, women's craft and fertility.

In bridging the gap between myth and experience, I utilize my artistic practice to create altogether new stories that tell contemporary tales of trauma, joy and womanhood.

Impact Statement

Misappropriated Mythology is a body of work I am making in which I have been recreating female monuments and well-known sculptures from art history with the addition of symbolic animals of different and paradoxical pagan mythological creature. This reclaiming and creation of new female monuments I am exploring through a series of life size ceramics sculptures and busts, which will result in a solo exhibition at Forsberg Art Gallery scheduled for April 2023. As an emerging artist just starting to establish myself here in Washington, this would be my first solo exhibition in the state. Receiving this Artist Trust Fellowship will fund the purchase of equipment and materials, time away from my part-time job to create, fund firing for this body of work, transportation of artwork, and professional documentation of the artwork. The recognition of the fellowship will increase visibility for the exhibition and this important step in my career.

Chris Vargas, (he/him), 2020 Fellowship Recipient, Multidisciplinary, Whatcom County

Discipline Statement

I am an interdisciplinary artist and film/videomaker. My most recent public work has been on a conceptual art project called the Museum of Transgender Hirstory & Art. Outside of this project, I am embarking on an exploration of mixed-race identity and colonial history via performance and animation techniques.

Artist Biography

I was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. In 2006, I received my BA from University of California at Santa Cruz in the Film & Digital Media. In 2011, I received my MFA from the UC Berkeley Art Practice program. In 2013, I was the Community Engagement Artist in Residence at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. I joined the studio art faculty at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA in 2014 where I am currently an Associate Professor. In 2016, received a Creative Capital award for a multi-exhibition project called "Trans Hirstory in 99 Objects" under my project, Museum of Transgender Hirstory & Art. Iterations of this project have appeared at Henry Art Gallery in Seattle (2015/16), the New Museum in New York City (2018/19), and the Oakland Museum of California (2019). I am currently a 2020 John C. Guggenheim fellow.

Artist Statement

I am a film/videomaker and interdisciplinary artist. In my early work I used performance and greenscreen compositing to take on the personas of real-life queer people. In a series of three video pieces I became, in turn, the master showman Liberace, the pioneering trans philanthropist Reed Erickson, and the "first pregnant man" Thomas Beatie. I did so to explore the complexities of queer celebrity, the inadequacies of role models, the possibilities of envisioning alternative queer futures, and also as a way to investigate how queer communities continually rewrite and reframe history for ever-changing political ends.

I am currently at work on a project entitled the Museum of Transgender Hirstory & Art. MOTHA is a conceptual art work, with occasional physical iterations, that imagines an institution dedicated to preserving and celebrating the visual history of transgender culture. With this project I invite audiences to think critically about what that visual history would look like, how it should be organized, and if it is even possible to compile a cohesive history around a linguistic identity category that is relatively new and whose language is still rapidly evolving. As an imaginary museum that is forever "under construction," the project takes the form of gallery and museum exhibitions, performances, tongue-in-cheek institutional videos, a virtual residency program, poster graphics, and an inaugural ribbon cutting ceremony.

In all of my work, I use humor and performance in conjunction with mainstream forms (video, posters, history and art exhibits) to explore the ways people, specifically those marginalized by gender, race, class and sexuality, negotiate spaces for themselves within historical and institutional memory, and within popular media.

Impact Statement

I am seeking an Artist Trust fellowship so I may take unpaid leave from teaching during the fall quarter of 2020. I am grateful to hold a tenure-track teaching job: as a first-generation college student who successfully navigated the slippery and precarious career path of a teaching artist, I cherish the opportunity to nurture a new generation of artists and teachers. Being one of only a few queer faculty of color, it is especially important to me that I provide mentorship to young artists of color. That said, it is equally important to have time when I am not teaching and can focus wholly on my art. The fellowship would help me move from an intensive period of exhibitions toward my preparation of a MOTHA book and then to my transition out of this project into my next body of work on mixed-race identity and colonial history.

Nia-Amina Minor (she/they), 2022 Fellowship Recipient, Performing, King County

Discipline Statement

I am a movement-based artist and choreographer whose interdisciplinary work uses performance and dance film to converse with Black realities and investigate the intersections of physical movement, memory, and rhythm.

Artist Biography

Originally from Los Angeles, Nia-Amina resides in Seattle. She was Company Dancer and Community Engagement Liaison with Spectrum Dance Theater for five seasons. She performed in acclaimed works created by Donald Byrd including *Rap on Race*, *Shot*, and *Strange Fruit*, receiving a Seattle Dance Crush Award for her performance in *Shot*.

Nia-Amina holds a MFA from UC Irvine and a BA from Stanford University. She has taught and guest lectured at UC Irvine, Saddleback College, Cypress College, and UW. Nia-Amina is a co-founder and former curator of Los Angeles based collective No)one Art House. She has presented work at Seattle Art Museum, Tacoma Art Museum, The Luminary, WaNaWari, CD Forum Showing Out, Reflections Festival, Seattle International Dance Festival (SIDF), Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Seattle Black Film Festival. Nia-Amina is a 2021 Velocity Made in Seattle Artist and was recently recognized as Dance Magazine's 25 Artists to Watch in 2021.

Artist Statement

I am a movement based artist and choreographer. My interdisciplinary dance projects focus on the body and what it carries, using physical and archival research to explore Black memory, history, and culture.

I approach my practice as an imaginative space grounded in rhythm where improvisation, the Black vernacular, and choreography can meet. My creative research engages with Black archives as a way to unearth hidden histories. Many of the choreographic pieces I create begin as investigations of the past and how one might bring forth that legacy into the present.

As a performing artist and choreographer, I also aim to facilitate creative processes where choreography, collaboration, and societal politics will intersect. I co-founded, performed and curated with Los Angeles based collective No)one Art House under the philosophy: Not the Efforts of One. It was in this space that I began to approach movement practice as a site for collective gathering, where collaboration in creative direction and choreographic practice was valued. I continued this journey when I relocated to Seattle, to work with Spectrum Dance Theater and entered a process that supported political and historical study while using dance as a mechanism for discourse around difficult subjects. These experiences undergird my philosophy of art making and have been critical in the development of my artistic identity.

My most recent work is a series of dance projects titled, *Dreams of Flight*. Through both film and live performance each piece explores the internal landscape of collective dreams of flight. The work is grounded in the ancestral embodiment of flight within the Black community. From the historic presence of flight in spiritual and Black gospel music to the movement of Black people during the Great Migration to Folk legends of flight as found in Toni Morrison's "*Song of Solomon*" and Virginia Hamilton's "*The People Could Fly*." Each piece centers the Black femme body where flight becomes a site of possibility, a secret language, and a paradox as we consider in the words of Toni Morrison, those who could "fly without ever leaving the ground."

Impact Statement

After performing with Spectrum Dance Theater, I am now working as an independent artist in Seattle. An Artist Trust Fellowship would help me continue to create choreographic experiences and film projects in the PNW region. It would also fund an upcoming dance project, "Black Collectivity out of Necessity." The project, which is part movement-research, part archive, and part community offering, investigates the legacy of Black Dance in Seattle beginning with Syvilla Fort. This fellowship would support the creative process including archival research and rehearsals. It will also fund the recording of oral histories to create new dance materials. My goal is to respond to the findings through choreography and film. I will develop a public program with local artists to help audiences engage with the legacy of Black Dance in Seattle. This fellowship would support important new additions to the Seattle Black dance archive.